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The Foreign Office and the Famine

British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933

Edited by
Marco Carynnyk, Lubomyr Y. Luciuk and Bohdan S. Kordan

With a Foreword by
Michael R. Marrus

The Foreign Office and the Famine

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Foreword

"*Get word to someone*. The modern prayer."[1] This desperate appeal to a world outside, or to some future generation, haunts the contemporary literature of genocide. Describing the Turkish massacres and deportations of Armenians from the Anatolian countryside in 1915, the American writer Michael J. Arlen underscores the particular pain and rage of victims who believe that their suffering is *unknown*. The special horror, for those in such conditions, is that their tormentors have destroyed all traces of the crime. "If the Germans win the war, what will the world know of us?" asks an Auschwitz inmate in a novel by the Ukrainian-born writer Tadeusz Borowski.[2] In the same camp, the Italian Jewish writer Primo Levi recalled that the urge to communicate could become the sole reason for living: "even in this place one can survive, and therefore one must want to survive, to tell the story, to bear witness."[3] Even when all hope is lost, when those targeted for murder are helpless before their murderers, the instinct to signal the human family remains alive. On the wall of a latrine in a Soviet camp, according to Antoni Ekart, could be found an admonition from the dead to those who were still alive: "May he be damned who, after regaining freedom, remains silent."[4]

Throughout this volume of documents, we hear the desperate "modern prayer" of victims of the famine that ravaged parts of the Soviet Union in 1932-33. We are starving, workers in the Kolguginskii district write to William Strang, the acting counsellor of the British embassy in Moscow, reminding him that all the while the Soviets have *exported* food to England. And then they add: "Do not forget to communicate this message." (27: 226-27)[5]

The special contribution of the editors of this book, Marco Carynnyk, Lubomyr Luciuk and Bohdan Kordan, is to have uncovered contemporary descriptions of the famine relayed to the West in British diplo-

matic pouches. Largely ignored or suppressed at the time, and forgotten since, these urgent messages now constitute one of the most important sources we have of this colossal human tragedy. Much of the information in these pages comes from the simple accounts of a variety of observers – British diplomats and consular officials, of course, but also of relief workers, trade officials, newspaper correspondents and the like. Much also is the *cri de coeur* of the starved and outcast, who managed to communicate their terrible experiences directly to outsiders who must have appeared to them as creatures from another planet.

These documents remind us of how communication occurs despite extraordinary obstacles. We are insufficiently aware of how easy it could be to penetrate the walls around Soviet society in the 1930s, once people took the trouble to do so. The appeals from the ravaged areas could be heard, if visitors bothered to listen. For someone like Andrew Cairns, a Canadian wheat expert whose reports are among the most graphic and extensive accounts of popular suffering, the "peasants' stories" had a concrete human reality, grounded in his own careful investigation. Like Arthur Young, a famous eighteenth-century fellow-traveller who visited the French countryside on the eve of the Revolution, Cairns was deeply suspicious of despotism and official optimism. And also like Young, he had an engrained dislike of bureaucratic controls and excuses and the collective management of agriculture. Cairns knew an agricultural débâcle when saw it, and had little patience for the Communist party's sanguine version of events.

How different from Cairns's evaluation are those better-known Soviet idylls that came so frequently from the duped, the wilfully ignorant or the true believers. What a contrast, for example, with the former French prime minister Edouard Herriot, who travelled through Ukraine the year after Cairns and found it a "burgeoning garden" of prosperity.[6] How different is the Canadian's careful, even pedantic, notation from that of the callous diplomatic officers in London who feared that the damning descriptions of Soviet reality would upset their courtship of Moscow or impede the hoped-for Soviet accession to the League of Nations. Emblematic of their attitude is the lapidary remark of the career diplomat T. A. Shone, rejecting a desperate appeal by the European Federation of Ukrainians Abroad: "No particulars of this organisation can be traced. While the deplorable account which it gives of conditions in the Ukraine is no doubt largely true, it is anti-Soviet in complexion and I presume that we can only ignore its appeal." (52: 321)

It is remarkable how the accounts in this collection, coming from such different personalities and perspectives, agree on the essentials—hunger and starvation on an immense scale, staggering bureaucratic callousness

associated with the collectivization of agriculture, massive internal deportations of people who are repeatedly referred to in Soviet administrative parlance as "useless mouths," and tremendous, deliberately organized inequities in food distribution. The documents leave little doubt that while ethnic Russians, favoured Communist party elements and the regions immediately to the north of Soviet Ukraine were not affected notably by the shortages of food, the famine did have particular impact on non-Russian territories, especially Ukraine, the North Caucasus and Kazakhstan, and that the principal victims were Ukrainians. Among the particular contributions of this volume are detailed maps charting the geography of the mortality from famine which confirm the frequently repeated contemporary observation: Ukrainians suffered most of all, with high death rates coinciding ironically with the fertile black soil regions of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

Did the famine of 1932-33 constitute a genocidal attack upon Ukrainians? Evidence presented by a good many horrified witnesses suggests that it did. In their view, the famine occurred because the Soviet authorities ruthlessly collected grain for export, stripping bare one of the most productive agricultural regions of the U.S.S.R., and allowing the local inhabitants to starve, sometimes forcing them into Siberian exile or simply driving them into the wilderness to perish. Most of the observers would probably have agreed with Otto Schiller, the German agricultural attaché, who declared that "the famine is not so much the result of last year's failure of crops as of the brutal campaign of State Grain Collection." (36: 259) The Kremlin took pains to cover up these horrors, insisting that all was well and refusing Western aid for the victims. Soviet indifference seems to have been related to the fact that the stricken were mostly Ukrainians. Diplomatic representatives certainly detected a venomous detestation of Ukrainians among Communist party officials in Moscow at the time and the linking of all expressions of Ukrainian national sentiment with treasonous anti-Soviet activity. As Lord Chilston, the British ambassador, put it in a letter to British Foreign Secretary Sir John Simon, the tendency was to denounce as counter-revolutionary "any evidence of particularism, either cultural, economic or political." (64: 368)

Of course, uncertainties remain. A conclusive evaluation of motivations requires a closer look at the Soviet officials who presided over this catastrophe, and must await the release of materials in Soviet archives – if that ever is to happen. In my view, formal classification of the famine matters less at this point than an appreciation of the limitless cruelty and anguish it entailed. Although we lack important information about the perpetrators, those who suffered did their best to tell the story as they

saw it, and the documents assembled in this volume show that their effort was not in vain. Now the victims have a chance to be heard once again. Like the visitors to the Soviet Union in the 1930s, we are asked to listen.

Michael R. Marrus

NOTES

1. Michael J. Arlen, *Passage to Ararat* (New York, 1975), 132.
2. Tadeusz Borowski, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*, trans. Barbara Vedder (Harmondsworth, England, 1976), 132.
3. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, trans. Stuart Woolf (New York, 1976), 36.
4. Antoni Ekert, *Vanished without a Trace*, trans. Egerton Sykes and E. S. Virpsha (London, 1954), 12. Quoted in Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor* (New York, 1976), 38.
5. The first number refers to the document, the second to the page.
6. "J'ai traversé l'Ukraine. Eh bien! je vous affirme que je l'ai vue tel un jardin en plein rendement. On assure, me dites-vous, que cette contrée vit à cette heure une époque attristée? Je ne peux parler de ce que je n'ai pas vu. Pourtant je me suis fait conduire dans des endroits qu'on disait éprouvés. Or, je n'ai constaté que la prospérité...." Interview with Herriot in *La Nouvelliste*, 14 September 1933. Quoted in Fred Kupferman, *Au pays des Soviets: le voyage français en Union soviétique 1917-1939* (Paris, 1979), 90.

Introduction

Choosing Not to See

London in late June 1932 was warm and unsettled. Seated comfortably in his office in the pedimented Italian palazzo that overlooks Whitehall, Downing Street and the Horse Guards Parade, a first secretary in the Northern Department of the Foreign Office pondered a dispatch that had arrived on his desk. Andrew Cairns, a Canadian who had been travelling in the Soviet Union for the Empire Marketing Board, was reporting distressful news. Many Kirghizes in the Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan were fleeing east to China and north to Siberia in search of food. "Many, many thousands" – so many that the army could not bury them all – had died of hunger, and another million could be expected to perish. At every station Cairns had seen hundreds of people, "all thin, cold, rag-clad, hungry and many begging for bread." Others were camping in the steppes and eating dead horses. At a bazaar a boy close to death held up his shirt to display thighs only three or four inches thick. As a Western traveller took a photograph of him, two tearful women said, "That is what is going to happen to all of us. Will you give that picture to the newspapers in America, so that they will send us food?" (5: 38, 42)

Laurence Collier uncapped his pen. The report had disturbed him. "I have seldom read a more convincing document," he minuted. "It is now clear that collective agriculture in Russia is a failure and that there is no prospect of Russian grain exports on any appreciable scale, for the next few years at least." He paused for a moment, then wrote, "As Tacitus' Romans 'made a solitude, and called it peace,' so the Soviet Govt. have 'made a famine, and called it communism.'" (5: 78)[1]

Cairns was describing a cataclysm whose beginnings can be traced to 1928, when Stalin abandoned Lenin's New Economic Policy and began a "revolution from above" that was far more devastating than the revolutions of 1917 or the Civil War. Borrowing Trotskii's idea of indus-

trialization as the only way to develop a war industry and collectivization of agriculture as a means of raising capital from the peasants, Stalin liquidated, as the ugly euphemism has it, opposition to his scheme within the party and declared a ruthless war against the peasants. A hundred million were compelled, often at gun-point, to foresake their holdings and join collective farms; six and a half million, labelled "kulaks" or "kulak henchmen," were shot, exiled or absorbed into the rapidly metastasizing Gulag. The most horrible fate befell Ukraine, the North Caucasus and Kazakhstan, where some eight million people were starved to death.[3] Anxious to crush the resistance that Ukrainians had shown to Soviet rule first by armed rebellions and then by growing demands for cultural and political autonomy, Stalin blockaded Ukraine to prevent peasants from fleeing from the famine, blacklisted entire regions to keep them from receiving consumer goods, forbade foreign relief and initiated a massive campaign of misinformation.

Stalin's heirs have not acknowledged his crime. Denouncing his predecessor's mistakes in his famous "secret speech" in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev argued that collectivization was one of Stalin's "great achievements" and studiously avoided mentioning the killing of the peasants.[4] In the West, apologists for Stalin have denied that the famine occurred or have blamed it on "peasant stubbornness."[4] Even the *New York Times*, in a dispatch from Moscow at the height of the famine, claimed that there was "no actual starvation or deaths from starvation," only "widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition." "This amazing sophistry," wrote Eugene Lyons, a correspondent in Moscow at the time, "characterizes sufficiently the whole shabby episode of our failure to report honestly the gruesome Russian famine of 1932-33."[5] Western historians, partly because they lack clear evidence ("pas de documents, pas d'histoire," they were taught) and partly because of their own unexamined assumptions (human suffering, they argue, is not a historical factor), have also glossed over the event.[6] The available documentation on the famine has lain untouched. Simple-minded reductionism and monocausal explanations have dominated the often acrid debates. The deeper comprehension that would show how millions of people died and why that bears on the world we live in has not been attained. In an age when "genocide" and "holocaust" have firmly established themselves in the political lexicon, the famine of 1933 is poorly understood, and many people are only dimly aware that Stalin (in Alec Nove's phrase) did "a most dreadful thing" to the "kulaks," while a vocal minority continues to dispute or deny the fact of the famine. "It is as if," a historian has written, "Hitler had won the war and the world remembered only Theresienstadt, the 'model camp' where the

Nazis showed foreign observers what purported to be a well-regulated and humanely administered autonomous Jewish community, while the atrocities of Auschwitz and Treblinka remained closely guarded secrets.'"[7]

Yet extensive documentation can be found, sometimes in the most unexpected places. One rich source is the British archives. In the 1930s, by virtue of its experienced foreign service, its importance in world affairs and the fact that it was the first European power to establish diplomatic relations with Moscow after the revolution, London knew more, with the possible exception of Berlin, about the situation in the Soviet Union than any other Western government.[8] In 1932 and 1933, the British embassy in Moscow regularly forwarded to the Foreign Office dispatches in which it drew on information from diplomats, correspondents, British subjects in the Soviet Union and Soviet citizens to report what was happening in the famine regions. In the course of research in the Foreign Office archives at the Public Record Office in London we uncovered some of this evidence, which sheds new light on the causes, course and consequences of the famine of 1932-33. The documents we are printing here, it must be understood, are not a history of the famine *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*, but the famine as reported by a small group of upper-class Englishmen who saw some things very clearly and others only imperfectly. Nor is our collection comprehensive – the files in the archives are often incomplete and unsatisfactory, and many more documents remain to be located – but we do believe that it gives a fair idea of what the Foreign Office knew about the famine and how it responded when political and relief organizations in the West requested aid for the stricken population.[9]

What did London know about the famine?

Cairns's report was not a complete surprise for Collier. Astute observers had begun to notice signs of hunger even before Stalin announced the first of his celebrated five-year plans. Paul Scheffer, the Moscow correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt*, whose articles were read with appreciation at the Foreign Office and who has been called the finest journalist ever to work in the Soviet Union,[10] reported in May 1928 that there had been bread riots in Ukraine, the Don region and along the Volga. In June 1929 he warned that the food shortage was growing daily. And by early 1930 he was anticipating catastrophe. "The days of famine are already sounding their approach," he wrote. "The present disorganization will not show its full effects till the coming harvest. It is still five months till that time, months in which hunger can only increase."[11]

Ewald Ammende, a Baltic German who had been involved in the efforts to relieve the famine that came in the wake of the Civil War, made a similar forecast. "The approach of a serious food shortage in Russia can be predicted with almost mathematical accuracy," he wrote in January 1930. "For this reason by next spring, in case deliveries from the outside do not take place, great privation and loss of human life can again take place."[12] The *Slavonic Review* also foretold famine. Supplies of seed, machinery and horses were deplorable. Organization of labour was unsatisfactory. Agricultural plans were not being made. The land belonging to the collectives would be badly tilled, and much of it would not be sown because of the shortage of machinery and seeds. "Thus, failure of crops is almost inevitable and a new famine, more devastating than that of 1921-22."[13]

Sir Esmond Ovey, the British ambassador to Moscow, agreed. In January 1930 he reported that the peasants and small proprietors were "hardly treated" and were being, when recalcitrant, "bullied out of existence." Famine was likely, and the government would not be "deflected by the death of even hundreds of thousands of peasants in a given district."[14] In March 1932 Ovey found that his apprehension had been justified. "There are stories going about Moscow," he wrote to Sir John Simon, the British foreign secretary,

> that traffic between the Ukraine and the consuming regions lying to the north of it is closely controlled, no one being allowed to bring more than 1,000 roubles out from the Ukraine, and all grain in the possession of private persons entering the Ukraine being confiscated. The Ukraine is, normally, the granary which feeds these consuming areas, but the granary, it is said, has been stripped very bare and some of the population in both town and country in the Ukraine is short of food. The peasants and others have therefore taken to coming to the more plentifully supplied industrial areas to buy back some of their own grain, and it is this that the control system is designed to prevent, lest industrial areas should be denuded and the urban workers, the proletariat *par excellence*, should go short. (1: 3-4)

Five weeks later, William Strang, the counsellor of the British embassy, informed Simon that the crisis was growing more acute.[15] Moscow had experienced little hardship, but visitors to Ukraine were reporting that bread rations had been reduced, workers and government employees had to spend most of their wages on bread and the peasants had been left "in a state approaching famine after successive grain collections, whether for the needs of the towns, or for the war reserve, or for export, or for seed purposes in other areas." (2: 5) On 20 May, after

a ten-day trip to Ukraine, Ovey advised the Foreign Office that the people were "quiet – numb perhaps with apprehension" and that there was "considerable shortage of food in Western Ukraine, shortage in the Eastern portion and probably definite want in the Volga area." (3: 18) And in early June J. D. Greenway, in summarizing reports received in the Foreign Office, noted that "in large districts of Russia, notably the Ukraine, conditions have become so much worse as to approach a state of famine." (4: 25)[16]

The most vivid and detailed dispatches about the famine came not from the embassy, but from Andrew Cairns, the Canadian wheat expert who had first visited the Soviet Union in 1930 for the Canadian Wheat Pools and then in the spring of 1932 was assigned by the Empire Marketing Board in London to assess the significance of Soviet agriculture for the world wheat market.[17] The Foreign Office esteemed Cairns's memoranda and thought that his "hair-raising revelations" deserved to be brought to the attention of government departments and the delegates to the Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa. (5: 77-78)[18]

In Ukraine and the North Caucasus, Cairns reported, every railway station had a crowd of "rag-clad hungry peasants, some begging for bread, many waiting, mostly in vain, for tickets, many climbing on to the steps or joining the crowds on the roof of each car, all filthy and miserable and not a trace of a smile anywhere." At the station in Kiev many people were begging for bread. When he went for a walk in the city, a woman at a bazaar told him that there was no bread because the government had collected so much grain for export. The collective farms round Kiev were very bad, she said, and all the members were hungry. She had left her village because she could not get food and people were dying. Now she had a job in Kiev, but with her small salary she was always hungry. Other women said that they had not joined, or had left, the collective farms because they and their children were hungry. On the way back to his hotel Cairns discovered a man dying in the street: "He was apparently insane as he was going through all the motions of eating and rubbing his stomach with apparent satisfaction. A crowd had gathered, and some people, thinking that the man was begging, dropped a few coins, but he was quite unconscious and soon stopped moving." Outside a food shop, where swarms of people were buying and selling bits of bread, rotten vegetables and fish scales, Cairns asked why things were so dear. The people pulled in their cheeks, pretended to vomit, drew their fingers across their throats and said, "There's nothing to eat. Nothing at all." On another walk Cairns stopped to give coins to three small girls who were nearly dead with hunger, and a crowd told him that there were many such children throughout the country. (10: 105-109)

From Kiev Cairns travelled to Dnipropetrovsk, in southern Ukraine, and to the North Caucasus. At every station hordes of "miserable, hungry people" were fleeing from the famine. In Dnipropetrovsk one evening he spotted six militiamen with drawn revolvers herding thirty-five men and women down the street, and the following morning he observed militiamen escorting forty tattered and hungry children. Here in the heart of Ukraine, where much grain had been confiscated the previous year for export, wheat meal was selling at twenty to twenty-five times its international value, and workers could not buy nearly enough bread to feed themselves. At the depot in Salsk in the North Caucasus, people were begging for bread, and women were sitting in the filth looking at their starving children. In Rostov Cairns saw a film about the resolution of the problem of homeless children in the Soviet Union. As he came out of the theatre, three children approached him to ask for money to buy bread. (10: 120-52)

In August 1932 the Soviet government issued a law that imposed the death penalty for the pilfering of "socialist property." Stealing an ear of wheat from a field was now a capital offense. Two weeks later speculation in collective-farm trade was made punishable by five to ten years' imprisonment. Strang explained the two laws to London: "the chief object of the first decree is to put an end to the practice of peasants... who, because they are hungry or afraid for the future, or both, are taking grain produced either by themselves or others and consuming or hiding it." Both decrees, he wrote, were "dictated by anxiety for the success of the coming grain-collection campaign, which is threatened... by the consuming hunger of the peasants... and their determination not to go hungry again next winter." (14: 195) A few days later E. A. Walker, the first secretary of the embassy, gave a further explanation of the decree against pilferage. Although the law was ostensibly directed against theft in general, it was being applied only to the theft of food in the countryside, and the Soviet press had listed numerous cases of "kulaks" stealing grain, especially in the Vinnytsia district of Ukraine, where conditions were "unusually unsatisfactory even for the Soviet Union." "Where the need and distress is as great as it is in the U.S.S.R. at the present time," concluded Walker, "a bushel of wheat is indeed precious and doubtless for that reason the unfortunate population will risk imprisonment or even the death penalty and go to any lengths to get something which can make its life a little less unpleasant, or indeed for that matter physically possible." (15: 198, 200)

By the early spring of 1933 the hunger of the previous year had turned into mass starvation. What little food had escaped confiscation was eaten, and the next crop was still months away. Corpses lined country roads.

Ukrainian Canadians who had returned to Ukraine only to find themselves in the midst of a famine appealed as British subjects to the embassy for help. One Ukrainian Canadian complained that he had been dekulakized in 1932: his house had been taken, and he and his family were living under the open sky. Forwarding extracts from the letters to London, Strang commented that he was receiving more of them than at any time since the mission had been established and that he was reporting "only a small proportion of the more sane and succinct" letters. (25: 221) Another Ukrainian wrote that the régime had reduced working people to "starvation, barbarity and even cannibalism." "England, save us who are dying of hunger," he pleaded. (26: 224)

In May 1933, at the very height of the famine, Strang apprised the Foreign Office that the number of unsolicited letters from Soviet citizens was increasing as the crisis became more acute. One anonymous letter opened with an appeal to the ambassador to ask the British government to save the starving people in the USSR, who were living on "all kinds of rotten stuff, carrion, marmots and cannibalism," and concluded by declaring that "we are perishing and you are being appealed to by thousands of hungry peasants and workers." (27: 227) Another letter revealed that millions of people had starved to death in Ukraine and that the survivors were eating carrion, horses that had died from glanders and human corpses. (29: 238)

Some Soviet citizens even visited the embassy to offer information. One caller presented a portfolio of documents that related to "the widespread famine which affected certain districts from which he had just returned, and regarding which the world was in utter ignorance." The embassy told him that it had no need for further information and dismissed him. (28: 232-33) Whitehall, however, was keen to have more information, and Sir Robert Vansittart, the permanent under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, issued orders to reprimand the embassy for discouraging informants. On 4 September 1933, R. G. Howe, a first secretary in the Northern Department, drew the embassy's attention to reports of famine that had appeared in British newspapers. Although the Foreign Office understood that the existence of famine conditions did not necessarily imply a bad harvest, it did believe that the harvest had been much smaller than the Soviet authorities had anticipated and that it had been worst in Ukraine. Howe knew that it was difficult for the embassy to furnish information from sources other than official Soviet reports, but the Foreign Office would be glad to have "anything giving the other side of the picture that you can get." Vansittart had asked why the two visitors were turned away and pointed out that it was "the legitimate business of the Embassy to learn all it can, when information is volunteered; any risk involved is, after all, run by the informant...."

> We shall therefore be glad if you (and His Majesty's Consulates) will make the most of every opportunity for supplementing official reports as to conditions in the Soviet Union; and we need hardly add that we should welcome your own comments or estimate of the true state of affairs – whether in the matter of the harvest, famine, industrial conditions, or whatever it may be.... (43: 285-86)

The sentence is revealing. Even when it sought information about the famine, the Foreign Office did not think that it was of exceptional significance. The size of the harvest was more important than the fact that people were dying. The embassy's job was to report not the famine itself, but its implications for Anglo-Soviet trade.

Until June 1933 each Soviet republic had its own public prosecutor's office. On 20 June the government issued a decree establishing a Procurator's Department of the USSR. Two days later *Izvestiia* explained that the purpose of the new office was "the strengthening of Socialist legality and the safeguarding of public property from anti-social elements." The new decree, Strang reported to Simon, was "merely the latest of a long series of recent enactments designed to strengthen the hold of the ruling Communist class upon the countryside, an object to which the major energies of the party are at present devoted.... It also has the more immediate object of ensuring... that the harvesting and threshing of this year's crop and the delivery of due quotas to the State shall not be accompanied by the losses which, added to the inadequacy of the crop, made it necessary last year to denude large areas of the country of food to the point of semi-famine in order to provide what is little more than a pittance for the bulk of the population of the towns." (31: 243-44)

In July 1933 Strang sent Simon a dispatch entirely about the famine:

> It is hardly necessary to confirm the notorious fact that on the eve of the harvest conditions of semi-famine still continue to obtain over large areas of the Soviet Union. Unauthorised estimates of the number of people who have died, either directly or indirectly, from malnutrition in the past year vary up to as much as the fantastic figure of 10 million. It is, I think, quite impossible to guess what the figure may be. I am told by a member of the German Embassy that in the German Agricultural Concession in the North Caucasus, five men have been employed in gathering and burying the corpses of peasants who have come in from outside this oasis of plenty in search of food and have died. One of the erectors employed by Metropolitan-Vickers in the Ukraine says that people died of starvation in the block of apartments in which he lived, one of them outside his door. He says that he refused

> to believe the stories he heard of conditions in the villages outside and walked out to see for himself; he found, as he had been told, that some villages were completely deserted, the population having died or fled, and that corpses were lying about the houses and streets. (35: 255)

What is of interest here is not so much the report itself – it confirms the embassy's numerous other accounts – as the interpretation London placed upon it. "It is clear that real famine exists in many country districts," minuted R. L. Speaight, a third secretary in the Northern Department, "and that the Soviet Govt. are not particularly concerned about it." (35: 257)

The hundreds of thousands of peasants who were "dekulakized" – stripped of their belongings and deported to remote regions – often ended up at labour camps and construction sites. In August 1933, the British consul in Moscow reported on the White Sea Canal Works, where many kulaks were worked to death. The memorandum provided a shocking description of their diet: a spoonful of cold porridge for breakfast and then, after ten hours' labour, bread, weak fish soup and a little porridge. Speaight, however, was not shocked. "I have seen accounts of worse conditions than these in other labour camps," he remarked. "So far as food is concerned these people seem to be better of[*f*] than the peasants in the Ukraine and Northern Caucasus." (38: 271-72)

A month later Edward Coote, the first secretary of the Moscow embassy, disclosed that an "All-Union Committee of Migration" had been established to utilize "sparsely inhabited areas." The reference to sparsely inhabited areas should not be taken to mean that new areas were to be cultivated, he explained. Many regions where there had been no famine were over-populated and could shed some of their surplus members, and the new decree was "a sinister admission" of famine mortality. "There is no doubt that many villages are entirely depopulated," Coote wrote, "and I have heard from other travellers that it is not uncommon to find villages with a black flag flying at each end of the central street, signifying that none of the population are left as the result of starvation and flight.... It may be expected that these will be selected as the 'sparsely inhabited, but fertile areas' to which the Government's migration programme will apply." (45: 291)

In September 1933, William Henry Chamberlin, the Moscow correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Christian Science Monitor*, was allowed to visit Ukraine and the North Caucasus. Strang's summary was unambiguous: "Mr. Chamberlin says that there is no doubt at all that famine was general in the Ukraine this last year. This fact was confirmed to him at station after station on his journey through the coun-

try. Nor is there any doubt that the North Caucasus is a semi-devastated region which would almost have to be recolonised." The Foreign Office was no less emphatic. "This is, to my mind, the most reliable summing up of the situation in the U.S.S.R. as regards the famine & as regards this year's harvest that we have received," Howe wrote. "On both these points it fits in with our reports from other sources." (55: 336-37)[19] And at the end of the famine year, on the occasion of a speech by Pavel Postyshev, Stalin's lieutenant in Ukraine, on the party's methods of enforcing its collective-farm policy, Lord Chilston, who had replaced Sir Esmond as the British ambassador to Moscow in the autumn of 1933,[20] gave London to understand that Soviet measures had been "both thorough and ruthless, and the famine conditions prevalent in the Ukraine throughout the year must, to a great extent, be put down to the methods of coercion employed by the Bolsheviks in achieving the results which they claim." (59: 353)

The effects of the famine, as the last two documents in this book suggest, were visible long after the mass mortality had ended. Charles Hawker, an Australian politician who visited the Soviet Union in the summer of 1935, was struck by the number of ruined houses and deserted villages that he saw when he flew over Ukraine and the North Caucasus – evidence, as Chilston put it, of the famine and accompanying epidemics in these regions in 1932-33. (84: 447-48) Equally ominous was the finding of Colonel Eric Skaife, the British military attaché in Moscow, who went to Ukraine in October 1935 to observe Red Army manoeuvres. All was not well in Ukraine, he concluded. Food and clothing stores in Dnipropetrovsk were guarded by civilians armed with rifles, and the standard of clothing and bodily condition was distinctly lower than in Moscow. (85: 450-51)

What did London know about why the famine happened?

As important as the fact of the famine itself was the question of its causes. Why had the famine occurred? The embassy's economic reports, which were based on a careful reading of Soviet newspapers and technical publications as well as on the occasional trip outside Moscow, were thorough and reliable. Its political reportage was less sure, and the embassy never fully grasped the Soviet government's rationale for pushing through its economic and agricultural policies: collectivization was both an economic policy and a way to extend the direct control of the state over the largest number of people within the shortest time.[21] The embassy did not fully appreciate, as R. W. Seton-Watson did, that in Ukraine "famine killed two birds with one stone: it weakened what was left of the most democratically minded peasantry in all the former

Empire, and it weakened the Ukrainian separatist national movement, which was not confined to the inarticulate masses, but was permeating even the ranks of the Communist bureaucracy of Kiev."[22]

Yet as the evidence accumulated the idea that the famine was the result of Soviet policies, that it had been engineered to attain certain goals, prevailed, and both the embassy and the Foreign Office came to understand that it was the systematic and cumulative damage wrought by the confiscation of the annual crop that brought about the famine. In the mid-twenties the peasants had surrendered less than a fifth of their harvest to the state. In 1929-33 the state's share jumped to 30 per cent for the USSR as a whole and 40.4 for Ukraine.[23] A memorandum about the North Caucasus in the spring of 1933 by Otto Schiller, the German agricultural attaché in Moscow who travelled throughout the Soviet Union in 1932 and 1933 and who often shared his information with his British colleagues,[24] conveyed the point clearly. "The famine is not so much the result of last year's failure of crops as of the brutal campaign of State Grain Collection," he wrote. "Therefore even such localities as the Northern districts of North Caucasia in which the crops were quite satisfactory, did not escape...." (36: 259) The condition of the country, Strang observed in July 1933, "causes the authorities some preoccupation, but little apprehension or alarm. The suffering and death inflicted upon the population are regarded as the normal casualties of a nation-wide operation in class warfare (a class war to end classes) in which the authorities are confident that victory will be theirs." (35: 257)

Where did the confiscated grain go? A dispatch from Strang in May 1932 offered an insight: "the Ukrainian peasants have been left in a state approaching famine after successive grain collections, whether for the needs of the towns, or for the war reserve, or for export, or for seed purposes in other areas." (2: 5) The provisioning of the cities, Strang pointed out in another dispatch, was "all that really matters in Communist eyes." At the opening of the final year of the Five-Year Plan, he wrote, "masses of the population outside the largest towns and industrial areas have not enough to eat."[25] And in October 1932 Strang observed that "there are millions of people in Russia, peasants, whom it is fairly safe to leave in want. But the industrial proletariat, about 10 per cent. of the population, must at all costs be fed if the revolution is to be safeguarded." (17: 204) Much of the grain was also being stockpiled to feed the Red Army if war broke out. Karl Radek told British diplomats in Geneva in April 1932 that the Soviet Union had spent "milliards" of roubles on defense in the previous year, and enough grain had been stored to supply the army for a year. All this, he said, accounted for the current "food shortage and general tightening of conditions."[26]

An even larger portion of the confiscated grain was exported. The Great Depression made grain, like all other Soviet export commodities, drop sharply in price. Soviet foreign trade collapsed: prices of Soviet exports dropped over 50 per cent from 1929 to 1932; the price of Soviet imports, however, dropped only 32 per cent.[27] The Soviet government responded by exporting even more grain. From under 200,000 tons in 1928 exports increased to nearly 5 million tons in 1931.[28] The success of the five-year plan, as Ovey explained to Arthur Henderson, the British foreign secretary, depended on exports. Pursuing its "gigantic plan of industrial and commercial and agricultural reorganisation" and seeking to raise funds for the purchase of machinery, the government was making "most extraordinary efforts" to export everything it could lay its hands on, "without causing such local want as to lead to a revolution."[29] The pressure to procure more grain for export continued throughout 1932 and led directly to the great famine in 1933. Summarizing the results of the Third All-Ukrainian Party Conference in July 1932, Ovey reported that although there was "a severe food shortage," Viacheslav Molotov and Lazar Kaganovich were demanding that Ukraine increase its grain yield by 150 per cent. (6: 80) A report on Soviet agriculture prepared by the Empire Marketing Board concluded that the fulfilment of the five-year plan for agriculture had been "far from satisfactory and that if the standard of domestic consumption in Russia were permitted to rise even to a moderate extent, it would be necessary to reduce the exports of foodstuffs and raw materials. On the other hand the difficulties of meeting their short-term indebtedness abroad in the present depressed state of world markets may prove so pressing that the Soviet Government may well be compelled to continue their exports of agricultural products on at least as high a scale as in recent years."[30] Other dispatches made the same point. Schiller told Cairns in the summer of 1932 that the outlook for exports was "very bad," but that the government would again export grain. "The amount would depend entirely on how far the Government dare go in making peasants still more angry. He agreed with me that we would hear of unprecedented difficulties this autumn and winter regarding grain collections." (10: 135) In August 1933 Strang reported to Simon that although the harvest was far from satisfactory, especially in Ukraine, the Soviet government had increased the quotas of grain to be delivered by Ukrainian state farms (42: 279-80), and in another dispatch he wrote that the Soviet authorities hoped to export three million tons of grain from the 1933 crop as compared with two million tons from the 1932 harvest.[31]

Thus these documents leave no doubt that Whitehall appreciated the geographic extent of the famine. Although it often used such danger-

ously vague phrases as "large areas of the Soviet Union" or "the south of Russia," the Foreign Office was aware that the famine was centred in Ukraine. And although it sometimes revealed a confusion about the causes of the famine, the Foreign Office also understood that the famine was man-made – the result of a policy of grain confiscation – and therefore entirely preventable. "The starvation of the population in certain districts (e.g. the Cossacks) has been something like a deliberate policy," Shone observed in a minute. (49: 308) J. M. K. Vyvyan made a similar point when he wrote that "grain has been collected for export from the Soviet Union when starvation existed in grain producing areas." (74: 419) And Collier wrote in June 1935 that "the Soviet Government's policy of ruthless agricultural collectivisation created famine conditions in many parts of the Soviet Union, particularly in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus." (83: 443)[32]

What did London know about how Moscow responded to the famine?

Whatever the motives that prompted him to confiscate the farmers' grain, Stalin responded to the resulting calamity with obduracy, silence and slander. He took no appreciable relief measures. Ovey reported that seed grain had been issued for Ukraine and the Kuban in February 1933, but Konstantin Umanskii, the Soviet press censor, admitted to Walter Duranty that the grain was not for the peasants. (21: 214; 24: 217) Stalin also rejected foreign aid (35: 255; 44: 287), prevented others from estimating the numbers of people who died from starvation (70: 395) and issued standing orders to his propagandists to keep references to starvation out of the press and to persuade the population that life in other countries was no improvement over theirs.

The silence within the Soviet Union was accompanied by a concerted campaign to suppress information in the West.[33] One of the key players in the cover-up was Walter Duranty, the influential Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times*. Although other journalists had noticed food shortages as early as 1928 and Western newspapers reported starvation throughout 1932, Duranty gave no indication of the situation until late in the year. On 31 October, he visited Strang to share his new-found concern. Duranty "has at last awakened to the agricultural situation," Strang informed London. "Large areas are almost depopulated and are going out of cultivation or are at best undercultivated and choked with weeds. In addition to all this, the deportation of the kulaks has swept the countryside of the most enterprising, skilled and industrious part of the population.... The food situation is bad enough even now, when fruit and vegetables are still to be had, but what of the late winter and early spring?" (17: 202-3)

Duranty expressed these apprehensions in a lengthy report, which appeared as a six-part series on the "serious food shortage in Soviet Russia." He manipulated the official palaver so skilfully that it was possible to interpret his articles in several ways. The headline on one article was "Food Shortage Laid to Soviet Peasants," and the article could indeed be read that way, but closer scrutiny shows that Duranty was hinting at government responsibility as well. The food shortage, he wrote, "must be regarded as a result of peasant resistance to rural socialization, or, perhaps, more accurately, as a result of the measures taken to overcome that resistance. The measures have proved effective and the resistance has been overcome – the operation was successful but it left the patient low." Duranty then pointed a finger at important causes of the famine: exports and stockpiles of food for the army. The Kremlin had thought that there would be shortage for two or three years but that the gains to be derived from its plans would outweigh the losses. Two factors upset the calculations: the fall of world prices, which forced the Soviet Union to increase exports of foodstuffs, and the threat of war with Japan. As a result, "the food supply became involved in a vicious circle, each difficulty breeding others."[34] The *New York Times* found Duranty's report important enough to make it the subject of editorials on two consecutive days. Although they praised Duranty for reporting the food shortage with "unprecedented detail and vigor," the editors referred bluntly to the "menace of famine" where Duranty had spoken only of a food shortage. "The present food situation," they wrote, "is mainly the direct result of the Five-Year Plan and of the methods employed in putting it through.... The 'successful' collectivization campaign is of course a ghastly failure. It has brought Russia to the edge of famine."[35]

These harsh words invoked the immediate wrath of Moscow. Strang described the lowering of the axe in a confidential letter to Collier in December 1932. Duranty, who had been "waking up to the truth for some time" but had not yet "let the great American public into the secret," had circumvented the censor by sending an article "by safe hand" to Paris from where it was telegraphed to New York. Shortly after he was visited by high-ranking officials who "reproached him with unfaithfulness":

> How could he, who had been so fair for ten years, choose this moment to stab them in the back, when critical negotiations were taking place and when the prospects of recognition by the U.S.A. was brightening? What did he mean by it, and did he not realise that the consequences for himself might be serious. Let him take this warning. (19: 209-10)

The threat succeeded: for the remainder of his tour of duty in Moscow – and for many years after – Duranty sent out "party-line editorials disguised as news stories" and not only suppressed the information about the famine that he himself obtained, but also ridiculed those foreigners who had managed to get their reports past the Soviet censors.[36]

Until early 1933, when the full force of the famine struck Ukraine and the North Caucasus, foreign correspondents were able to travel there as they chose, although, as Cairns pointed out (5: 29), the censor did not always allow them to cable their findings to their papers. But when Malcolm Muggeridge ventured into the famine regions and then got his report past the censor by sending it out in a diplomatic bag, the Soviet authorities began to discourage journalists from leaving Moscow. Ovey reported the restriction to London on 5 March. A English visitor to the Kuban had described conditions "as appalling and as resembling an armed camp in a desert – no work no grain no cattle no draught horses, only idle peasants or soldiers." Muggeridge had been "strongly dissuaded" from visiting Ukraine, where conditions were just as bad although the apathy was greater. And all correspondents had been "advised" by the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to remain in Moscow. (22: 215) Eight days later Ovey informed Simon that the authorities were so alarmed at Western press reports that they had "strongly advised" foreign correspondents not to leave Moscow and had removed some "too curious visitors" from cities where conditions were "particularly bad." (24: 218)

Although the travel ban remained in effect all spring and summer, Western newspapers accepted it without protest and their reporters in Moscow did not report the restriction on their journalistic freedom for over six months. Only on 21 August did William Henry Chamberlin announce in the *Guardian* that he and his colleagues had been ordered not to leave the capital without submitting a detailed itinerary and obtaining authorization from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

> Your correspondent received personal evidence that this rule is no empty formality when he was refused permission today to visit country districts in Ukrainia and North Caucasus regions, which he visited several times in previous years without objection from the central or local authorities. This is not an isolated case of restriction, as your correspondent knows of an instance that occurred some time ago when two American correspondents were forbidden to visit Ukrainia... and several correspondents of various nationalities were warned not to leave Moscow without special permission.[37]

The *Manchester Guardian*, usually regarded by Moscow as one of its staunchest supporters, was prompted to observe editorially that although the grain harvest was "exceptionally good," foreign correspondents who wanted to look at it in Ukraine and the North Caucasus were being refused permission. "Whence this modesty? Since the achievements of the State and collective farms have been so great, why should they be refused their due publicity in the foreign press?... If now the Soviet Government refuses permission to responsible foreign correspondents who wish to visit the grain areas and report on the harvesting it must not be surprised if foreign opinion draws unfavourable inferences."[38]

The Soviet authorities swiftly responded to the criticism: in September 1933, when the new harvest was being brought in and the famine was beginning to taper off because the farmers were finally allowed to keep some of their crops, Moscow lifted the travel restrictions. Duranty, who could be expected to take the edge off the remarks of his more critical colleagues, and Stanley Richardson, of the Associated Press, were the first to be allowed to visit Ukraine and the North Caucasus. (49: 307) Strang summarized Duranty's findings for Simon on 25 September:

> According to Mr. Duranty, the population of the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga has decreased in the past year by 3 million, and the population of the Ukraine by 4-5 million....
>
> From Rostov Mr. Duranty went to Kharkov, and on the way he noticed that large quantities of grain were in evidence at the railway stations, of which a large proportion was lying in the open air. Conditions in Kharkov were worse than in Rostov. There was less to eat, and the people had evidently been on very short commons. There was a dearth of cattle and poultry. Supervision over visitors was also stricter in Kharkov. During the year the death rate in Kharkov was, he thought, not more than 10 per cent. above the normal. Numerous peasants, however, who had come into the towns had died off like flies....
>
> The Ukraine had been bled white. The population was exhausted, and if the peasants were "double-crossed" by the Government again no one could say what would happen...
>
> At Kharkov Mr. Duranty saw the Polish consul, who told him the following story: A Communist friend employed in the Control Commission was surprised at not getting reports from a certain locality. He went out to see for himself, and on arrival he found the village completely deserted. Most of the houses were standing empty, while others contained only corpses....
>
> Mr. Duranty thinks it quite possible that as many as 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union during the past year.

The report was printed for distribution to the King, the Cabinet and the Dominions, and Vansittart minuted that the estimate of ten million dead was "horrifying," particularly because it came from Duranty. (50: 310-13) The figure of ten million that Duranty had given to Strang did not appear in any of his books or articles.[39]

Another important actor in the Soviet cover-up was Edouard Herriot, chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the French Chamber of Deputies and one-time prime minister, who made a well-publicized two weeks' tour of the Soviet Union in late August and early September 1933. Arriving by ship in Odessa, he travelled to Kiev and Kharkiv in Ukraine and Rostov in the North Caucasus. At every stop he visited scientific institutes, museums, factories, cathedrals, orphanages and collective farms, where lunches prepared from the local produce were invariably served. He was, of course, being shown Potemkin villages, and many Ukrainians would describe later how the streets of their cities were cleared of famine victims, whether dead or alive; priests who had been arrested during an anti-religious campaign were dragged out of prison to serve Mass; children in orphanages were served meals of chicken and rice that were taken away immediately after Herriot's party had left; and actors were issued folk costumes to play the part of contented collective farmers. From the Soviet point of view, the trip was an unqualified success. Photographed and filmed at every stage of his trip, Herriot waxed enthusiastic to the reporters who were following him about the collectivization of agriculture and, without bothering to reveal that the purpose of his mission was to persuade Moscow to buy industrial goods from France rather than from Germany, denounced all talk of famine as Nazi propaganda. Everything he had seen in the USSR was "splendid," *Pravda* was able to quote him as saying. "He categorically refuted the lie of the bourgeois press about famine in the Soviet Union."[40]

The British were not taken in. "The red carpet which the Soviet Government spread before the feet of its distinguished guests has now become proverbial," Coote confided to London, "and on this occasion the Soviet authorities were at pains to see that the carpet was of extra width, of splendid texture, of the deepest pile and most carefully brushed." In Ukraine, Coote went on, "undesirable elements" had been removed from the streets and railway stations, and clothes and food rations were issued to the townspeople. The Foreign Office concurred. Herriot seemed "surprisingly gullible" and even informed journalists that the reports of famine in Ukraine were "gross libels," though this could be explained by "the methods of deception practised on him." (47: 301-2) And when Herriot capped his trip with a series of articles lauding Soviet achievements, Shone noted that "Herriot ridicules the stories which have been

current that the Soviet authorities only allowed him to see what was good during his recent visit to Russia; and says that they, like the stories about famine in the Soviet Union, are part of Hitler's propaganda for the establishment of an independent Ukraine." The articles, Collier remarked, threw "more light on the mind of M. Herriot than on the situation in Russia!" (61: 357)

On the whole, however, the cover-up was remarkably successful. Anyone talking about the famine abroad was branded as a Nazi sympathizer or a tsarist reactionary. As an embassy dispatch put it, "Soviet organizations can now do anything they like in or outside of the Soviet Union, as the majority of educated and responsible opinion in Europe and America is simply incredulous of any criticism of the Soviet Union, Soviet decency or good faith."[41] The success was due, in no small measure, to London's willingness to abet Moscow.

How did London respond to the famine?

Although many observers of the Soviet Union, as we have seen, were predicting starvation by 1930, a relief campaign got under way only in the summer of 1933, when the famine was almost over. On 24 August, L. B. Golden, the general secretary of the Save the Children Fund, turned to the Foreign Office for advice. He had been receiving reports about the famine from both the press and private letters. Yet the Soviet embassy in London had assured him that the harvest was a "bumper one." The fund had no intention of embarrassing the British government by issuing an appeal for donations after the Soviet government had denied the existence of famine, but Golden thought that Moscow might be forced to acknowledge it during the coming winter and asked for an opportunity to discuss the matter with someone familiar with the question. The Foreign Office urged the fund to remain silent. "The line to take," Shone recommended, "is that, while information available here tends to confirm that famine conditions exist in some parts of Russia, there can be no question of issuing an appeal unless & until the Soviet authorities admit that conditions merit such assistance." (44: 288) No such admission ever came. Instead, at the end of the year Soviet President Mikhail Kalinin attacked the organizations that had tried to provide relief. "Political impostors ask contributions for the 'starving' of Ukraine," he orated. "Only degraded disintegrating classes can produce such cynical elements."[42]

The first of the numerous appeals that the Foreign Office was to receive came from the European Federation of Ukrainians Abroad, in Brussels, which in September 1933 asked London to urge the Soviet government

to permit a relief operation.[43] The plea was not answered. "While the deplorable account which it gives of conditions in Ukraine is no doubt largely true," Shone minuted, "it is anti-Soviet in complexion and I presume that we can only ignore its appeal." Howe concurred. "As long as the Soviet Govt. continue to deny the existence of famine conditions in the Ukraine & N. Caucasus they will certainly refuse to accept any representation of the kind suggested by this Organisation." (52: 321)

In July 1933, Ukrainians in Western Ukraine, which was then a part of Poland, formed a committee to organize relief for Soviet Ukraine.[44] In September the committee sent delegates to Geneva to lobby the League of Nations, the highest international body in the inter-war period, to place the famine on its agenda. Ukrainians in Canada and the United States, the delegates announced, were ready to donate food to their starving brothers, if the League would make it possible to distribute the food under international supervision. The chances of getting the League to place the famine on the agenda were slim: the League's charter forbade it to discuss issues that concerned non-members or to become involved in the "internal affairs" of any state. And, indeed, the Council of the League at first refused to consider the appeal. Fortunately for the Ukrainians, the president of the Council was the Norwegian diplomat Johan Mowinckel. As the representative of a small country that was not involved in the great-power game and was proud of the tradition of humanitarian aid established by Fritjof Nansen, who had organized the League's relief campaign for Russia during the famine of 1921, Mowinckel circumvented the procedural restrictions by submitting the Ukrainian appeal not to a full meeting of the Council but to what was described, with fastidious delicacy, as a private consultation between members of the Council. After a long and heated discussion – some members were reluctant to turn down a humanitarian proposal – the Council decided to tell the petitioners that the only course open to them was an appeal to the International Red Cross. The advice was of no practical use. The Red Cross promptly asked Moscow whether it would allow a relief operation in Ukraine, and Moscow replied, with equal alacrity, that no relief was needed because there was no famine. When the British delegation to Geneva, which had not supported the petition in the Council, forwarded to London the papers that Mowinckel had circulated, the Foreign Office concluded that "in the circumstances, no other action at Geneva was possible, & none seems possible here." (53: 328)

Having failed to persuade the League of Nations to take action, Ukrainians began to search for allies among influential Britons. In September and October 1933 representatives of the Save the Children Fund,

the Federation of Jewish Relief Organizations and the Society of Friends, as well as several Ukrainians who had been in Geneva, met in London to discuss how they might organize relief. On 27 October, a delegation consisting of Ethel Christie and Alice Nike, both experienced Quaker relief workers, and Colonel Cecil Malone, a prominent Labour MP, visited Collier in the hope of enlisting the British government's help in persuading Moscow to allow a relief mission to enter Ukraine. Collier dismissed their plea as the importunings of ignorant and impractical do-gooders. He argued that the Soviet government was now prepared to admit that "something like a famine" had existed in Ukraine until a month or two before, but was claiming that it was capable of dealing with the situation. Moreover, the Soviet government would not allow any foreign organization to conduct relief in the USSR. But the chief obstruction was the Ukrainian involvement with the scheme. "Anything to do with Ukrainian nationalism at the present moment was like a red rag to a bull to the Soviet authorities," said Collier, and the involvement of several prominent Ukrainians, among them the director of the Ukrainian Bureau, in the scheme "would in itself be enough to damn it from their point of view. In these circumstances I could not hold out any hope that H.M.G. would interest themselves in the scheme in any way." (54: 329)[45]

Ukrainian Canadians were not far behind their European compatriots in the effort to draw attention to the famine. In October 1933, the Ukrainian National Council in Canada, which had just been formed in Winnipeg, turned to Prime Minister MacDonald. Thousands of letters were reaching Canada from Ukraine, the council wrote. The systematic starvation of the population was caused not by crop failure, but by the policy of confiscating grain. Could MacDonald arrange "an immediate neutral investigation of the famine situation in Ukraine, with a view to organizing international relief"?[46] After a pro forma consultation with the Dominions Office, the Foreign Office instructed the British high commissioner in Ottawa to dismiss the appeal. In February 1934, many months after the worst of the famine was over, the high commissioner replied to the Ukrainian National Council by repeating almost word for word the text drafted in London: "His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are unable to undertake any action with a view to investigating conditions in territories under the control of the Soviet Government, or to organizing relief for the inhabitants in the absence of any indication that such action would be acceptable to the Soviet Government." (56: 339-47)

In Britain, undaunted by the government's coolness, the Federation of Jewish Relief Organizations, the Society of Friends and the Save the

Children Fund agreed in December 1933 to establish a joint relief committee. To be known as the "United British Appeal," the committee would raise money to purchase food for the starving through Torgsin, the Soviet shops in which food was available, even at the height of the famine, to those who could pay with hard currency or gold. Forwarding the committee's draft constitution to the Foreign Office, Malone asked about Whitehall's opinion of the Ukrainian Bureau in London, with which the committee planned to co-operate. The government again discouraged relief. The chief activity of the bureau, Collier complained, was the issue of bulletins in which it protested against the treatment of Ukrainians in Poland and the Soviet Union. In view of the bureau's attitude towards two governments with which Britain was in "normal relations," the Foreign Office did "not have much to do with it." (58: 351)

In the summer of 1933, as the famine in Ukraine and the North Caucasus was abating, Ewald Ammende began his own campaign to aid the victims of the famine. In letters to newspapers he urged the formation of an international relief committee. Shortly after, an "Interconfessional and International Relief Committee for the Famine Areas in the Soviet Union" was established. Ammende, who had done much to rouse public opinion to the famine of 1921, became the committee's secretary general.[47] He soon tried to take his campaign to Germany. The Nazi government, he later told the Foreign Office, had discouraged him because it did not want its relations with the Soviet Union worsened. (68: 388) Was German-Soviet antagonism at this time as serious as it is sometimes made out to be? Did the Wilhelmsstraße want good relations because Moscow had borrowed vast amounts to finance industrialization? Or did Berlin support Ammende for the purpose of anti-Soviet propaganda, as one of these documents suggests? (65: 374)

In May 1934, together with Fritz Dittloff, the former manager of the German concession Drusag in the North Caucasus,[48] Ammende extended his relief campaign to Britain. On 16 May, Ammende and Dittloff visited Collier at the Foreign Office. Ammende explained that his mission in England was to arouse public opinion so that pressure could be put on the Soviet government to alleviate the famine by allowing relief or taking its own measures. He had already interviewed prominent people who had "shown themselves sympathetic but had been anxious to make sure that he was not contemplating a political movement against the Soviet Government." Ammende had assured them that he had no such intention. Indeed, when the Duchess of Atholl (who had arranged the interview at the Foreign Office) had suggested a boycott of Soviet grain, Ammende had rejected the idea because it would introduce "political prejudice" into the case.

Dittloff, when it was his turn to speak, described the situation in Ukraine and the North Caucasus: the government was deporting villagers to Siberia or was driving them into the wilderness to starve. This "wholesale deportation and expulsion," which was being used for both economic and political reasons, had diminished the population of the North Caucasus in two years by two million persons. The reduction in the population of Ukraine must have been proportionate. Ammende then said that he had come to lay the facts before the British government and to determine whether it objected to his campaign. Whitehall did not presume to encourage or discourage any purely humanitarian movement, Collier replied. Being, "rightly or wrongly, in normal relations with the Soviet government," it would not help Ammende. On the other hand, it would not prevent him from holding public meetings or publishing articles. In conclusion Ammende asked whether Britain, as a member of the League of Nations Council, could make its vote for admission of the Soviet Union to the League "conditional on some assurances on matters of humanitarian concern, such as famine relief." Collier deftly brushed the question away. It had no actuality at present, he explained. If a member of the Council did propose to admit the Soviet Union, it would probably be France, and the question should therefore be posed to the Quai d'Orsay. Ammende replied diplomatically that this was the answer that he had expected, and he and Dittloff left, "apparently much relieved that no obstacles were to be placed in the way of their campaign." (68: 387-89)

Collier was not entirely straightforward when he assured Ammende of his government's neutrality on the question of a relief campaign. In private interviews with charitable organizations and such dignitaries as the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Reverend J. H. Rushbrooke, the general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, the Foreign Office had repeatedly advised them not to take part in Ammende's campaign. Just a day before his meeting with Ammende, Collier had had a visit from Ethel Christie, the treasurer of the Russian Assistance Fund, as the reconstituted United British Appeal was now known. Mrs. Christie explained that she had been sending parcels through Torgsin to people in Ukraine whose names she knew. Now Ammende and other persons who were interested both in famine relief and in propaganda to enlighten the public about conditions in the Soviet Union were urging her to join with them in a series of public meetings. Mrs. Christie felt uneasy when she saw how little people knew about the true state of affairs and had come to ask for advice on what to say to Ammende. Collier made it clear that she should shun publicity. As a government official, he minuted, he had told her that he could not encourage propaganda against a

government with which Britain maintained "normal relations." He could, however, explain the situation as he saw it:

> ...her course of action depended upon which of two alternative objects she wished to aim at – either to relieve individual suffering or to arouse public opinion here to a realisation of the general conditions which had produced that suffering – for in present circumstances the two objects were unfortunately incompatible. As far as I could see, there was no likelihood that any amount of agitation in this country would alter the present agricultural policy of the Soviet Government which had brought about these famine conditions, while there was every likelihood that such agitation would cause the Soviet Government to interfere with her present relief work. (67: 385)

Food parcels to people in the Soviet Union through the Torgsins were acceptable, Collier was saying. Publicity, which would antagonize the Soviet government and endanger Soviet trade with Britain, was not. Whitehall practiced the same policy of silence when the question of the famine was raised in the House of Commons. On 2 July 1934, Sir Waldron Smithers asked whether the foreign secretary had any information about the economic situation in the Soviet Union and the extent of the famine in the past year. Collier set about furnishing a reply that would give away as little as possible:

> The truth of the matter is, of course, that we have a certain amount of information about famine conditions in the south of Russia similar to what has appeared in the press, and that there is no obligation on us not to make it public. We do not want to make it public, however, because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced.... We cannot give this explanation in public. (71: 397)

Simon went into the House armed with a suitably disingenuous reply: "I have no recent information on the subject suitable for answering this question beyond what has already appeared in the Press."[49]

Shortly after, drawing on information provided by Muggeridge and Ammende, Lord Charnwood gave notice that he would be raising the matter in the House of Lords. According to information circulated in England, he wrote, Moscow had caused widespread starvation in the grain-producing areas. Did the British government have information to confute this allegation? The reply that the Foreign Office prepared for use in Parliament substituted prolixity, as Anthony Eden described the politics of the day,[50] for conviction:

1. It is not His Majesty's Government's business to enter into controversy on the subject of the internal affairs of foreign countries; their information is not collected for this purpose and there are, therefore, no papers suitable for laying which bear on Lord Charnwood's arguments on the subject of living conditions and food supplies in the Soviet Union.

2. His Majesty's Government are familiar with the information published about food supplies and conditions in the agricultural districts of the Soviet Union which have doubtless given rise to Lord Charnwood's question.... His Majesty's Government have no material for contradicting this information except what has been published through Soviet official sources which is generally available and upon which people can form their own opinions.

3. If it is unavoidable to enter into the substance of Lord Charnwood's allegations, it might be pointed out that apart from facts, Lord Charnwood has made judgments of cause and effect. His Majesty's Government have no reasons to defend Soviet economic policy, which, as a policy of control and planning, is presumably more responsible than any other Government's policy for conditions in the country in which it is practised, whatever people's judgments of those conditions may be. But there is no information to support Lord Charnwood's apparent suggestion that the Soviet Government have pursued a policy of deliberate impoverishment of agricultural districts of their country, whether or not their policy is considered to have had that effect.

4. The diversion of supplies from the countryside for whatever purpose naturally leaves less available for the producers, but His Majesty's Government have no information to bear out the arguments of Lord Charnwood in which he emphasised the effect of particular measures in this respect. (74: 420-21)

In a covering note, J. M. K. Vyvyan, the author of these exquisitely worded equivocations, explained that Charnwood had put the government in the position of "either defending the internal policy of the Soviet Government, which we have no reason for doing, or making unfavourable statements about conditions in the Soviet Union, which are also open to objection, however richly they are deserved." Yes, Soviet policy had had a "deplorable effect" in the agricultural regions of the Soviet Union and grain had been exported when starvation existed. Nevertheless, Vyvyan concluded, it was preferable "to deal with the facts behind Lord Charnwood's arguments as little as possible." (74: 418-19) The subsequent debate in the House of Lords, which took place on 25 July

1934, was fruitless. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Earl of Denbigh supported Charnwood, but government members tried to block the discussion first on points of parliamentary procedure (the undesirability of discussing the internal affairs of another country), and then on the grounds that those who wanted to talk about the famine in Ukraine were not noticeably eager to examine oppression in Germany or poverty in England. The greatest obstacle, however, was the government's insistence, enunciated by Lord Stanhope, the parliamentary under-secretary of state for foreign affairs, that it had no information about the famine beyond what had been published. Little could be gained by questioning Whitehall's foreign policy, and Charnwood withdrew his motion.[51]

Whitehall was less reluctant to deal with the facts about the famine when British imperial interests were at stake. In June 1932 the Foreign Office provided information about the impending famine to the British ambassador in Afghanistan. (4: 27) Two years later, at the same time as the government was denying in Parliament that it had any information about the famine, C. C. Garbett, a British civil servant in India, was complaining to Vansittart that Communists were subverting the peasants of the Punjab. Did London have any figures about the famine – how many people had perished, how many homeless children there were, what the cost of food was – that could be used to counter this subversion? In reply, the Foreign Office forwarded ten of the most revealing dispatches that it had received from Moscow, among them the accounts of Duranty's and Chamberlin's visits to Ukraine and the North Caucasus. Collier explained that the statistics Garbett sought were not available – the Soviets had not published any figures on famine mortality, and they put obstacles in the way of people who tried to compile such figures – but the dispatches threw "a lurid light" on living conditions and provided estimates of the number of people who had perished in 1933. Two months later, Garbett thanked Collier for the dispatches, which had supplied exactly what he had needed. "Now, thanks to you, I have the facts and greater confidence in our own counter-measures," Garbett wrote. The documents, he continued, would be treated with the secrecy Collier desired: "I am not keeping any copy of this letter – merely the reference – and the shorthand notes will be burnt." (70: 393-96)

The dyspeptic efforts to provide at least a modicum of relief dragged on for another year. In late August 1934, the Duchess of Atholl, the most persistent British lobbyist for the famine victims,[52] forwarded to the Foreign Office a memorandum by Dittloff, as well statements by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Reverend Rushbrooke, and again asked whether British consent to the Soviet Union's entry into the League of Nations could be made conditional on the cessation of food exports and

the permission of famine relief, particularly since, as the Duchess argued, the Soviet government might now be more willing to admit the famine than it had been a year or two ago. Simon's reply was polite but firm. He could not confirm the Duchess's view that the Soviet Union was more disposed to allow relief work, and he feared that Soviet membership in the League of Nations could not be linked to internal policy. Any such attempt, he reasoned, "would result in the abandonment by the Soviet Government of their candidature and the consequent sacrifice of the international objects which we believe that Soviet membership would serve, without any advantage being secured." (75: 422-24)

James Alexander Lovat-Fraser, a Labour MP from Lichfield, raised one last question about the famine in Parliament. Could the attention of the League of Nations, he asked on 28 November 1934, be drawn to the position of women in the Soviet Union, particularly in Ukraine and the North Caucasus, where over three million were reported to have died of starvation the previous winter? Speaight prepared a draft reply for Eden: "The position is that membership of the League imposes upon the Soviet Government no special obligation to organise effective measures to prevent famine.... We have thus no *locus standi* for bringing this matter to the notice of the League." Eden's reply in the House was in the same spirit: "His Majesty's Government have no *locus standi* for bringing such a matter to the notice of the League."[53]

Early in 1935, Ammende renewed his campaign in England. On 14 February, after a conference in London at which he talked to churchmen about the threat of a new famine and the need to avoid a repetition of the catastrophe of 1933, the Reverend Rushbrooke saw Simon to express his fears about "the spread of famine actual and prospective" in Ukraine. The discussion produced no results, and Simon merely promised to ask Chilston for more information. Chilston had already argued that British relief committees should cease their efforts because the continued Soviet exports of grain proved that there was no famine. (76: 425) "I think it most improbable that a famine on the scale of 1933, or anything like it, is to be expected," Chilston wrote now. "The 1934 harvest was probably about the same as that of 1933; and grain exports were 16% less than in 1933, in which year they were small enough.... As to the reaction of the Soviet Government to any relief, I am still of the opinion... that they might regard any offer as an insult to their internal organisation. They certainly, in any case, would not facilitate relief." (80: 435)

A month later, when Eden, then Lord Privy Seal, was preparing to visit Moscow to discuss European security, British churches again approached the Foreign Office to explain the difficulties they encountered when they tried to send food and medication to the Soviet Union.

The churches had drawn up a list of points for London to press in its negotiations with Moscow – abolishing duties on parcels of food, medication and warm clothing, for example – but Rushbrooke presented the list almost apologetically. He was seeking information, not requesting action, and he would be grateful if Eden simply mentioned the matter to the British ambassador. Eden took the churches' points to Moscow, where his party was greeted by large crowds waving Soviet flags and somewhat inaccurate versions of the Union Jack and where he became the first Western statesman to gain an interview with Stalin, but he did not discuss the points even with the ambassador, let alone Stalin. (81: 437-39) The *communiqué* issued to mark the talks spoke of Anglo-Soviet relations in fulsome terms. There was no "conflict of interest" between Britain and the Soviet Union on any major issue. Both powers recognized the advantage of maintaining the other's "prosperity and integrity," and the talks had created "a firm foundation... for the friendly co–operation of the two countries in the general work for the collective organization of peace and security."[54] With a series of meticulously worded generalizations and evasions Whitehall had killed the British relief campaign for Ukraine. "Other peoples may be and are rougher and more cruel," Edward Crankshaw has written. "Other bureaucracies are no less lacking heart; but the particular inhumanity of British officialdom seems to lie in the fact that it brings to its more disgraceful behaviour that flavour of high-minded, distant, chilly holiness, which is also a feature of British justice at its best."[55]

Why did the Foreign Office, if it was receiving such detailed and reliable reports about mass starvation, refuse to do anything? Several reasons can be suggested for the British government's silence. There was, to begin with, what one historian calls "the nineteenth-century tradition of mediation and non-involvement as the ideal attitude towards other people's affairs."[56] But such neutrality, if looked at more closely, reveals partiality towards one side. Like diplomats everywhere, the Foreign Office assumed that it should recognize any government that does what a government is supposed to do. Since it enjoyed "normal relations" with the Soviet Union, the British government could not encourage those who were saying that that government was starving people to death. The Foreign Office thus treated the Ukrainians in Galicia, Western Europe and North America who tried to draw attention to the famine and to argue the case for Ukrainian independence from the Soviet Union and Poland with a distinct coolness – or even hostility.

Behind this lay another assumption, one derived from Anglo-American pragmatism: since the Soviet government wielded effective power, since the Soviet experiment looked as if it would last, it was not only

legal but worthy of respect. Chilston clearly shared this assumption when, in reporting to Simon on the Seventeenth Party Congress (known as "the Congress of Victors," at which Stalin celebrated his victory over the peasants) in February 1934, he wrote that although he did not like the self-glorification, cant and bombast that the Bolsheviks indulged in, he was impressed by their achievements:

> ...the Soviet Government have reason to feel that the efforts which they have made to impress the world have borne fruit, and that they have reached a position from which they can demonstrate to all but the wilfully blind that the new Russia has come to stay. The U.S.S.R. seems to be succeeding better than most countries in their method of carrying out a policy of self-sufficiency and of national security.... Of all the Governments of the world, the Soviet Government have the most comprehensive grasp of their economic resources and possibilities. They desire peace in which to consolidate their position, and they wish that other countries, instead of concerning themselves with the philosophic bases of bolshevism, would recognise that the Bolshevik economic system is going to last and accept Communist Russia as a fact.[57]

The Soviet Union, Whitehall had begun to think, might even be a partner against the country that it saw as the real threat to Britain – Nazi Germany. In 1932 C. H. Bateman was genuinely shocked by Cairns's account of starvation in Western Siberia, Kazakhstan and the Volga region. It would be "an act of humanity," he wrote, "for the Empire at least to make up its mind to exclude Russian wheat from its markets until we can be satisfied that the conditions in Russia are such that it would be impossible for Mr. Cairns to paint another picture such as this." (5: 77) In early 1933, by contrast, the embassy's reports of even more fearful conditions left the Foreign Office cold, and in late 1933, when the Western relief campaign got underway, the Foreign Office viewed pleas for help as a political embarrassment and refused to take action or even to confirm that it had evidence of famine conditions. The change of attitude was brought about by Hitler's accession to power in January 1933. From then on the great question confronting British statesmen was what relations they ought to seek with Germany and the Soviet Union or, to put the question in ideological terms, how to deal with fascism and communism. For Whitehall, the choice in 1933 was clear. Hitler spoke of expansion and conquest; Stalin of peace and co-operation. Berlin threatened the world; Moscow menaced only its own peasant masses. Germany was just across the channel; the Soviet Union lay at the far end of the continent. "When you think of the defence of England

you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover," Stanley Baldwin said in the House of Commons. "You think of the Rhine. That is where our frontier lies."[58]

Two of the most active advocates of better relations with the Soviet Union were Vansittart and Collier. Until the spring of 1933 Vansittart's feelings for the régime in Moscow were dislike for its anti-British propaganda and contempt for the disparity between lofty Soviet pretensions and sordid Soviet deeds. The Metropolitan-Vickers trial had briefly renewed diplomatic tension between Moscow and London, but as soon as the British prisoners were released, Vansittart and Collier began to craft a campaign to support French plans to bring the Soviet Union into the League of Nations and to make of it an ally against Germany. By July 1933 Vansittart had made up his mind that Nazism was more dangerous for Britain than Communism. "It does not help us," he wrote to Simon,

> to compare the internal excesses of Hitlerism with those of Bolshevism: the latter of course are vastly greater at present. But that is beside the point. We cannot take the same detached and highbrow view of Hitlerism as we can of Bolshevism or Fascism, precisely because these are not really and vitally dangerous to us, and Hitlerism *is* exceedingly dangerous. Fascism has never presented the least danger to this country, and Russia has been too incompetent a country to be really dangerous, even under Bolshevism. But Germany is an exceedingly competent country, and she is visibly being prepared to external aggression. I do not think that anything but evil and danger for the rest of the world can come out of Hitlerism, whichever way the dice fall in Germany.[59]

Collier had a similar view. "I believe that it is important for us and for France," he wrote in January 1936, "to cultivate good relations with the Soviet Government in view both of the German menace in Europe and of the Japanese menace in the Far East; and I do not believe that it is either possible or desirable to attempt to reverse our present policy by coming to an understanding with Germany at the expense of Russia."[60]

And so the famine was caught in the cross-fire of the great battle between fascism and communism and never managed to rouse the public to action or to become established in the minds of men as a historical event.[61]

Yet the diplomatic concerns, pressing though they were for the makers of British foreign policy, also served a classic ideological function – they were screening other interests and motives. For the most important reason for the British government's silence was economic: it saw the Soviet

Union as a profitable market for the exports of its beleaguered industries and as a source of cheap food with which to feed its disgruntled populace. Paul Scheffer described the British desire for Soviet markets in July 1926. The Foreign Office, the Bank of England, the City, and allied die-hards all believed that England and Europe would not be able to emerge from their difficulties unless the Soviet Union again became a "natural market" that Europe could exploit. "A lavish opening of Russian business," wrote Scheffer, "is an absolute and unavoidable necessity for Europe – the fact is becoming more and more apparent every day."[62]

The steady growth of Anglo-Soviet trade in the mid-1920s was interrupted by the Conservatives' break in official relations with Moscow in May 1927. The Soviet Union responded by minimizing purchases in Britain: of total Soviet orders for machinery and metal products placed abroad from 1926 to 1936 (72 per cent of all Soviet imports in that period), the United States received 34.1 per cent, Germany 19.1 per cent and Britain only 4.4 per cent. Under competitive conditions, each country would have received about 20 per cent of the total. At the same time the Soviets maintained their sales to Britain at as high a level as possible, thereby shifting the balance of Anglo-Soviet trade in their favour. It was for this reason that Ovey wrote in a letter to Henderson in March 1930 that the encouraging of British exports to the Soviet Union was a "pressing matter." Britain's policy, he gathered, was "to maintain correct and friendly relations with the Soviet Government, with a view to encouraging trade as much as possible." Ovey then discussed ways of increasing exports to the Soviet Union. "That we buy commodities from Russia," he wrote, "arises principally from the fact that it is the cheapest market." The Soviet ability to buy from Britain depended on its ability to sell to Britain. "The more Russia sells to us the more she should be sympathetically inclined *ceteris paribus* to buy from us," Ovey concluded.[63]

What the Soviet Union was selling to Britain, of course, was grain. Of the average annual exports of 142 million bushels of wheat from Russia in 1908-12, only 27.7 million had gone to Britain. In 1931-32, 51.4 million bushels of the total wheat exports of 65.7 million bushels went to Britain. In 1930-31 and 1932-33, Britain imported 40 per cent of her wheat from the USSR as compared with less than 20 per cent in pre-war days. To put it a different way, in 1926 Britain's imports of Soviet wheat amounted to only £1,493,728. By 1930 the value had increased to £5,751,955, and wheat was the single largest item imported from the Soviet Union.[64] In the first three or four months of the 1931 harvest season alone, Cairns pointed out, the Soviet Union sold to Britain

about half of all the wheat she exported. (10: 122) Between 1929 and 1933 the British market absorbed an average of 25 per cent (by value) of annual Soviet exports and 40 per cent of Soviet grain.[65]

The British government's wish to assure continuing exports of Soviet wheat was not motivated solely by a desire to keep the MacDonald government in office by feeding the people in the breadlines and making Manchester manufacturers happy. Moscow had borrowed a great deal of money in the West, especially in Germany, to finance its industrialization, and it could repay its loans only by selling grain. The Soviets were financing their programme of industrialization with short-term loans which they paid off by exporting wheat. Between 1926 and 1930 Britain lent between thirty and forty million pounds to Germany. The Germans kept a percentage for themselves and passed the credits on to the Soviet Union, which used them to purchase goods, principally heavy machinery, in Germany. Britain was thus financing Germany's export trade with the Soviet Union.[66] A serious public campaign to alleviate the famine by returning the grain to those who needed it most would, therefore, have brought about a reduction of Soviet grain exports, and that, in turn, would have upset the international banking system, in which London had such a great stake.[67]

These documents, then, support the thesis that Britain kept quiet about the famine for several reasons. There was the indifference that is the usual response to a catastrophe in a remote and little known land. There was the misleading and sometimes simply mendacious reporting that confused the public and prevented the few who were genuinely concerned from mounting an effective campaign. There was the effect of Nazi propaganda, which cited the famine as an example of the "Bolshevik menace" and thus discredited Ukrainian aspirations for independence for decades to come. Above all, there was a desire not to disrupt trade with the Soviet Union. Cheap wheat was more important than human life. It was a decade, Vansittart observed in his memoirs, when it was fashionable to do nothing.[68] Humanitarian duty was irrelevant. Starved by their rulers, the Ukrainians nonetheless had no claim upon British compassion. The Soviet authorities had done all they could to conceal the facts. The British had chosen, with equal determination, not to see what they did not want to see.[69]

*The Foreign Office referred – interchangeably and often misleadingly – to famine in "Ukraine," "South Russia," "Russia" and the "Soviet Union." The political geography of the famine of 1932-1933 is still poorly understood. And little progress has been made in determining

how many victims the famine claimed. Estimates by observers – the reader will find some of them in these documents – range from one to ten million (and in one case even fifteen million) victims. The range of present-day calculations is only slightly narrower, although many scholars speak of a figure between five and eight million. The difficulty, of course, lies in the absence of reliable data. The first Soviet census, held in 1926, gave a detailed picture of the population before collectivization, famine and purges began to take their toll. But the results of the next census, held in 1937, never appeared in print, apparently because they would have revealed a population of 158 million, about 10 per cent less than could have been expected given a normal rate of increase.[70] A new census, taken in 1939, was published in the form of less than ten pages of tables.[71]

We therefore drew on the Soviet census of 1959 – the first full census after the famine – to estimate the intensity of population losses in Ukraine and adjacent regions.[72] Following Sergei Maksudov, we restricted our calculations to the rural female cohort because of its "quasi-stable" nature, thus avoiding the problems of the volatile mortality rate among men and the greater geographic mobility of rural men and urban men and women.[73] By comparing the number of rural women born between 1929 and 1933 with the number born between 1934 and 1938 we were able to calculate rates of decline, which include mortality, especially that of infants and foetuses not carried to term or aborted, and failure to conceive because of prevailing conditions. Having calculated a mean for the western Ukrainian regions annexed in 1939 and for the RSFSR regions adjacent to Ukraine, we standardized the rates of decline for the regions located within Soviet Ukraine before 1939. We then arranged these rates of decline according to rank, grouped them in the table below to show both the regional intensities and their territorial character and then plotted the data on the map headed "Geography of the 1932-33 Famine." Of the other two maps, "Ukraine in Europe" shows the Ukrainian SSR at the time of the famine. "The Chernozem Belt" indicates the region of fertile black earth that runs through central Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the Volga region.

The conclusions that can be drawn from the table and maps are clear. First, no region of Ukraine within the pre-1939 borders entirely escaped the famine. Even the Proskuriv/Khmelnytskyi region, the only area within Soviet Ukraine before 1939 that shows a zero rate of decline, had famine losses, although they did not affect the comparative size of the generations.[74] Second, Moldavia, Belorussia and the Russian regions immediately to the north of Ukraine did not experience significant rates of decline, although their climate, soil and agriculture are similar to those

in adjacent regions of Ukraine. Third, declines were greatest in central Ukraine and the North Caucasus, where there were extensive Ukrainian settlements.[75] Fourth, the areas of greatest decline coincide with the fertile chernozem belt. The famine was less severe in the podzolized soil regions of the forest steppe, the intrazonal regions and the chestnut soil regions along the Black Sea.[76] This suggests that the famine was the result of a decision to extract from the most fertile regions of Ukraine and the North Caucasus the maximum amount of grain in order to finance industrialization. The famine, in other words, was not a natural phenomenon but a politically engineered cataclysm.

Rates of Decline in the Rural Female Cohort of 1929-1933

	Region or Republic	Rate of Decline
25% or more	Cherkasy	34.0
	Dnipropetrovsk	33.1
	Kiev	32.4
	Kirovohrad	32.4
	Voroshylovhrad/Luhansk	32.4
	Krasnodar	32.1
	Kharkiv	30.1
	Zaporizhia	27.4
20-24.9%	Poltava	24.5
	Kherson	24.5
	Stavropol	23.6
	Mykolaiv	23.6
	Crimea	21.7
	Rostov	20.8
15-19.9%	Saratov	19.8
	Stalino/Donetsk	18.9
	Odessa	17.0
	Volgograd	16.9
	Zhytomyr	16.0
	Sumy	16.0
1-14.9%	Vinnytsia	11.3
	Chernivtsi	6.6
	Chernihiv	4.7
	Rivne	4.7
	Belorussian S.S.R.	3.8
	Belgorod	3.8

	Stanyslaviv/Ivano-Frankivsk	2.8
	Lipetsk	1.9
0% or less	Proskuriv/Khmelnytskyi	0
	Moldavian S.S.R.	0
	Lutsk	0
	Lviv	0
	Tambov	0
	Kalmyk A.S.S.R.	0
	Ternopil	− 0.9
	Kursk	− 0.9
	Orel	− 1.9
	Voronezh	− 4.7
	Briansk	− 7.5

* A word on the editing of this collection. The italicized titles appear on the jackets attached to the documents by the Foreign Office. We have reprinted most of the documents in their entirety, not making any changes except to translate those that were written in French and to standardize the punctuation. Titles of periodicals, for example, are printed in italics rather than enclosed in quotation marks. In the case of the minutes, however, we have printed only substantive remarks and deleted most references to such administrative matters as the forwarding of documents to particular officials or departments. We have indicated omissions by suspension points in square brackets – [....] – to distinguish them from the suspension points that occur in the original texts. Editorial interpolations are printed in italics within square brackets. Illegible words are indicated by [*illeg.*]. Footnotes and marginalia appear as footnotes and our own comments as notes on pp. 453-461. We have not corrected the varied English spellings or systematized the erratic transliteration of Ukrainian and Russian names. In the index, however, we have cross-referenced variants to spellings based on a standard transliteration. To help the reader identify the numerous government officials, diplomats, politicians and journalists whose names appear in the text, we have added brief explanations to many of the entries in the index. The documents are reprinted by permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The originals may be consulted at the Public Record Office, Kew Gardens, Surrey, England.

Constantine Zelenko drew some of the documents at the Public Record Office to our attention. Mykhaylo Dobrianskyj, Yarko Koshiw of the University of Glasgow, Taras Kuzio, Bohdan Nahaylo and Professor Ron Vastokas of Trent University helped to obtain documents. Alex-

ander Babyonyshev (Sergei Maksudov) of Boston University allowed us to draw on his research and vetted our maps, as did Professors Leszek Kosinski of the University of Alberta and Paul Robert Magocsi of the University of Toronto. Mrs. Andrew Cairns, Alan and Andrew Cairns, Knowlton Nash and Mrs. Elena Sweeton supplied us with information about Andrew Cairns. Marta Horban-Carynnyk of the University of Toronto translated the documents that were written in French. The Canada Council, the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, the Multiculturalism Directorate of the Secretary of State and the Ukrainian Famine Research Committee supported Mr. Carynnyk's research. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada assisted Dr. Luciuk with a post-doctoral fellowship. Ms. Alexandra Chyczij, Dr. Oleh Romanyshyn and Dr. Walter Zaryckyj gave us encouragement. Mykola Bartkiw, Bohdan Fedorak, Myroslaw and Maria Horban, Dr. Askold Lozynskyj, Dr. Myroslaw Maleckyj, Walter Petryshyn and Ivan Rawluk helped raise financial support, as did the Bahriany Foundation, the Civil Liberties Commission of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee, the Prometheus Foundation, the Ucrainica Research Institute, the Ukrainian Canadian Club of Kingston, Ontario (which underwrote the cost of preparing two of the maps in this book) and the Ukrainian Information Center in New York. We are grateful to them all.

NOTES

1. Laurence (later Sir Laurence) Collier, born in 1890, joined the Foreign Service in 1913. After a short assignment to Tokyo, he served in the Foreign Office, first in the Far Eastern Department, then, from 1926, in the Northern Department, which had jurisdiction over relations with the Soviet Union. In 1932 he became an advisor to the Foreign Office and in 1933 was appointed head of the Northern Department, where he had a decisive voice in the disposition of the appeals and petitions that were addressed to the Foreign Office. His general training and long experience with Soviet affairs allowed him to speak with authority on the USSR. A student of British foreign policy in the 1930s has observed that "if anyone in the Foreign Office at this period deserves the accolade of 'arch anti-appeaser,' it is surely Laurence Collier. His minutes brooked no compromise.... And there is a shining honesty and consistency in his comments which bears favourable comparison with most of his contemporaries." Norman Rose, *Vansittart: Study of a Diplomat* (London: Heinemann, 1978), 114.
2. Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 306. Conquest calculates that eleven million peasants throughout the Soviet Union died in 1930-37, and another three and a half million who were arrested at this time died later in labour camps. Of these fourteen and a half million, six and half million died as a result of dekulakization, and one million died in the Kazakhstan famine. In the 1932-33 famine, five million died in Ukraine, one million in the North Caucasus and one million in other regions.

3. Bertram D. Wolfe, *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost: Text, Background and Meaning of Khrushchev's Secret Report to the Twentieth Congress on the Night of February 24-25, 1956* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1957), 91.

   According to the Yugoslav Communist Anton Kolendić, however, Khrushchev expressed a different view in private. In the struggle for power in the Kremlin immediately after Stalin's death Lavrentii Beria had his secret service record conversations in the offices of his associates in the Politbureau, including Khrushchev's. Talking with the writer Mikhail Sholokhov in May 1953, Khrushchev said: "There is much that is true in your books, but nevertheless they do not tell the whole truth. We are still far from knowing everything that happened at the time of collectivization. We shall doubtless never know how many human lives were swallowed up in collectivization. You have spoken only of Ukraine, and of individual cases. I myself know of hundreds of thousands of cases and, I repeat, only in Ukraine. And here scholars are proving mathematically, demographically, that close to twelve million victims died at that time.... You ask me who is responsible? In the past we would say, you and I, the 'kulaks,' the 'bourgeoisie,' 'imperialism.' Today I can in all honesty say this to you with regard to collectivization. First, Stalinist methods of collectivization have brought us, beyond violence and terror, only misery and famine in the countryside. Second, at the time, Stalin was already dictator of the Soviet Union.... Thus, if one must seek out the one person responsible for the millions of deaths and for those years of horror, it is to Stalin that one must turn." Anton Kolendić, *Les derniers jours: De la mort de Staline à celle de Beria (mars-décembre 1953)* (Paris: Fayard, 1982), 161-62.

   Both during and after the Khrushchev era, Soviet scholars (who did manage to give a more candid picture of collectivization and dekulakization in the liberal 1960s) continued to ignore the famine, only occasionally making cryptic remarks about "temporary food shortages." A two-volume history of the Ukrainian peasantry, for example, disposes of the famine in one sentence: "the decrease in the size of the rural population was connected with the acute shortage of food in 1931, 1932 and the first half of 1933, which was caused by crop failure and improper planning of grain procurements." I. I. Kompaniiets, ed., *Istoriia selianstva Ukrainskoi RSR* [History of the peasantry of the Ukrainian SSR] (Kiev: Naukova dumka, 1967), 2: 175. The situation has not changed greatly since Mikhail Gorbachev introduced his policy of *glasnost*. R. W. Davies points out that although "quite frank references to the famine of 1932-3 and the repressions under Stalin from 1929 onwards now appear in the Soviet press," it is not clear how fully the doctrine of "no blank pages" is to be applied, and "no serious attempt has been made [to] investigate these tragedies in any detail, or to assess the number of people affected." R. W. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution: The First Phase* (Birmingham: Centre for Russian and East European Studies, University of Birmingham, 1987), 57.

4. A hagiographer of Maksim Litvinov discusses Stalin's accomplishments in the following terms: "The collectivization of agriculture... has been a major and difficult achievement, made more difficult and consequently more cruel by the stubbornness of certain sections of the peasantry. Yet when in the end collectivization succeeded, it brought prosperity to the peasants... banished the ever-recurrent menace of famine... and has firmly established one of the essential economic bases of the Soviet state." Arthur Upham Pope, *Maxim Litvinoff* (New York: L. B. Fischer, 1943), 266-67. The passage is noteworthy because the assumptions in it – that the peasants manifested a lemming-like suicidal instinct and that collectivization was economically justified – have been unthinkingly repeated in scores of textbooks.
5. Walter Duranty, "Russians Hungry, But Not Starving," *New York Times*, 31 March

1933: 13; Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937), 572.

6. Other biases include the predisposition in favour of the victorious side in history and the inclination to discount the writings of émigrés because they are full of resentment against the régime that forced them to leave. But the most important one is the Russocentrism of many Sovietologists. The famine was centred in Ukraine, which is seen as a hinterland, not relevant to the crucial processes taking place in the metropolis, and the numerous memoirs and serious analyses of the famine, as distinct from collectivization, are largely in Ukrainian, which few Sovietologists read. An exception is Zhores A. Medvedev's *Soviet Agriculture* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), which gives a fair though superficial summary.
7. James Mace, introduction to Ewald Ammende, *Human Life in Russia* (Cleveland: John T. Zubal, 1984), [iii].
8. Twenty countries maintained missions in Moscow in the early 1930s: Afghanistan, Austria, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Persia, Poland, Sweden and Turkey. The United States, which established relations with the Soviet Union in November 1933, opened an embassy in Moscow in March 1934. Until then, reports about the internal Soviet situation, including many specifically about the famine, were sent to the State Department by the "Russian Desk" of the U.S. Legation in Riga, Latvia, and by embassies and consulates in Berlin, Warsaw, Bucharest and other European capitals.
9. The emphasis we are placing on the viewpoint of the Foreign Office and the professional diplomats leaves some aspects of British policy-making untouched. The views of the prime ministers of the 1930s receive no attention. Research in the Cabinet papers and in the records of the Department of Overseas Trade, the Dominions Office, the Empire Marketing Board and the War Office would no doubt reveal more information about the famine and the process by which Whitehall formulated its policies.
10. Alex De Jonge, *Stalin and the Shaping of the Soviet Union* (London: Collins, 1986), 160.
11. Paul Scheffer, *Seven Years in Soviet Russia* (London: Putnam, 1931; New York: Macmillan, 1932), 64, 83, 294.
12. Ewald Ammende, "Soll das Rußlanddeutschtum untergehen?" *Revaler Bote*, 2 January 1930.
13. "Collectivisation of Agriculture," *Slavonic and East European Review* 8 (March 1930): 711.
14. E. L. Woodward and Rohan Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939*. Second series, vol. 7, 1929-34 (London: HMSO, 1958), 73.
15. William (later Lord) Strang took the post of counsellor of embassy in Moscow in the spring of 1930. He left in the autumn of 1933 to become head of the League of Nations section of the Foreign Office and chief adviser on League affairs. The American diplomat George F. Kennan, who was posted to Moscow in the 1930s, calls Strang "one of the ablest" of his British counterparts. George F. Kennan, *Memoirs 1925-1950* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), 165.
16. British parliamentarians were also aware of the growing food shortage in Ukraine. Stanley Baldwin pointed out in the Commons on 4 November 1930 that the Soviet government was exporting grain while the population was in "a state of semi-starvation." Commander Bellairs asked the foreign secretary on 21 January 1931 whether information about famine conditions could be included in a White Paper on labour in the Soviet Union. The government replied that the White Paper was designed to deal

only with labour legislation. The Duchess of Atholl spoke at length on Soviet grain exports on 10 November 1931. Sir William Davison asked on 22 February 1932 whether the Department of Overseas Trade was aware of the shortage of wheat and flour in Soviet Ukraine and whether this would be taken into account when credits for the import of Ukrainian wheat and flour were granted. Major David John Colville, the parliamentary secretary of the department, replied that he was not aware of any shortage and that the department had no power to give guarantees for the importation of foreign goods. The following day Rear-Admiral Sueter asked whether the Board of Trade would give figures for the last three years for the value of exports and imports from the USSR and whether figures were available to show what part of this trade related to Ukraine. The Board of Trade replied that figures for Anglo-Soviet trade could be found in published reports and that no separate figures for trade with Ukraine were available. *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 244 (1930), col. 807; vol. 247 (1931), col. 163; vol. 259 (1931), cols. 81-90; vol. 262 (1932), cols. 20 and 223.

17. Born in Scotland in 1899, Cairns emigrated to Canada as a boy and was educated at the Universities of Alberta and Minnesota. He joined the Alberta Wheat Pool in 1926 and the Canadian Wheat Pools in Winnipeg in 1927. The high regard of the Foreign Office for Cairns's expertise is evident from a minute in F0 371/17253 N 3035: "No reliance can be placed on Soviet official statistics. Mr. Cairn's reports on the agricultural situation give the best & most accurate picture of the Soviet agricultural situation." He became director of the Grain Department of the Empire Marketing Board in London in 1931, secretary of the International Wheat Advisory Committee in 1933, secretary of the International Beef Conference in London in 1937, director of statistics and research for the British Ministry of Food in 1941 and secretary of the International Wheat Council in 1943. He was director of food for UNRRA in 1944 and secretary general of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers from 1947 to 1952, when he went into private business. He died in a plane crash in India in May 1958.
18. At the Ottawa conference in August 1932 Britain and Canada agreed to prohibit the import of commodities, particularly agricultural and forestry products, which had been aided by state subsidies in the form of underpaid labour organized by a government.
19. Chamberlin gave a similar account in a book about his years in the Soviet Union. "The famine area, so far as I could observe and learn from reliable information," he wrote, "included Ukraina, the North Caucasus, a number of districts in the middle and lower Volga, and considerable sections of remote Kazakstan, in Central Asia. Northern and Central Russia and Siberia suffered a good deal of hardship and undernourishment, but not actual famine. The number of people who lived in famine areas was in the neighborhood of sixty million; the excess of deaths over a normal mortality rate can scarcely have been less than three or four million." William Henry Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1934), 88.
20. Ovey was recalled to London in late March 1933, after the arrest of six engineers who had been working for Metropolitan-Vickers in the Soviet Union made his position as ambassador untenable. He left Strang as the chargé d'affaires. Throughout the spring and summer of 1933, when the famine was at its height and relief efforts were getting under way abroad, Britain had no ambassador in Moscow.
21. A specialist in British diplomacy has noted its "economic insight and political myopia" in the 1930s. P. A. Reynolds, *British Foreign Policy in the Inter-war Years* (London: Longman, 1954), 35.
22. R. W. Seton-Watson, *Britain and the Dictators: A Survey of Post-War British Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), 119-20.

23. Volodymyr Kubijovyč, ed., *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984-), s. v. "grain procurement." The state may have taken an even greater percentage because harvest figures were distorted. Stalin announced at the Seventeenth Party Congress in January 1934 that 89.8 million tons of grain had been produced in 1933. The State Statistical Commission has recently calculated that the true figure was 68.4 million tons, but in 1933 the government insisted on collecting the delivery plans that it had set on the basis of the inflated figure. Mark Tolts, "Skolko zhe nas togda bylo?" (How many of us were there then?), *Ogonek*, 19-26 December 1987: [10]-[11].
24. Johnnie von Herwarth, who was stationed at the German embassy in Moscow in the 1930s, recalled in his memoirs that Schiller was "the finest observer of the agricultural scene in any of the embassies. His reports were treated as the Bible; his analyses were quoted and paraphrased by diplomats of many countries.... There is evidence to suggest that the Soviets appreciated Schiller's ability as much as we did. The Russians have never hesitated to ask for the removal of any foreign diplomat whose past or present behaviour did not meet with their approval; after the war, however, Otto Schiller was permitted to return to the Moscow Embassy, where he served again for several years as agricultural attaché. Perhaps the Russians realized he was a deeply knowledgeable expert and that he was genuinely fond of them." Johnnie von Herwarth with S. Frederick Starr, *Against Two Evils: Memoirs of a Diplomat-Soldier during the Third Reich* (London: Collins, 1981), 77.
25. FO.371/16335 N 3060.
26. Woodward and Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy* 10: 357.
27. G. L. Owen, "The Metro-Vickers Crisis: Anglo-Soviet Relations between Trade Agreements, 1932-1934," *Slavonic and Eastern European Review* 49 (January 1971), 94.
28. De Jonge, *Stalin and the Shaping of the Soviet Union*, 287.
29. Woodward and Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy* 7: 71.
30. FO.371/16335 N 4693.
31. FO.371/16332 N 4396.
32. In a memorandum in which he compared the Nazi and Communist systems as they affected British foreign policy Collier argued that Soviet practice was virtually indistinguishable from that of the fascist governments. His catalogue of the features of Stalin's régime included the one-party dictatorship, the suppression of personal freedom, the exploitation of labour by the state, the emergence of social distinctions based on influence and family, and the existence of a racial policy, as towards Ukraine and Moldavia. Memorandum by Collier, 16 August 1938, in FO.371/22289, N 4071/97/38. Cited in Donald Lammers, "Fascism, Communism, and the Foreign Office, 1937-39," *Journal of Contemporary History* 6 (1971): 75.

    The brief reference to the famine in Vansittart's memoirs is also unambiguous: "Population was reduced by the supply of short-lived slaves, and six millions of farmers were killed off to increase production.... The great man-made famine of 1933 was followed by a silence that Stalin called happiness... The Kremlin took so much food from the peasants that they destroyed their livestock. Between 1929 and 1933 the number of horses in Russia dropped from 34 to 16 millions, cows from 68 to 38, sheep and goats from 147 to 50, pigs from 20 to 12 millions. Consequently the people also fell by millions, and Stalin could never admit the human cattle uselessly slaughtered. He therefore had to fake the census. Statistics were adopted to the Leader's whim. When they were too low for his taste, he killed the authors." Sir Robert Gilbert Vansittart, *The Mist Procession* (London: Hutchinson, 1958), 457, 459.

33. The voluminous literature on the Western Russophiles and fellow travellers who were ready to ignore or justify the brutality of collectivization and the famine includes David Caute, *The Fellow Travellers: A Postscript to the Enlightenment* (London: Quartet Books, 1977); Lewis S. Feuer, "American Travelers to the Soviet Union 1917-32: The Formation of a Component of New Deal Ideology," *American Quarterly* 14 (Summer 1962): [119]-49; Peter G. Filene, *Americans and the Soviet Experiment, 1917-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Eugene Lyons, *The Red Decade: The Stalinist Penetration of America* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1941); Sylvia R. Margulies, *The Pilgrimage to Russia: The Soviet Union and the Treatment of Foreigners, 1924-1937* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968); Vladimir C. Nahirny, "Western Intellectuals and the Soviet Union: Pilgrims, Dupes or Dealers in 'Noble Lies?'" *Ukrainian Quarterly* 39 (Summer 1983): [134]-55; and Frank A. Warren, *Liberals and Communism: The "Red Decade" Revisited* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966).

    The Soviet manipulation of public opinion was not new. During the famine of the 1890s, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Central Statistical Committee issued "glowing" and "grossly exaggerated" crop estimates. Nothing that contradicted these reports reached the public, and attempts to describe the real state of affairs were rigorously censored. "An occasional Governor, or even an Ispravnik [police superintendent], might admit to local partial crop failure, but to famine, never." The tsarist ministers' motives? "Being in want of money – much money – they sought to impress on money-lenders in Paris, Berlin, Vienna and London, Russia's enormous agricultural wealth, up till now her main source of revenue." David Bannerman, "Agricultural Distress in Russia," *Westminster Review* 157 (March 1902): [283]-84.
34. "Food Shortage Laid to Soviet Peasants," *New York Times*, 26 November 1932: 9.
35. "Soviet Food Scarcity," *New York Times*, 26 November 1932: 14.
36. Walter Laqueur, *The Fate of the Revolution: Interpretations of Soviet History from 1917 to the Present*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 12. Strang offered a tantalizing hint that Duranty downplayed the severity of the famine because he was eager to have the United States recognize the Soviet Union. (17: 204)
37. "Journalists in Russia," *Manchester Guardian*, 21 August 1933: 9. The official explanation of the travel ban was that the presence of foreign correspondents would hinder the harvest. "What was even more amusing than this suggestion that a few itinerant correspondents might seriously affect the fate of harvesting operations over almost one sixth of the surface," Chamberlin observed, "was that some foreigners were naive enough to take it seriously." *Russia's Iron Age*, 149.
38. "The Russian Harvest," *Manchester Guardian*, 22 August 1933: 8.
39. On Duranty's reporting of the famine see James William Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise: Western Reporters in Soviet Russia, 1917 to 1937, A Case Study of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982), and Marco Carynnyk, "Making the News Fit to Print: Walter Duranty, the *New York Times* and the Ukrainian Famine of 1933," in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, eds., *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), [67]-95. For further references to Duranty in the British documents, see FO.371/16336 N 4912 (in which J. D. Greenway wrote that "Duranty, an expatriate Englishman of only mediocre capability, is for some unexplained reason regarded with awe by the American public & by such a mixed bag of American public men as Senator Borah, Paul Robeson & Governor Roosevelt. He is a trimmer & prob-

ably not very honest and in his muddled way is genuinely pro-Soviet. He has done much good work for the Russian [*illeg.*] in his recent tour in the States. The *New Yorker* describes him as 'our (i.e. American) most respected envoy in Europe' 'with a faint air of skullduggery about him.'"); and FO.371/17244 N 9179 (in which Shone commented, on the occasion of Duranty's interview with Stalin in December 1933, that "it is unusual for M. Stalin to give interviews to journalists, but Mr. Duranty might be expected to get favourable treatment in this respect."). Two recent Durantesque regurgitations are Douglas Tottle, *Fraud, Famine and Fascism: The Ukrainian Genocide Myth from Hitler to Harvard* (Toronto: Progress Books, [1987]), and Jeff Coplon, "In Search of a Soviet Holocaust: A 55-Year-Old Famine Feeds the Right," *Village Voice*, 12 January 1988: 28, 30-33.

40. "'Vidennoe v SSSR prekrasno,' zaiavliaet Errio" ("Everything I have seen in the USSR is splendid," declares Herriot), *Pravda*, 13 September 1933: 1.
41. FO.371 N 6514 6514 38. Cited in De Jonge, *Stalin and the Shaping of the Soviet Union*, 291.
42. "Vstupitelnaia rech tov. M. I. Kalinina" (Comrade M. I. Kalinin's opening speech), *Pravda*, 29 December 1933: 1.
43. The federation was established by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists in 1930 in response to the Polish "pacification" of Western Ukraine. The federation founded the Ukrainian Red Cross, which collected funds to aid the victims of the famine, and in September 1933 distributed the memorandum that is reprinted here as document 52. See Dmytro Andriievskyi, "Mizhnarodnia aktsiia OUN" [The international activity of the OUN], in *Orhanizatsiia ukrainskykh natsionalistiv 1929-1954* [The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists 1929-1954] ([Paris]: Persha Ukrainska Drukarnia u Frantsii, 1955), 148-49.
44. The committee included Vasyl Mudryi, chairman, Milena Rudnytska and Volodymyr Doroshenko, vice-chairmen, Zenon Pelenskyi and Dr. Ivan Gyzha, secretaries, Volodymyr Kuzmovych, Volodymyr Tselevych, Andrii Zhuk, the Reverend Iuliian Dzerovych, the Reverend Ivan Laba and O. Radlovskyi, members. Vasyl Mudryi, *Lyhholittia Ukrainy* [Ukraine's troubled times] (Lviv: Ukrainskyi Hromadskyi Komitet Riatunku Ukrainy, 1933), and Andrii Zhuk, *Riatunkova aktsiia dlia Velykoi Ukrainy* [The relief campaign for Eastern Ukraine] (Lviv: Ukrainskyi Hromadskyi Komitet Riatunku Ukrainy, 1933), contain much information about the famine and the committee's activities.
45. The Ukrainian Bureau was founded in London in 1931 with funding from Iakiv (Jacob) Makohin, a Ukrainian who had emigrated to the United States at the turn of the century. The director of the bureau was the historian and civil servant Vladimir Kaye-Kysilewsky (Volodymyr Kysilevskyi). For a biographical sketch and a list of papers concerning the bureau, see Myron Momryk, *Kaye (Kysilewsky), Vladimir Julian, MG 31 D 69, Finding Aid No. 1409* (Ottawa: Public Archives Canada, 1982).
46. The Ukrainian National Council addressed identical letters to Edouard Daladier, prime minister of France, Franklin D. Roosevelt, president of the United States, Adolf Hitler, prime minister of Germany, Benito Mussolini, prime minister of Italy, and R. B. Bennett, prime minister of Canada. The British government received similar appeals from Ukrainians in Ward, Manitoba and Oshawa, Thorold and Windsor, Ontario. See FO.371/17247 N 7878, FO.371/17247 N 8997, FO.371/18320 N 1603 and FO.371/18320 N 1761.
47. See Evald Amende, *Europe and Soviet Russia*. Riga: R. Rueβ, 1921. Reprinted in *Seeds of Conflict. Series 4. The Russian Revolution from the October Revolution to the Moscow Trials, 1917-1936. Foreign Relations*, vol. 2 (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint, 1975).

The honorary chairman of the committee was Cardinal Archbishop Innitzer of Vienna, and the members included Chief Rabbi Dr. D. Feuchtwang, the Very Reverend P. Mesrop Habozian, from the Armenian Church Congregation, the Very Reverend Dr. M. Homykewytsch, from the Ukrainian Catholic Church, the Reverend P. Jancovschi, from the Rumanian Orthodox Church, Professor Dr. F. Karlicky, from the Czech Catholic community, the Very Reverend Dr. Karl Kiss, from the Hungarian Pazmaneum, the Very Reverend Father Superior S. Skwierawski, from the Polish Catholic Church, the Reverend Dr. R. Stojakovic, from the Serbian Oriental Church, the Reverend Dr. Erich Stoekl, from the Evangelical Church, and Professor Dr. Agathangelos Xiruchakis, from the Greek Oriental Church. Ammende was assisted in the secretariat by R. Mitloehner.

48. Drusag – the name was an abbreviation of Deutsch-Russische Saatbau Aktiengesellschaft, or German-Russian Seed Joint-stock Company – had been founded in the mid-1920s with German capital. It was one of about 150 concessions granted to foreign capitalists by the Soviet government in the 1920s. Westerners who visited the concession during the famine – Andrew Cairns in the summer of 1932, Malcolm Muggeridge early in 1933 – described it as an oasis of plenty in a sea of starvation. The Soviet government ordered its closing in 1934 because of the contrast between its productivity and that of the Soviet state farm Gigant. For details, see Edward Coote's dispatch in FO.371/17253 N 6869 and George F. Kennan's report in National Archives, Record Group 59, State Department Decimal File, 1930-1939, 861.51/2689.
49. *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 291 (1934), col. 1548.
50. Anthony Eden, *Facing the Dictators* (London: Cassell, 1962), 6.
51. *Parliamentary Debates* (Lords), 5th ser., vol. 93 (1934), cols. 1097-1117.
52. The Duchess had cited the reports of Gareth Jones and Malcolm Muggeridge about the famine on 5 July 1933 and brought up the question of Soviet exports on 1 March 1934. *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 280, cols. 425-28, and vol. 286, cols. 1325-28.
53. FO.371/18321 N 6656; *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 295 (1935), cols. 825-26.
54. Eden, *Facing the Dictators*, 160-61.
55. Edward Crankshaw in a review of Nikolai Tolstoy's *Victims of Yalta*. Reprinted in *Putting up with the Russians, 1947-1984* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 253-54.

    The British government was indifferent even to a clearly worded warning that the Soviet authorities were prepared to sacrifice lives. Leslie Pott, the British vice-consul in Leningrad, told the Department of Overseas Trade in June 1933 that "conditions in the Soviet Union were becoming almost incredibly bad." Though the situation in Leningrad was bad enough, German diplomats in Ukraine had told him that conditions there were even worse. He had heard "guarded allusions" to the practice of cannibalism and said that "all the signs seemed to point towards a famine." He doubted, however, whether "the effect of a few hundred thousand lives being lost would sensibly affect the régime at present in power." Shone agreed that Pott's remarks confirmed reports from other sources and that the opinion about the Soviet government's attitude was correct. Most of the minutes on the document, however, were concerned with Macdonald, a British engineer who had been arrested in the Metropolitan-Vickers case. The notion that the Soviet government was indifferent to human life was of no interest to Whitehall. (30: 241-42)

    Consider how differently British politicians responded when the Soviet government put out an appeal for famine relief in the summer of 1921. "This is so appalling a disaster," Prime Minister Lloyd George stated in the Commons on 16 August, "that

it ought to sweep every prejudice out of one's mind, and appeal only to one emotion – that of pity and human sympathy." Lloyd George went on to say that the Supreme Allied Council had decided to create a three-man commission "to study the possibilities of rendering immediate aid to the starving population in Russia." Considering the various objections that might be made to the provision of relief from Britain, he stressed the hope that "no word will be said which will make it difficult for people to give of their uttermost to help distress." In the ensuing discussion, J. H. Thomas (who as secretary of state for the Dominions would turn down the plea from the Ukrainian National Council in 1933) concurred with the prime minister and urged that all political questions be cast aside. "We must dissociate any political opinions, and we must clearly keep in mind that this is a great human cry which must appeal to all human beings. I believe it is only in that spirit that we ought to approach this question.... In short, I believe the appeal is to humanity over and above any political consideration." *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 146 (1921), cols. 1236-56.

56. W. N. Medlicott, *British Foreign Police since Versailles 1919-1963* (London: Methuen, 1968), 326.
57. Woodward and Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy* 7: 662.
58. *Parliamentary Debates* (Commons), 5th ser., vol. 292 (1934), col. 2339.
59. Quoted in Ian Colvin, *Vansittart in Office: An Historical Survey of the Origins of the Second World War Based on the Papers of Sir Robert Vansittart* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1965), 26-27.
60. Woodword and Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy* 15: 538.
61. Myroslav Prokop and George Shevelov have advanced the intriguing but as yet insufficiently documented thesis that Postyshev was ordered to carry through the famine to the end in order to pacify Ukraine and make it into an obedient province of Russia before war with Germany broke out. Myroslav Prokop, *Ukraina i ukrainska polityka Moskvy* [Ukraine and Moscow's Ukrainian policy] (N.p.: Suchasnist, 1956), 26-30; Iurii Shevel'ov, "Ukrainizatsiia: radians'ka polityka 1925-1932 rokiv" [Ukrainization: The Soviet Policy of 1925-1932], *Suchasnist*, May 1983: 55.
62. Scheffer, *Seven Years*, 234.
63. Woodward and Butler, eds., *Documents on British Foreign Policy* 7: 111-12.
64. Mikhail Heller and Aleksandr M. Nekrich, *Utopia in Power: The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), 238.
65. Lammers, "Britain, Russia and the 'Revival of 'Entente Diplomacy,'" 102; Andrew Cairns, *Agricultural Production in Soviet Russia: A Preliminary Report as at May 1st, 1933* ([London: Empire Marketing Board, 1933]), 15.
66. R. Boothby, Conservative MP, speaking at the Congress of Peace and Friendship with the U.S.S.R. in London in December 1935. *Britain and the Soviets: The Congress of Peace and Friendship with the U.S.S.R.* (London: Martin Lawrence, 1936), 3.
67. In a memorandum on the solvency of the Soviet government, G. P. Paton, the commercial counsellor of the British embassy in Moscow, revealed in June 1932 that the Soviet government was not able to pay the bills that would mature in Germany in October 1932. In October-December 1931 Soviet bills amounted to 40 million marks, but a year later the Soviet government would be faced with bills totalling 165 million marks. "If all reports regarding this year's sowing are true," wrote Paton, "the prospects of a bumper crop are very remote, and wheat acreage is up all over the world. The consensus of opinion, in fact, is that Soviet Russia will be fortunate if it can produce sufficient grain to meet domestic requirements; and that exports, if any, will be relatively insignificant as compared with the past two years. Assuming this forecast

to be true, where is the Soviet Government to find the wherewithal to pay the bills maturing in Germany from October onwards? And what of the bills maturing in other countries?" FO.371/16323 N 3840.

68. Vansittart, *The Mist Procession*, 431.
69. In the autumn of 1932, after returning from five and a half months in the Soviet Union, Cairns was invited by the *Times*, the BBC, the Royal Institute of International Affairs and friends in the Canadian government to describe his impressions of the USSR. He declined the invitations because the Foreign Office was thinking of sending him back in 1933 as the British agricultural attaché and he was planning to write a book about his trips to the Soviet Union and he did not want to lessen his chances of getting a visa. Mrs. Cairns believes that her husband did not go back in 1933 because the Soviet government refused to issue him a visa. But the Foreign Office, which had praised so highly Cairns's 1932 dispatches, deprecated his return to Moscow. Had he displeased someone with his reports about the famine? As it happened, Cairns did not go in 1933, and an opportunity to alert the world to the danger was lost. If Cairns had stated publicly what he was reporting privately – that famine was an actual fact and that even greater famine could be expected – he might well have mobilized the British public to voice its concern and the British government might have found it impossible not to lend its support. The famine might then have taken a different course and many lives may have been saved. And if, after he made public what he knew, no action was taken, there would have been at least the benefit that the Soviet régime and its friends would have found it more difficult to brand all talk about the famine as Nazi propaganda. But these are all very big ifs. Cairns kept quiet, the British government remained passive, and the famine proceeded unchecked until the autumn of 1933.
70. "The census taken at the beginning of [1937], after a minute preparation and with an army of over a million officials, ended in the arrest of the directors of the statistical bureau and of their close collaborators, the results remaining a mystery. According to W. Krivitsky, whose excellent confidential source of information is the G.P.U.: 'Instead of the 171 million inhabitants calculated for 1937, only 145 million were found; thus nearly 30 million people in the U.S.S.R. are missing.'" Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism* (New York: Alliance Book Corporation, 1939), 669. The Soviet demographer Mark Tolts has recently confirmed that Stalin falsified population figures in the 1930s in order to cover up the consequences of the famine and the terror. Tolts, "Skolko zhe nas togda bylo?"
71. Lee Schwartz, "A History of Russian and Soviet Censuses," in Ralph S. Clem, ed., *Research Guide to the Russian and Soviet Censuses* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 55-56.
72. Tsentralnoe statisticheskoe upravlenie, *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda* (Results of the All-union population census of 1959). Moscow: Gosstatizdat, 1963. 16 vols.
73. Maksudov, "Geografiia goloda 1933 goda" (The geography of the famine of 1933), *SSSR: Vnutrennie protivorechiia* 7 (1983): 5-17; and "The Geography of the Soviet Famine of 1933," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 8 (Winter 1983), [52]-58.
74. The Proskuriv/Khmelnytskyi region is erroneously shown on the map "Geography of the 1932–33 Famine" as not being part of the Ukrainian SSR until 1939. It was formed from a part of the Vinnytsia region in 1937.
75. The 1926 census reported that there were 5,805,522 Ukrainians in the European part of the RSFSR. Of these, 3,106,852 lived in the North Caucasus, where they constituted 37.1 per cent of the population. The percentage varied from 0.1 in the southern regions to 61.5 in the Kuban district (now part of the Krasnodar region) in the north-west. A

further 1,078,552 Ukrainians lived in the Voronezh region (32.6 per cent of the population). Tymish Olesevych, *Statystychni tablytsi ukrainskoho naselennia S.S.R.R. za perepysom 17 hrudnia 1926 roku* [Statistical tables of the Ukrainian population of the USSR according to the census of 17 December 1926] (Warsaw: Ukrainskyi naukovyi instytut, 1930). Significant rates of decline were also registered for the Crimea – 21.7 – and the Amur region in the Far East – 19.8. Cairns, who visited the Crimea in June 1932, observed that "while conditions were undoubtedly bad, there was nothing like as much begging or obvious hunger as in the Ukraine," and Chilston pointed out that the Far East was favoured in matters of grain collection and food. (10: 130; 66: 381) In the absence of other evidence of extensive famine we believe that the rates of decline shown for the Crimea and the Amur region by the 1959 census are due to extensive post-war migration by Ukrainians, who brought with them their own age-sex structure. The rates of decline in the Chernivtsi, Rivne and Stanyslaviv/Ivano-Frankivsk regions, which were occupied by Poland before 1939, reflect pre-war emigration and post-war population redistribution.

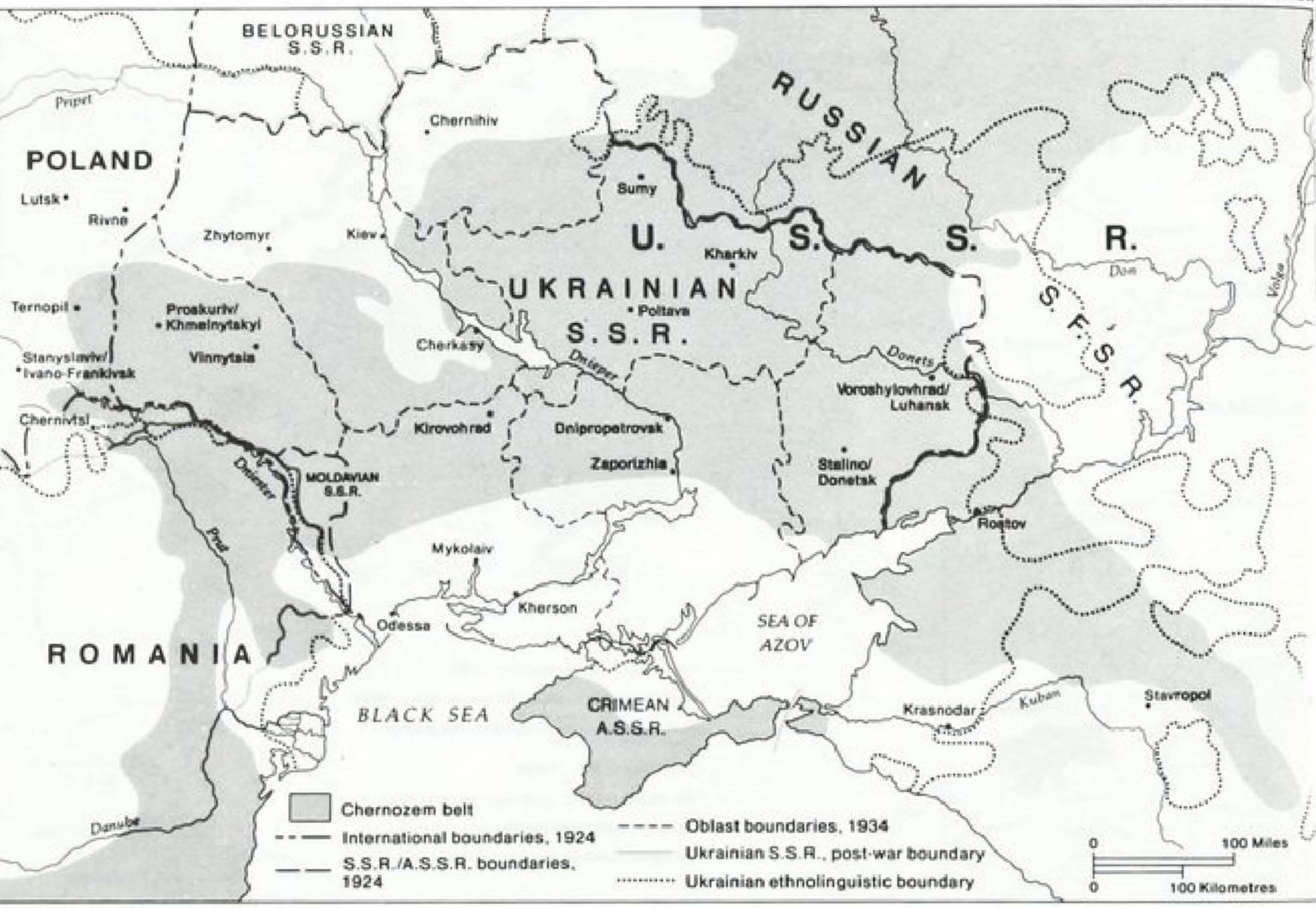
76. It is important to keep in mind that the rate of decline for each region or republic is an average. A more detailed calculation will be possible only if figures from the 1959 census for each district (*raion*) within a region (*oblast*) become available. (Alexander Babyonyshev believes that special volumes of the 1959 census results containing data on the district level were prepared for official use, but were not released to the public.) If we are right in assuming that the productive chernozem area was chosen for maximum extraction of agricultural surplus, we can conclude that the northern districts of the Kiev and Poltava regions were less affected by the famine than the more fertile southern districts and that the rates of decline for the two regions were increased by the severity of the famine in the southern districts. In the case of the Zaporizhia region, on the other hand, the rate of decline was lessened because the famine was not as intense along the coast as it was in the more fertile inland districts. And the low rate of decline of the Stalino/Donetsk region may be due to its extensive industrialization. More precise figures might well show that the agricultural districts of the region suffered as much as the adjacent Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Voroshylovhrad/Luhansk regions. In short, the famine took its greatest toll in the most productive agricultural lands of Ukraine and the North Caucasus.

Maps

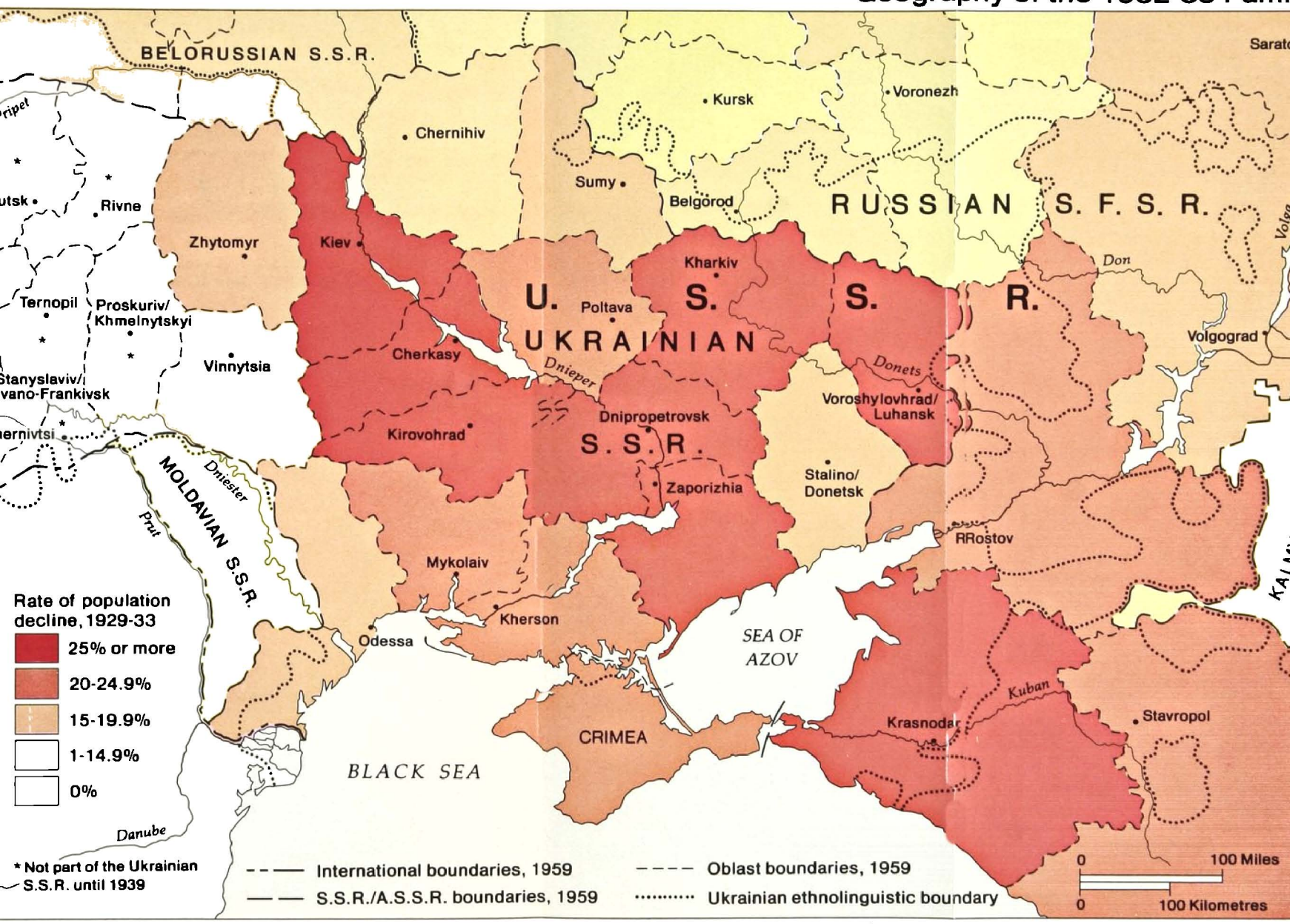
Ukraine in Europe



The Chernozem Bel



Geography of the 1932-33 Fami



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Documents

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30 SEP 1933

Registry Number N 7182/114/38

FROM Mr. Strang, Moscow.

No. 525 (39/53/33)

Dated Sept. 26, 1933.

Received in Registry Sept. 30, 1933

N. Russia.

Tour by Mr. W. Duranty in North Caucasus and the Ukraine.

Refers to Moscow despatch No. 603 of 12th September (N 6878/114/38).

Submits accounts of impressions gained by Mr. Duranty, on harvests and conditions generally, during his recent tour, with Mr. Richardson of the Associated Press, in North Caucasus and the Ukraine.

(Sent Department of Overseas Trade, Export Credits Guarantee Department.)

Last Paper.

N 6790

References.

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Next Paper.

N7261

(Minutes.)

The King; Cabinet, Dominions.

An interesting account of conditions by an actual observer who might be expected to write of what he had seen without bias against the Soviet Govt. (—in fact, with bias in their favour).

Mr. Duranty considers it possible that 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food, during the last year, & I think this estimate exceeds any we have yet had.

His estimate that 30% of the harvest will be lost this year tallies with that of Dr. Schiller.

Now that Mr. Duranty & other press correspondents are again being allowed to visit the grain areas and, presumably, to report on their experience.

8350 3/33 N.O.P. Sep 30 Cas

1

Seed Collection in Soviet Union
Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 28 March 1932

Sir, Moscow, March 28, 1932

With reference to my despatch No. 140 of the 22nd March, I have the honour to transmit herewith the latest table issued by the Commissariat of Agriculture showing the situation as regards seed collection in the various regions of the Soviet Union as on the 20th March.[1] The percentage fulfilment of plan on that date was 73.1 per cent., as compared with 54.4 per cent., on the 10th March, an increase of nearly 20 per cent. It is explained, however, in a note that the figures now given include the contribution made to the seed funds by the Government in the form of the seed loan referred to in paragraph 10 of my despatch No. 91 of the 25th February; and, in fact, the principal increases in this latest table are shown in respect of those areas to which the seed loan was to be issued, namely, Lower and Middle Volga, Ural, Kazakstan, Bashkiria, Western Siberia and the Tartar Republic. Similar large increases are also, however, shown by the North Caucasus (58 per cent. to 86 per cent.), the Far Eastern Region (41 per cent. to 67 per cent.), and it is possible that these areas may also have received contributions from the loan. In most other regions the increases are relatively small, and the position in the Ukraine, where the percentage is still only 66, continues to be unsatisfactory.

2. There are stories going about Moscow to the effect that traffic between the Ukraine and the consuming regions lying to the north of it is closely controlled, no one being allowed to bring more than 1,000 roubles out from the Ukraine, and all grain in the possession of private persons entering the Ukraine being confiscated. The Ukraine is, normally, the granary which feeds these consuming areas, but the granary, it is said, has been stripped very bare and some of the population in both town and country in the Ukraine is short of food. The peasants and others have therefore taken to coming to the more plentifully supplied industrial

areas to buy back some of their own grain, and it is this that the control system is designed to prevent, lest industrial areas should be denuded, and the urban workers, the proletariat *par excellence*, should go short.

3. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and to the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.

Esmond Ovey

2

Conditions in Soviet Union
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 4 May 1932, and Andrew Cairns to William Strang, 3 May 1932

Sir, Moscow, May 4, 1932

I have the honour to transmit herewith some interesting notes by Mr. Andrew Cairns, who is visiting this country on behalf of the Empire Marketing Board, on conversations he has had in Moscow with foreigners of various nationalities on conditions in the Soviet Union.

2. It seems to be generally agreed among foreign observers that for the population at large this has been the hardest winter since 1921. There have been few signs of unusual hardship in Moscow itself, but to those coming from elsewhere in the Soviet Union, Moscow has usually appeared to be a place of plenty if not of luxury. It is certainly a place of privilege. In Moscow, the bread ration has not been cut down, though the sugar ration has recently been reduced. For weeks at a time there have been no eggs to be had in the shop which supplies foreign missions, and potatoes have often been unprocurable. These are minor hardships, and the population as a whole has not lacked the means at any rate of subsistence; and the children, in particular, seem healthy and well nourished. But in provincial towns and over large stretches of the countryside, there is another story to tell. Recent visitors to the Ukraine report that the bread ration, even for manual workers themselves, has been cut down; that members of workers' families and other employees and their families have no ration of bread at all and have to supply themselves with bread as best they can outside the co-operatives, at prices which swallow up the greater part, or even the whole, of the workers' wages on bread alone. They also confirm, as already reported in previous despatches, that the Ukrainian peasants have been left in a state approaching famine after successive grain collections, whether for the needs of the towns, or for the war reserve, or for export, or for seed purposes in other areas, and that many of them move to the towns in search of bread. Livestock is dying for lack of fodder or is being killed for food. At the barrage

works at Dnieprostroi, in addition to the ordinary worker, who is entitled to a reduced ration of 400 or 600 grammes a day, there are said to be gangs of pressed workers, who receive no more than 200 grammes.

3. Even the relatively favoured factory workers have in places been driven to active protest by the deterioration of their standard of life. There are reports that quite recently the workers in the textile factories at Ivano-Voznesensk ceased work, held meetings at which they demanded more and better food, and sent representatives to Moscow to present their demands. Troops were sent to the spot and work was resumed. A Moscow factory which struck in sympathy with the workers at Ivano-Voznesensk was immediately brought to heel by G.P.U. troops, and fleets of lorries are said to be held in readiness at various points in Moscow in case similar trouble should arise in the future.

4. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and to the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.

William Strang

Enclosure in No. 2

Andrew Cairns to William Strang

Dear Mr. Strang, Moscow, May 3, 1932

In response to your request I am jotting down herewith a few notes, on non-agricultural subjects, summarising information given to me by friends and foreign specialists.

I have seen a good few United States engineers and they nearly all complain about the Germans spoiling their market by working largely, and in some case entirely, for roubles. They tell me that many United States engineers have gone home; some because their contracts have expired, some because the Soviet Government told them they could no longer meet the valuta terms of their contracts, and many others because the Government would not renew their contracts on a valuta basis, and the enormous sums in roubles offered for new contracts were unacceptable to the Americans. Many Americans tell me that the Russians do not like the German engineers and specialists and they (the Germans) are sulky and adopt superior airs, whereas the Americans fight the Russians every day for a "square deal" and the Russians love it! Three American engineers, typical of those I have met (one a chemical engineer for three Moscow trusts, one of them a dye trust, another a railroad engineer and another a chemical engineer who works in a soda plant at

Kharkov), tell me that things are going from bad to worse in their plants – waste, apathetic workers, very short supplies of extremely poor food for the workers, constant changes of management, &c. There were many Americans on the balconies of the Grand Hotel watching the big parade on the 1st May. What interested me most regarding their attitude was the manner in which they openly jeered and laughed at the "parade of percentages," particularly when they recognised some factory with which they were familiar.

I have had breakfast a few times recently with a Czechoslovakian coal-mining engineer. He returned recently from an inspection tour of the Donetz Basin and is leaving soon to make a survey for the Government of the mines in the Far East. He says the condition of the mines in the Donetz Basin is appalling – wet, poorly ventilated, gross mismanagement, &c. The food shortage among the workers is very acute; accommodation is so poor that the men do not bring their wives, so in spring they return to their women in the villages and a new bunch of green hands arrive to smash up more expensive machinery. The output per worker is four-tenths of a ton per day, as compared with two tons in Czechoslovakia. Having in mind my observations in 1930 on Russian farms (at which time I concluded that one Canadian farmer does as much work as eight to ten Russians), I suggested that a rate of one to five was not too bad. He replied that the conditions were not comparable as in Czechoslovakia one finds 3 metres of coal, then several metres of dirt, then 1 or 2 metres of coal, whereas in Russia the mines were very much richer. I think he said at Kuznetsk in Siberia there was an enormous seam of coal 40 metres in depth, 100 metres underground. He told me that he recently had a conference with Molotov, who wanted to know what was wrong. When he told Molotov that they must give the men decent wages, very much better and more food, put up decent houses, stop changing the management every three months (as it took a manager at least three months to study a mine, let alone manage it properly), enable the men to keep their womenfolk in the mining district, and generally improve conditions so that the constant labour turnover would be stopped, Molotov asked him to write to the papers about it and then he (Molotov) would take the matter up with the appropriate commissariat. But so far the Government officials had only talked and talked about the subject.

Like yourself, I have heard many stories about the serious food shortage in the rural districts. My friend Bernhardt (general manager of Control Company in Russia – a very large international organisation of cargo superintendents, which has a monopoly of superintending Russian exports of grain, timber coal, oil, &c.), who is well informed on Russian

conditions (having been here practically continuously since 1912) just laughs when I ask him how present-day living conditions compare with pre-war and N.E.P. time, and says there is no comparison. However, he is convinced that the Russian Government is the strongest Government in the world (because no other Government could treat its people like Russians are treated and get away with it), and agrees with Napoleon that you must not only shoot a Russian, you must push him down. The day clerk at the Grand Hotel tells me that the collective farms around his home in the Ukraine have absolutely nothing, and that there is a great deal of "trouble" there. Many others have told me similar stories, but after I return from the country I'll be able to report from first-hand observations, so I won't bother to repeat what I have heard, except to say that the consensus of opinion of practically all the people I have met so far is that he is a brave man who will go into the country to-day and mock the peasants with the Communist story that living conditions are better to-day than they were in pre-war, N.E.P., or even pre-collectivisation days.

Stumpfe (the Czech engineer) tells me that the average cost of producing a ton of coal in Russia to-day is 15 roubles as compared with 8 in 1930. However, if Russian production costs in coal-mining are similar to their farm cost of production, figures are quite worthless. The United States, German and other engineers I have met are agreed that the most obnoxious type of person in Russia to-day is the young Communist who has had a three months' technical course and now styles himself an engineer or expert. I can fully credit Stumpfe's story about the frequent changes in management, because I know for certain that Exportkhleb (Grain Export Company) has had at least thirteen managing presidents since it was organised several years ago.

Even Mrs. Hanna, the Russian representative of the Open Road (an American organisation which works in co-operation with Intourist), who came here from the United States quite red four years ago (she is now, like a lot of others here, rather radish-like), tell me that conditions throughout Russia are certainly the worst they have been in her experience, that practically all the manufactured goods, especially clothing, are just shoddy, and that, from all she can gather, conditions are very much worse in the rural than in the urban districts. Her comment about the quality of Russian manufactured goods is almost superfluous, as anyone with half an eye can see what she says is true.

Stumpfe confirms the stories I have heard of American engineers returning home, and also states that many German engineers are doing likewise. However, he says that many new Germans are coming in, but he does not expect that some of them will stay long as they are being

paid entirely in roubles and, as they have been led to believe that a rouble is worth two marks, they soon become bitterly disillusioned. The American engineers also tell me that a good few so-called mechanics and workers (some Communists, some Communist sympathisers, and some just fed up with the deplorable state of affairs at home) are arriving from America to work for roubles, but they (the engineers) predict that they won't last long.

I should add that when I enquire from Bernhardt and others about the probable error of Communist statistics, I am told that the recent fire in the building where Gosplan is housed was really not very serious, as the ceilings remained intact, so the source of data was not impaired.

What I see and hear confirms one of my 1930 impressions, that one of the truest things ever written in Russian is the song which commences thus: "To-morrow, to-morrow, not to-day."

Yours, &c.

A. Cairns

Minutes

The King. Cabinet. Dominions.

Very interesting. When Mr. Cairns returns to Moscow from visiting the countryside, he should be able to write a most valuable report.

J. D. Greenway

May 18

Mr. Cairns is a Canadian wheat expert who has been in Russia before & speaks the language fluently. He made a good impression when introduced to Mr. Gwatkin & myself some months ago, & is clearly a careful and trustworthy observer.

L. Collier

May 18th

3

Visit of Sir E. Ovey to Southern Russia
Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 20 May 1932

Sir, Moscow, 20th May, 1932

I have the honour to report that I returned on the 15th instant from a ten days trip in Southern Russia accompanied by my wife and by Mr. W. G. Walton, Third Secretary, who came to meet me at Odessa. The trip was interesting, instructive, and tiring. Generally speaking, there was little in the general condition of the country that caused me any great surprise. Many of my existing impressions arising from long distance study were confirmed and several latent ones brought to life.

2. Travelling in Russia is not always pleasant, but when one is able to obtain seats in the so-called international wagon-lit cars it is not really uncomfortable. The general plan of the trip was negotiated in Moscow and it was impossible to do otherwise than to place one's self in the hands of "Intourist" (the local national "Cook's" office) whose representatives met us and looked after our luggage, and drove us to the rooms reserved for us at every stopping place with the greatest courtesy and at great profit to the national exchequer, the cost being counted in American dollars.

3. From the point of view of adventure the trip was uneventful. The track everywhere we went was in good order. The trains ran on time, or, at the utmost, twenty minutes late. We neither met with, nor was our journey impeded by, any accident. We saw no prisoners. We were nowhere bitten by vermin although on one occasion it may have been owing to the precautions taken. We were not insulted nor arrested, nor was anything stolen from us. As regards accommodation it must be remembered that, except at Dnieprostroi, we stayed only in the large towns – Odessa, Kiev, Kharkov, and Rostov. All this may be a coincidence in the same way as the dead calm we encountered on the Black Sea.

4. Russia is so large that on the ordinary size map it appears to have many railways. In practice there are very few and several times we had to run over the same line visiting places which in other countries would have been linked up by cross lines. Except for a considerable distance from Moscow there appear to be few roads worthy of the name unless in the immediate vicinity of the towns.

5. In order to give an impression of how Russia strikes the European traveller, I enclose a detailed diary relating exactly all my experiences on the road, in the towns, and during my visits to the factories and other institutions. This diary is I fear somewhat long, but I feel that a first-hand description of one's actual impressions may give a better picture than a composite description independently composed after the event. In this diary I merely quote as far as my memory serves me from what I heard or saw. The statistics therefore are oral statistics and quite possibly conflict with written statistics. What I set down was compiled without any book reference except a map, and contains, apart from my personal observations, merely the statements actually made to me. It is not easy in a Russian train to get into conversation with fellow passengers, even when, as in the case of Mr. Walton, the exigencies of the Russian regulations frequently forced him to share a compartment with some other person, usually of the opposite sex. Incidentally I am much indebted to Mr. Walton whose complete knowledge of the vernacular enabled him to understand every word said to us irrespective of the noise of trains, steam hammers, or local variety of accent. Passengers are chary of chatting with foreigners, owing probably to the almost constant presence in the first-class carriages of representatives of the O.G.P.U. These officials appear to travel untiringly back and forth like the birds on the Bosphorous – the unquiet souls not of dead dragomans but of living and active representatives of an all-pervading Okhrana.[2]

I have, &c.

Esmond Ovey

Enclosure in No. 3

[*Observations by Sir Esmond Ovey*]

[....]

Odessa

May 4th

The following morning the flat coast of Russia appeared on the port side, and by 9 o'clock we could make out the silhouette of Odessa. The

captain brought to me a live snipe which had come on board, with the courteous request that I should give it to my wife so that she should have the pleasure of liberating it and letting it arrive safely in Soviet Russia.

Odessa has an entirely artificial harbour of very considerable size. A few church towers broke the horizon and there were several factory chimneys smoking a mile or two to the right where there is a modern industrial quarter. The stonework of the breakwater appeared to be in excellent order but the expanse of enclosed sea appeared very large in proportion to the number of ships loading and unloading. In fact, without being dead, it produced an impression of space and leisurely tranquility. Partly perhaps owing to the ample berthing space available, no small boats whatever were plying in the harbour. We docked without incident and found a dozen or so people waiting.

Shortly after, while we were waiting permission to disembark, a smart car arrived which turned out to contain the German Consul, whom the German Ambassador had courteously directed to meet me. In due course the representative of "Intourist," the local representative of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, acting on Mr. Krestinski's instructions, and Mr. Walton arrived and came on board. We were immediately whisked off in a luxurious new Lincoln car to the Hotel London situated on a wide promenade some distance above the sea and harbour. The Hotel London is the best hotel I have seen in Russia, and the whole city is entirely un-Russian in its aspect. The buildings are much less shabby than in Moscow and many of them are of solid and not unattractive classical type. The hotel contained a double marble staircase and was eminently clean. We were ushered into a large sitting room on the front with a balcony, the view from which was somewhat restricted by the fact that some red bunting and a portrait of Lenin, dating from the recent First of May celebrations, still blocked the view. We were then offered a large choice of sights to see and finally selected those that appeared of the greatest interest in view of our future plans.

We left at 11 o'clock to visit the town in our Lincoln car. The streets are better paved than in Moscow, wider and straighter. We proceeded down a long avenue which evidently once contained the villa residences of the rich merchants, all of which are now turned into people's rest-houses. A mile or two away we visited a small garden and a park on the sea complete with bandstands and benches, and then returned to inspect the Lermontov hospital and sanatorium. This large sanatorium, recently completed, contained every kind of modern appliance for massage, electric and water treatment. It was practically empty when we arrived, it being announced that the season was to commence on the following day when no less than 1,800 patients would present themselves. We visited

the baths, electric apparatus, and the kitchens. The latter seem modern although, somewhat surprisingly, they had no modern American system for the rotary washing of the plates, cups, etc.

Odessa is near the frontier and, as such, is not apparently to be devoted to any large scale industrial developments. It, however, appears to be essentially an educational and hospital town. It contains twenty-five hospitals, a very large number of universities, polytechnics and other educational institutions.

As regards industry, it seems to concentrate on canning (conserves) and agricultural machinery (the "Red October" factory).

The new buildings are of very soft and friable sandstone stuccoed over to protect them from the weather, and the town generally has some resemblance to a mixture between the Leas of Folkestone and Naples but is much more solid looking than the latter. The luncheon of which we partook at the hotel was quite excellent.

At 4.30 we visited a library which seemed to be very fully provided, particularly with Russian books. The librarian informed us that the problem of accommodation was a serious one as they received thirty to forty thousand new books a year. He said that there were twenty departments and some old manuscripts and incunabula in the museum. The latter was however closed. We tested the card-index system which resulted in the production of a copy of Julius Caesar in Ukrainian in two minutes. Mr. Bernard Shaw's works were also available in the same language.

We then proceeded to visit a somewhat uninteresting "German" village some ten miles down the coast. These people still speak some form of German. The road after the first few miles was incredibly bad. In fact Odessa appears as far as roads are concerned to be completely isolated from the outside world. The agricultural district round Odessa is reported to be about 75% given over to collective farms. The few thin cows we came across were however declared to be private property. The fields were alleged to be ploughed by tractors but we saw some horses at work and one fallen down in a doorway.

The town generally is much cleaner than Moscow but has fewer churches, much fewer pedestrians and practically no traffic. Such traffic as there is, however, is controlled by uniformed police at every cross-roads and, in a street nearly two miles long with nothing in sight, our driver invariably made a large circle to turn his car round on the correct side of the street to arrive at the hotel.

The people seemed generally to speak the Ukrainian language. All the papers are in Ukrainian with the exception of a Jewish one. There are no Russian papers but there is a Russian and Jewish theatre. Hebrew and other dialects are taught in the schools.

The population is about a half a million and is said to be increasing. Many of the roads leading out of the town contain the houses of the late rich and gardens which are now used for the recuperation of Soviet workmen. There are many new workmen's buildings.

There is considerable fishing, a quite tolerably palatable mullet seeming to be the principal item.

We were struck by the spirit of independence as regards Moscow, the R.S.F.S.R. being always referred to as "Russia."

The problem of the encouragement of these local languages is an interesting one. *Prima facie* it would seem to be a great waste of time and a definite inconvenience to cause people to know two languages. The Ukrainian language seems roughly as different from Russian as Italian from Spanish.

We were told that the winter sowing was "nearly good."

At 8 o'clock we dined with the Italian Consul-General, an old friend of ours from Moscow, and proceeded to the opera to which we had been invited by the representative of the Narkomindel, Gayunski. The first part of the performance was taken up by speeches by a delegation of shock-brigade workers. We were permitted to avoid this and arrived about 10.30 to hear the "Barber of Seville" in Ukrainian. The theatre is a beautiful building on the lines of the "Burg" theatre at Vienna, the stage of which was rebuilt after a fire in 1925. It is named after Lunacharski. Mr. Gayunski received us in the salon of a small box and, in the *entr'actes* developed the usual flow of statistics. For instance, the industrial output of Odessa had been increased four or five times. The number of workmen had risen from 15,000 to 150,000. There were no illiterates up to the age of 25 years. Previously 80% of all of the population had been illiterate.

During one *entr'acte* we were taken round behind the scenes to see the modern arrangements for the prevention of fire, and given elaborate statistics regarding the weight of the fire-proof curtain, the chandelier in the centre of the hall, and many other objects of admiration and interest. The stage was not rotary but of a type which I understand is even more modern in that it can be raised and lowered.

The Italian Consul-General had no news of any change in the constitution of the Republic of Moldavia. He said there had been great emigration of peasants from the country districts and that there was a great hatred of the collective farms. Many animals had died and there was a shortage of food. Generally speaking there was somewhat more freedom in social intercourse than in Moscow, but the O.G.P.U. (humorously referred to by my staff as the Y.M.C.A.) were much in evidence. He did not think there was any chance of any rising, either local or political.

Many Russians had left the Ukraine on account of the language difficulty [....]

Kiev

[....] The German consul was extremely pessimistic. He evidently was no admirer of the Soviet régime. According to him the crops were bad. The winter wheat had been seriously affected: only 60% of the spring wheat had been sown, and the harvest was expected to be only 40% of the Plan. The horses had been and were dying everywhere. All we saw certainly were extremely thin. The shock brigade workers, he said, merely chose the best horses, worked them to exhaustion, and then took others. The peasants had left the collective farms for the Caucasus and, finding conditions no better there, had in many cases returned. There was a shortage of bread, and he gave me a sample, which I enclose. This bread was brought him by a German peasant and apparently contains, in addition to some grain, a mixture of potato and possibly sunflower oil. It was difficult to buy anything, even in the town. The sugar was bad. Incidentally this is the district from which Haritonenko, the late owner of our Embassy house, and Tereshchenko, possibly known to you in London and temporarily Foreign Minister to Kerenski, drew their large fortunes. One local sugar factory at least, the Consul assured me, was engaged in the production of gasmasks. The recent internal structural political adjustments involving the disappearance of the *okrug* as an administrative unit had upset the country. He had no news of any change whatever as regards the Republic of Moldavia. Stalin's decree alleviating the condition of the peasants had in his view come too late. In spite of all the above there were no signs of any possibility of a revolution.

We left Kiev about 8 p.m. The station is new and splendid in appearance. Like most other stations in Russia it frequently serves as a dormitory for casual and seasonal labourers. It appeared however to be so constructed that one had to mount a long and ornamental staircase in order to descend again to the railway platforms. Here for the first time we had reason to complain of Intourist. The young female guide who had been attached to us according to custom, had definitely assured us that there would be an international wagon-lit car. The advantage of this accommodation, apart from cleanliness and comfort, is that one can get tea and boiling water. On arrival at the station we found that all that was reserved for us was the usual "soft" second-class compartment of very repulsive aspect for my wife and myself, whilst Mr. Walton was condemned to pass the night in a compartment with three other fellow trav-

ellers who, as it turned out, were members of the O.G.P.U. We felt, in view of the fact that we were paying a sum of something like £20 a day and had had all our meals with the German Consul, that we were not quite getting our money's worth for this particular twenty-four hours. We therefore complained in chorus. As soon as this was known, the manager of Intourist who was present at the station fled apparently out of harm's way. We recovered him and expressed our disappointment and ordered him at least to procure some mineral water. He succeeded in diving through the crowd and produced four bottles of sticky lemonade. However, after careful "flit"ing, we succeeded in reaching Kharkov on the following morning without too much discomfort. The uncomfortable conditions in which Mr. Walton travelled at least had the advantage of enabling him to engage in a long conversation with his fellow travellers of the O.G.P.U. Much of the conversation, he informed me, was of a general character about various colleagues and their adventures on the road. In one case one of them so far forgot himself as to state that one of his friends had been to a place in the Polesie district, presumably a village, where the men had literally nothing but their shirts to walk about in. He was, however, recalled to a sense of his responsibilities by his colleagues and no further admissions of this kind were made.

At 6.45 we passed through Poltava where hot water, eggs, and a form of biscuits were on sale. The factory sirens went at 7 and the population were busily engaged proceeding to their day's work.

The corn in the fields seemed to be slightly more advanced. The country was already a vast and rolling plain with frequent villages and a considerable number of churches in the distance. Groups of peasants, men and women up to about sixty, were seen working in the fields. The huts in this district were made of adobe, usually whitewashed, with thatched roofs. A few chimney stacks were seen and windmills, and finally near Kharkov a considerable number of deciduous trees and fruit trees, the leaves of which appeared to have come out before the blossoms. These were no pine or fir trees [....]

As regards the agricultural prospects, I gathered that the winter wheat was not so bad as I had gathered from our guide. The spring crops should be 60% of the Plan. The spring was, as everywhere else, at least a fortnight late, and sowing had been delayed by heavy and late rains. The guide, whom I interrogated, and who was more frank and talkative than most of the people we met, denied that there had been any definite shortage of seeds. This may possibly be incorrect. The horses we saw in the district appeared slightly better than those at Kiev but still very poor.

Food conditions were admitted to be somewhat worse than last year. There was plenty of bread in the town but less butter. Meat was a little

more easy to obtain but other things difficult. It was noticeable in the hotel that there was no caviar to be obtained. Butter was procurable for ourselves at any rate in generous quantities and served with breakfast and lunch. All the motorcars we saw were either American or Italian, but ten Rolls Royces were reported to be in circulation. Our evening meal was not bad, and we were served by a cook who took some interest in his art and produced a garniture of three kinds of potatoes to make up for the absence of any other vegetables.

In the bedrooms as usual there was a shortage of mattresses which either resulted in one's being bumped up against the wooden bedframes or in lying uncomfortably on nearly bare springs.

May 8th

It was quite impossible to obtain any kind of breakfast or even tea until 9.30. At 9.30 all the guests, including ourselves, assembled in the restaurant and waited a considerable time until a regular luncheon was served. It is difficult to understand how these hours fit in with an early day's work. The people we saw on the whole seemed better dressed, or at least as well dressed as any in Moscow. The street paving averaged about the same. It was said that it is possible to go by motorcar to Moscow [....]

Dnieprostroi

[...] We had kept a careful lookout at each of the other stations [*for homeless children*]. These were small children below the age of twelve, in one or two cases accompanied by their mothers. They were in any case professional beggars and were working the trains with success. The Russians as usual were generous and gave them bread and coppers. In a few cases the boys ate the bread forthwith, but in most cases put it by in their extremely dirty clothing. Peasant women were selling hardboiled eggs at half a rouble each and doing good business. After leaving Lozovaya we continued to pass through the rolling plains of the Black Earth country dotted with villages and spring growth. There was always at least one soldier guarding every bridge, and one or two at small block posts on the line. This was our first view of the steppes which, in the spring sunshine, was literally like a green ocean with wine-coloured patches of newly ploughed land. A certain amount of cattle was seen, the presence of one person in charge denoting that the cattle are the possession of a cooperative farm, whilst the presence of ten to fifteen peasants indicates that they are the property of private peasants. Generally speaking the land seemed to be under collective agriculture. The

Lithuanian Minister said that he had noticed a general improvement in the aspect of the country and villages since he passed through in 1929 [....]

General Impressions and Deductions

A country of obviously huge size. We made three trips of a distance equivalent to the journey from London to Durham and found ourselves still in the Ukraine, while the whole of European Russia forms only a small portion of the map of the Soviet Union.

Everywhere work is proceeding, and everything is in a state of flux. The fields are being cultivated, such herds of cattle as there are are being tended. They seemed very thin and the horses even more so. There is little that is complete and there is even more which requires demolition. While the relatively picturesque pre-war inheritance of wooden or mud huts in the villages will probably never disappear, rival conglomerations of communal farm buildings, workmen's dwellings, and communal kitchens are everywhere appearing. The small independent houses for the workmen or the peasant have unfortunately been found uneconomical. Communal farming, particularly in the more agricultural districts, is the general rule. The collective farm, declared only two years ago by Stalin to be a mere step to the State farm, appears to be taking root as a permanent institution. They are somewhat less inhuman than the State Farm. The early severity of purely theoretical communist doctrine is already being modified by concessions to the peasants in respect of small holdings and the possession of live stock and gardens.

The people are reported everywhere to be quiet – numb perhaps with apprehension. They realise nonetheless the advantages of tacit acquiescence in the policy of the Party over active opposition. At the present moment there would appear to be considerable shortage of food in Western Ukraine, shortage in the Eastern portion and probably definite want in the Volga area. One meets, however, but few beggars either in the towns or at the railway stations.

Russia is geographically large enough to fall into separate regions of production. Nowhere, except perhaps in the South, the Crimea and parts of the Caucasus can an even approximately self-sufficient community be imagined. In the extreme North, roughly speaking, a livelihood is only to be gained from furs, forests and fishing. The northern limit of corn passes not far North of Leningrad in a steep curve downwards across Eastern Russia and Siberia. Then comes the large northern limit of fruit-growing, a line which is roughly parallel and does not pass very far north

of Moscow. Below this we find a region, not very fertile but at least producing trees, corn, and fruit. Then the Black Earth district with practically no trees. Each of these regions must import commodities from the others.

Industrially the picture is much the same. The North Caucasian *krai* for instance is dependent on other districts for light industry. The Donets basin must import its timber, the pastoral steppes their corn.

And these distances are not inconsiderable. Bauxite comes from Leningrad to Dnieprostroi, twice the length of England. The new Kuznetz coal area in Siberia is some two thousand miles from almost any of its markets. Transport is therefore a prime necessity. Hitherto this has invariably been described as the weak spot of Russia. Inadequate as it may be, it does however work and the volume of material carried on the railways must be largely in excess of anything in pre-war days. There remains much to be done, not only in upkeep but in new construction. Cross-country lines appear insufficiently developed. This must contribute to the difficulty of providing supplies in time of shortage.

From the sociological point of view it would seem that the country is building an aristocracy, or rather a bourgeoisie. Certainly a class more intelligent, better paid, housed, and fed than the masses. It is impossible for each factory, each university, and each school to train its hundreds or its thousands of young people each year in all the groundwork of mechanical knowledge, physics and chemical science, without producing a class of relative supermen. The large percentage of Russians, as in all other countries, seem destined to manual labour of an unskilled or semi-skilled type.

Stalin complains of the too great fluidity of labour. The aspect of the railway platforms certainly demonstrates the existence of a huge seasonal migration. Efforts are being made to control this but seasonal demands for labour will always exist. The new bourgeoisie of the satchel bursting with plans, blue prints, and statistics, will tend to a certain stability. An individual for instance who had been carefully trained for 3½ years to become a communistically-minded mechanic is not likely to change his profession. Only a rare genius can emerge. A Russian child soon ceases to play with toys, and at a much earlier age than in England his toys become models of lathes and machines. A machine to do their work for them becomes their obsession. Will not those that really understand and can master these machines tend to become a new priesthood? There would seem no means of arresting this movement. Evolution is bound to occur and is occurring with visible and surprising rapidity but a new mechanical intelligentsia is arising with ever greater rapidity.

One is often asked whether the standard of life in Russia has gone up or down. This is difficult to answer. The potential standard of life is higher. The actual standard gauged by the quantity of commodities dear to the heart of the normal human being has been artificially prevented from rising while the well-to-do classes have ceased to exist. The demand created for the symbols of civilisation such as boots and shoes and ugly stereotyped clothing has enormously increased. The demand for books of an educational kind is probably also very great, although from what I can see this demand is fully met. Mental pabulum in the form of dull and useful literature is adequately supplied. Shortage is evident in the more material things such as food, clothing and houses.

I have referred once or twice to the independent feeling of the Ukraine and the Northern Caucasian *krai*. This does not appear to indicate any centrifugal movement of importance. It is rather perhaps a source of healthy emulation. The Bolsheviks have decided that the teaching of local languages helps to speed up the raising of the culture of the masses, or, in other words, the saturation of the people with communistic doctrines. This is part and parcel of the original doctrine of a universal revolution. Little or no success has fortunately attended their efforts outside Russia, but inside their enormous empire it is possibly the best policy from their point of view. A common bond of communistic ideology is possibly the strongest cement to hold together this heterogeneous mass of generally speaking, docile, backward and patient humanity. Against this the inherent adaptability of the human race, the natural inclination towards individualism in the manufacture and exchange of minor commodities, and the desire to surround oneself with individual as opposed to mass-produced conveniences all tend towards evolution.

Above all this one still finds the all-pervading sense of the presence of the secret police. This produces a malaise felt even by those such as a travelling diplomat whom the police protect as well as detect. To anyone else except a Russian it would seem almost intolerable. In all our trips, in the train in every town, these silent guardians were present. Whenever we took a car a man, whom we came to call "le Silencieux," took his place beside the driver. He never spoke. He offered no help in the case of a puncture. He merely looked on and listened. This supervision checks any independent political thought and any desire to discuss politics openly. The high-placed Party bosses alone are less inconvenienced by this constant supervision and talk more frankly.

Will this ever disappear? The "dictatorship of the proletariat" appears to involve the dictatorship over the proletariat. Will the new aristocracy finally acquire the right to criticise on independent lines? If so, life will become easier and more democratic, but it will only be achieved by a

weakening of the religious fervour of these early years. The Russian revolution like all others began like a bursting dam. Everything in its way was torn up and destroyed. The waters are not widespread and cover the country. One day they will begin to recede and leave the fertilizing deposit in which the seed of Communist doctrine have been implanted. The history of all revolutions tells us that the crop will not be "up to plan." There doubtless will be many weeds – unhealthy weeds of corruption and opportunism as well as many useful plants of commonsense. How much of the planned harvest will survive? It would not seem exaggerated to suggest that ownership of the major sources of production will remain in the hands of the State while the individual by his passive resistance will acquire some privileges to set off the dreariness of his State-ordered life. The country will then perhaps become more like an uncomfortable United States without the millionaires. The bosses are more likely to be present. Picturesqueness will everywhere be sacrificed on the altar of utilitarianism. Private property, that is to say, the possession of livestock, motorcars, pictures and even money will be increasingly permitted, but there appears little reason to think that during a lifetime the basic tenets of communism that no man is to use his capital or his hoarded possessions for the purpose of making someone else, or a group of other people, work for his private benefit, will suffer fundamental alteration. State ownership, even if it has not come to stay for ever, will at least receive a long trial. To all opponents of this system this may appear a pessimistic prognostication. Consolation can however be drawn from the belief that the new state of affairs will be too dreary for other people to copy and above all from the fact that many basic fallacies, such as the possibility of a universal wage, will have been exploded for all time. The elimination of such basic fallacies from the purview of the dissatisfied seekers of panaceas will not only have gone far to reduce the possibility of dangerous and destructive upheavals in our world but will do much to strengthen belief and confidence in our own methods of slow but sure constitutional evolution.

Minutes

This almost diurnal record of Sir E. Ovey's impressions would, I think, be more interesting if it were not overloaded with so much detail and repetition. No doubt the details have been introduced to enable the reader to form a more complete mental picture of the districts visited, and they succeed in reinforcing a general impression – already gained – of a pervading dirt, discomfort & slovenliness. Some sort of order is however emerging but for glimpses of it one has to search through a mass of

material which only serves to distract the attention & adds little to the record of things perceived, & not merely seen.

For the rest, I think the conclusions are instructive, when they are not platitudinous.

C. H. Bateman
4/6

This is very heavy reading – in fact, it is hardly worth while to read more than the covering despatch and the last section of the diary, entitled "General Impressions and Deductions." In general, Sir E. Ovey confirms the impressions we have derived from other sources.

L. Collier
June 1st

This is of course only meant to be an account of things seen in the course of an ordinary journey in S. Russia, & does not pretend to be more. It is on the long side, but not without interest.

M. Vyvyan
2/6

I find this long report or diary terribly jejune. Were there a demand in the House or by a Cabinet Min[*ister*] for any report by H. M. Ambassador on any journey by H. E. in Soviet territory, I sd. not be easy in my mind if this were produced.

I do not think an official Desp[*atch*] of thanks is called for. But I will acknowledge it in a private letter.

L.O. June 4

4

Situation in Soviet Union
Memorandum by J. D. Greenway, 8 June 1932

Memorandum

The following notes are an endeavour to formulate a personal appreciation of the situation in Russia to-day in its various aspects. Naturally, they contain no new idea or suggestion but, for the purposes of record, it may be convenient to draw up a brief resumé of our existing reports.

Financial

The double aspect of Russian finance, i.e., the internal rouble, which has no purchasing power abroad, and the stock of foreign valuta, which is gradually growing less or at least is not being replenished as it should be from exports[,] makes it especially difficult to estimate the soundness or otherwise of Russian credit. Ultimately, this depends, for the financing of imports, on the supply of exportable goods. The latter is rendered increasingly precarious by the facts:-

(a) that there has been a great fall in world prices of just those commodities which are more easily available for export from Russia, i.e., oil, timber, grain, hides, etc., as compared with the relatively stable price of the goods principally imported, i.e. machinery.

(b) that the Soviet authorities are being forced by circumstances to hand over to the population more consumption goods and commodities which would otherwise be available for export. They have been driven to this step by the growing discontent of the industrial workers and by the passive resistance or truculence of the peasantry.

The financial position of Russia may be seriously threatened by certain contingencies:-

(1) a widespread failure of the harvest, resulting in conditions approximating to those of 1921;

(2) a breakdown of the supply of raw products and export goods arising out of a failure of the transport system, or resistance of the population;

(3) embargoes or restrictions which may be placed on Soviet goods by a group of foreign Powers.

None of these contingencies (except possibly the last) can be considered as quite remote. On the other hand, it is often argued that hitherto the Russians have not defaulted on their import payments. This argument, however, contains an obvious fallacy, and it is generally conceded that Russian credit to-day is considerably weaker than it was, even six months ago, whether the causes of that depreciation are internal or external. Naturally, if Russia could get her industrial plan into working order in a degree sufficient to ensure that the country would become self-supporting, with her restrictions on the import of foreign currency she would, in time, become financially independent of the outside world, but for reasons advanced below, it will be seen that this is unlikely to occur.

Economic and Agricultural

The Five Year Plan proceeds on paper on its brilliant course; but viewed in the cold light of reason, its achievements become less dazzling. Even the Soviet leaders have expressed themselves as dissatisfied with the results of 1931, and the grandiose schemes for the Second Five Year Plan need not be taken too seriously, in view of what has already occurred. A certain case can indeed be made out for what has been achieved, but the industrial development of the country is more theoretical than real. The great factories and works which have been erected, have, for the most part, hitherto failed to justify their enormous cost, both in money, *moral* and health. Their output is often microscopic or of a quality that by Western standards is incredibly low, and though the Soviet authorities have acknowledged their mistakes, it may reasonably be doubted whether they can now repair them. The country is over-organised, and the machinery of the State apparatus clogged with bureaucracy, fear of responsibility, theory and mismanagement. Further important factors which must militate against economic progress, are bad transport, *sabotage* (which appears to be widespread), the fluidity of labour due to bad living conditions of the workers, conscripted labour, the great insufficiency of technical experts and skilled workmen; and finally, the discontent of the ordinary worker, conflicting with the blatant self-sufficiency of the younger Party members.

But so long as the individual continues to work for the pittance which he receives at present, whether the motive which urges him to do so is

fear or hunger, hitherto the principal allies of the Soviet power, the economic policy of the Soviet Government can be justified *up to a point* from an internal point of view by the argument of the needs of the State. But conditions are changing rapidly; so much so that Stalin has been compelled by circumstances to introduce the New Agricultural Policy, a modified form of Lenin's New Economic Policy, and to remove many restrictions which would have been rigorously maintained but for the growth of resistance. It is yet too early to forecast results, or even to consider the full implications of this move; but there is evidence to show that the peasantry are still suspicious and recalcitrant. Their organisation into collective farms has given them a power which, though still undeveloped, is, nevertheless, a force to be reckoned with most seriously; and with the example of the N.E.P. before them, and their experience of similar moves, though on a smaller scale, towards permitting a modicum of individual liberty, which has subsequently been revoked, they are not likely to suffer under any illusions as to the meaning of this new development of Soviet policy, or the extent of the breathing-space now permitted to them. The situation is further complicated by the prospects of an extremely bad harvest in the present year. Already in large districts of Russia, notably the Ukraine, conditions have become so much worse as to approach a state of famine, while it is generally agreed that the last winter was the hardest for the general population since 1921.

Internal

It will have been seen from the foregoing that the population in general are highly dissatisfied with the results of Stalin's policy. As far as can be ascertained, he has hitherto preserved his ascendancy by removing his rivals, actual or potential; but the various oppositions still survive, although they have been driven underground. We know that Bukharin has recovered some of his former authority, and it is reported that Rykov has been re-admitted to the Council of the Politburo, a fact which, if true, is of considerable significance. However, the temper of the Young Communists is still something of an enigma, and there are no special signs that their enthusiasm for the régime has waned sufficiently to permit of their being regarded as a factor making for change. On the other hand, it may be doubted whether they carry much weight in the inner circles of the Party. The Trade Unions are probably hostile, though passive, for they have lost the last shadow of their former power. The G.P.U. remain faithful enough, though even in their favoured ranks there have been dissensions, plots and counterplots. The loyalty of the Army is perhaps more open to doubt. The rank and file, being of peasant stock,

are naturally not enthusiastic supporters of the Communist Party. Their leaders are often jealous or ambitious men, who appear to have realised that they are indispensable for the preservation of the régime, and have acquired from that knowledge a dangerous desire for advancement or a hatred of the Central authorities whose elimination they have in some cases conceived to be a patriotic duty or a personal pleasure. There have been certain counter-revolutionary movements on a large scale in recent years in the Army. They have in all cases, hitherto, been suppressed, but the Central authorities must in future find their difficulties increasing in attempting to cope with these subversive plots. There are some who think, not unreasonably, that the overthrow of the Soviet must come eventually from the Army and the theory has much to recommend it.

It may be doubted whether the effect of the militarist spirit which is so sedulously fostered by the Soviet authorities in all sections of the population will be quite in accordance with the wishes of the Party, and there is good reason to believe in the possibility at least of the population using their newly acquired knowledge, in the event of a war, to turn upon their domestic oppressors. Whatever may be the intention of the latter regarding aggressive action against a foreign Power (and they have strenuously and persistently denied having the faintest desire to attack any other country, though that admirable sentiment hardly consorts with the implications in their avowed intention of bringing about the Millenium of world revolution), it nevertheless seems clear that the Army (peasant) reserves would not embark on such an adventure [....]

Military

Information about the Soviet fighting forces is naturally very restricted. It is known however that they are well armed and disciplined, with almost illimitable reserves. This last however constitutes a weakness rather than a strength, as the great mass of peasant reservists are frankly hostile to the existing régime.

The fighting value of such a force is doubtful. Some authorities consider that an attack on the U.S.S.R. would bind the country together and that a great wave of patriotism would drown all other sentiments. But it is hard to accept this theory against which can be set what is known of the peasants' reaction to collectivisation, their hatred of Communist methods and instruments and not least their peculiar character. In the event of aggressive action on the part of the Soviet power, it seems definitely established that they would not move, except possibly to turn on their superiors. Transport is an added difficulty: the Trans-Siberian Railway has of course been most useful in the recent moves of troops

to Eastern Siberia, but being for the most part single track its utility is restricted. On other railways the position is not so good, while, as far as is known, the Turksib is not yet sufficiently in working order to be of much value for the transport of troops.

The authorities however are at present concerned with one thing alone – a Japanese invasion of Siberia, which they appear to consider almost inevitable. It is credibly reported that there are at present no less than 200,000 troops east of Lake Baikal, and the figure may possibly be much higher. Whether or not this fear is justified it appears to dominate Soviet policy and renders aggressive action against any border State, including Afghanistan, quite impossible in present circumstances. In the latter case the difficulties of the central and local authorities are greatly increased by the persistent guerilla warfare (though on a small scale) which is reported to be going on. The recently revived "Basmachi" movement in Central Asia has not yet grown to any serious proportions, but even in its present stages it is a source of great embarrassment to the authorities, aided as it is by the sullen resistance to collectivisation and communism generally of the inhabitants of those regions, and by Moslem reaction to Soviet attacks on religion, and thus, in the event of an Amanullah putsch occurring in Afghanistan, there would seem to be no possibility of any active support by Soviet forces, still less of an invasion.

Everything still tends to show that, in spite of the universal military education, the inculcation of the spirit of war-mindedness and the vast military expenditure, the curve of which has accelerated lately in a remarkable manner, for which no other country can afford a parallel, aggressive action on the part of the U.S.S.R. can definitely ruled out as a possibility at the present stage of her development, unless despair impels her rulers to seek a blind issue by force of arms – and in this last event everything tends to show that the breaking point would be reached and that the enslaved population would not be slow to react to the opportunity which would thus be presented to them.

[*sgd.*] J. D. G.

Minutes

If the picture of conditions of Russia today presented in these notes is considered to be an accurate one, perhaps a copy may be given to Sir R. Maconachie in order that he may give the Afghans some idea of the Soviet situation as we see it.

J. D. Greenway

June 9.

5

Conditions in Western Siberia, Kazakstan and Certain Districts along the Volga

Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 21 June 1932, and Andrew Cairns to E. M. H. Lloyd, 7 June 1932

Confidential

Sir, Moscow, 21st June, 1932

With reference to my despatch No. 292 of the 4th June in which I enclosed a translation of a report by Dr. Schiller of the German Embassy on Soviet agriculture, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, for your information, an interesting report in the form of a private letter from Mr. Cairns to Mr. Lloyd of the Empire Marketing Board, regarding conditions in Western Siberia, Kazakstan and certain districts along the Volga.

2. Mr. Cairns is at present away on a three weeks tour in Southern European Russia and will presumably have further observations to offer with regard to that region.

I have, &c.
Esmond Ovey

Enclosure in No. 5

British Embassy, Moscow

E. M. H. Lloyd, Esq.,
Assistant Secretary,
Empire Marketing Board,
London, S.W. 1

Dear Lloyd, 7th June, 1932

As you will recall from my last letter, I left Moscow on May 10th. I returned on June 5th quite satisfied that the trip was not only well worth while, but extremely interesting, despite the innumerable but inevitable

discomforts and hardships which one must experience in travelling in the Soviet Union, particularly when departing from the main railroad lines.

2. The Embassy staff are interested in my observations and wish to send some of them to London, and as my time is too limited to write two separate accounts, one for the Empire Marketing Board emphasising agricultural problems and a brief one for the Embassy emphasising more general topics, and giving what little information I picked up about manufacturing and other subjects, I have decided to give you a chronological account of my trip in the form of a descriptive letter. I shall include a minimum of personal opinions and conclusions and try to give you just a simple picture of my observations.

3. The trip on the Trans-Siberian express during the first day was uninteresting as we were passing through the Central Industrial district. There were very few interesting passengers and I got little information from them. A young American journalist told me that some of his friends had recently written some despatches on the large number of peasants who had left the collective farms during the seeding campaign and were now moving to the towns to search for work and food, but they (the journalists) were unable to telegraph the reports to their papers as the Soviet Censorship Board had refused to pass them. An American engineer (Wood, an employee of the General Electric Co.) who had just returned from Magnetostroy and was on his way to Kuznets to install electrical machinery, told me a number of stories about the deplorable housing and food conditions of the workers at Magnetostroy, and also of very large numbers of work horses which had died there due to lack of food.

4. I was agreeably surprised to find that the food in the dining car was not only better than in the Grand Hotel in Moscow, but very much cheaper – omelet 1½ roubles as compared with 7 roubles in the Grand, Russian tea 15 kopeks (50 in Grand), coffee – made out of burnt barley – 65 kopeks (1¾ roubles in Grand); a plain meal which costs from 15 to 25 roubles in the Grand was only 5 to 7 roubles on the train.

5. I made a point of getting out at practically all the stations at which the train stopped to ask the price of what little agricultural produce was for sale and to try my extremely bad pigeon Russian on the peasants (at every station there are literally hundreds of them waiting for trains to take them, in their own words, "wherever their eyes fall"). During the first day, May 11th, the prices were very high (½ litre of milk 1 rouble, very small loaf – really a large bun – of soggy, heavy, black bread 2 roubles, eggs 10 for 4 roubles, 8 tiny fish 2 roubles – these prices taken at Kotelnaya, are typical of the prices taken during the day), but for

some items, particularly eggs, not so high as the prices quoted during my trip to the Lower Volga. But despite the high prices and scarcity of goods, I saw little, if any, begging which was obviously not of a professional type. The rate of collectivisation in the Moscow, or the Central Industrial Region, has not been so rapid as in the grain areas so I noticed a good deal of strip (individual) farming and in every case (whether on individual or collective farms) the only type of cultivation I saw all day was a small plough or harrow being drawn by an extremely thin and hungry horse – during the three day trip I did not see a single tractor working.

6. On the 12 and 13th of May, conditions got progressively worse as we went south-east – both in the Urals and Western Siberia. Goods were not only scarce and prices higher, but the amount of begging (obviously not professional begging, but genuine cases of hunger) by children, women and men was simply amazing. I expect when I return to Canada I shall soon forget what little Russian I know, but never will I forget the Russian equivalent of "please give me some bread," or the expression on the faces of the tens to scores of people who made the request at practically every station at which I got out during the late afternoon and night of May 12th and all day of May 13th. On the last day I had a chat with two Russian generals who were on their way to some military camp in Eastern Siberia and when I asked them what their Government were going to do to solve the acute shortage of food we had witnessed all day, I got the answer I expected – collective farms and State farms, mechanisation and agrotechnical measures, etc., etc. They asked me what salary I received and when I told them they said they were surprised it was so small, as a pound was worth only 7 roubles now. They then asked the price of my top boots, breeches, shirt, etc., etc. and were astounded (in fact I doubt if they believed me) that they were so low – I quoted all the prices in roubles at the official rate of exchange!

7. A German doctor on the train who was returning to his home in China, told me a good deal about life in Western Siberia during and after the War. He had been a prisoner of war and stayed for a few years after the Revolution. He wanted to know why he saw so few dairy cattle when Western Siberia used to be world famous as a dairy centre. I did not like to tell him about the slaughter of millions of livestock during the compulsory collectivisation in 1929-30, or the large number which had since died of hunger, so I put him off with a question. He was amazed at the prices, as he said one could live on the best of food when he was in Western Siberia before for 25 roubles per month.

8. In the evening of May 13th I arrived in Novosibirsk, the capital of Western Siberia. The sight at and around the depôt was very depressing

– several hundred people, many asleep, many begging and many just sitting shivering (it was a cold raw night) in their rags. After the usual futile argument I agreed to pay 10 roubles and was driven a short distance to the new hotel. As usual, they had no rooms, but also, as usual, after seeing my letters of introduction from the Government in Moscow and after a few long conferences, I got a room – the price was fairly reasonable, only 12 roubles per night, as compared with what I paid in Moscow and Saratov, 28 and 30 respectively. The quality of the material and construction work in the hotel was almost beyond belief. The building had been up only two years, but it was already a wreck – the window frames had been not only extremely badly fitted, but apparently were made of unseasoned wood as, despite the double windows, the wind and dust could enter the room without the slightest difficulty through every joining; the oak floor was likewise made of unseasoned wood and as the wood had contracted, the cement had broken, and I could actually pick up a number of the sections and see the bed bugs in the insulating material underneath. A Scottish architect showed me the drainage and sanitary equipment in the hotel and stated that like in most of the numerous new buildings in Novosibirsk it was not a sanitary system at all, but a mere sham. I am quite sure he was telling the truth as he was very friendly to the Bolsheviks; had waited 4 months for a reply to his application for a position, paid his own passage to Moscow, was working for only roubles and so far had not saved any. He also told me a number of interesting stories about his associates' loved for complicated formula, how they worked out plans to the third and fourth decimal point when the data required only rounding off in whole numbers, and that the number of people required to draw up the plans was several times as great as he had been accustomed to.

9. After much trouble on May 14th, I finally got in touch, by telephone, with the head of the foreign department in the Institute for the Socialistic Reconstruction of Agriculture. He said he would call at my hotel in a few minutes. He turned up at 3 p.m. and said the director (to whom I had a letter of introduction), the assistant director, and the other officials who could receive me were not in and, although it was strictly against the rules, had not left word where they could be found. But he would try again, so off he went to telephone. At 4 p.m. he returned to say that the end of the working day in offices was 3.30, so there was nothing to do but wait until tomorrow when he would get the director and after a conference about my visit they would receive me. He would give me the particulars when he telephoned in the morning at 10 a.m. I then went out for a walk and saw many interesting sights. I visited a small store on the main street where many people were buying in very

small quantities bread (very black and very heavy, as it contained very nearly the maximum amount of moisture grain meal will absorb, and very coarse) at 6 roubles per kilo. There were, of course, the usual long lines of people waiting for their turn to get in to the "closed" shops. I visited a large open shop to price the goods: mens' cloth coats lined with sheepskin 416 roubles, ladies' fur coats 744 roubles, mens' shirts (they looked like a coarse grain sack with three holes cut in it before dipping it in ink) 59 and 79 roubles, ladies' purses 33 roubles, paper handbags and suitcases 30 to 80 roubles, and small wooden cannons 4 to 5 roubles.

10. As I knew that 10 a.m. in Russia meant sometime in the afternoon (in this case it turned out to be 2 p.m.), I did not wait long next morning (June [*May*] 15th) for a call, but went to the large bazaar where I had an interesting time gathering price statistics. A few of the typical quotations follow: One small glass (small tea cupful) of rye 2½ roubles, one glass sunflower seeds 1 rouble, pair of top leather boots 160 roubles, small handful of used nails 1 rouble, very small bottle milk 1⅗ roubles, eggs 10 for 6 roubles. There must have been 1,500 to 2,000 people in the bazaar.

11. In the afternoon I spent several hours with the head officials (7 of them) of the Institute for the Socialistic Reconstruction of Agriculture. They explained the work they were doing at great length (planning, specialisation, economic investigations, publication of scientific studies and propaganda, mechanization, agro-technique, etc., etc.), showed me many fine graphs and maps, presented me with several books, and then bombarded me with questions for two hours about Canadian and U.S. agriculture, foreign politics, Japan, etc., etc. In the evening I went to have dinner with a most unhappy member of the staff of the German Consulate (he had been in Novosibirsk 6 weeks after spending the three happiest years of his life in the German Embassy in London) and when returning to my hotel at 2 a.m. saw several women already waiting in line for the Government store to open at 9 a.m. As you know, many German prisoners of War stayed in Siberia after the Revolution and during NEP did very well. However, things are now very bad and very many of them are returning to Germany, so the Consulate is kept busy. The Japanese also have a Consulate in Novosibirsk to meet the needs, I was told by the Germans, of Trans-Siberian passengers!

12. I should have added in the last paragraph that the officials of the Institute for the Socialistic Reconstruction of Agriculture told me, among many other interesting things, the following:-

1. The dairy industry in Western Siberia was about as large as in pre-war days and to-day they were shipping more butter from Western Siberia than before the war.

2. The "compulsory" collectivisation in 1929-30 had not been pushed as hard in Western Siberia as in the older parts of Russia, so they did not lose so large a proportion of their live-stock.

3. Only ⅓ of the suitable land was now under cultivation and by 1937 they would double area under grain and export 65% of the production.

4. At first they said the spring had been very early and the grain sown in April had been badly frozen and they had to stop the seeding, but later they said they expected a good crop as the recent heavy rains around Omsk and in the main wheat area had been very beneficial.

The German Consul told me that despite repeated assurances in the local newspaper that good rains were, like prosperity in the U.S. during the past two years, "just around the corner," they had had only a few drops of rain in the past six weeks. Later I spent 9 days either motoring or on slow local trains in the main wheat area and not only saw no rain, but both the surface and sub-soil were everywhere as dry as powder and they had obviously had little or no rain this spring or last autumn. Moreover, during my visit to Western Siberia from May 12th to 28th I did not see but a few drops of rain.

5. They confirmed the serious drought in the western and southern parts of the Western Siberia last year, and said they got only a fraction of the average (300 mm. per year and about 160 during the period of vegetation) precipitation.

6. They all regarded the new decree about grain collection and trading with great favour and pointed out how it would enable the collective farms and their members to make some money by selling their produce.

13. In the afternoon of May 15th I told the Institute that I was anxious to get out into the country to see the farms. They promised to have a conference about the matter that night and take me to the country early next morning. On May 16th at 10 a.m. my interpreter 'phoned to say that the director had not yet arrived, but as soon as he came a conference would be held to arrange matters. At 3.30 my interpreter arrived to say the others would be a little late and at 4.30 they actually turned up. Incidentally, my interpreter told me that he had lost his wife recently – spotted typhus. The poor chap had been in the States and I could see in his face what he was thinking, but he did not talk. Next day they gave me a new interpreter, a young Russian-American girl who had come to the U.S.S.R. in 1922 with her family along with a group of miners from W. Virginia. She seemed to be a good loyal communist, but told me the living conditions of the miners in Western Siberia were very bad. She also told me that the head of their foreign department had died a few days before from spotted typhus caught by going to the station to meet people. During the remainder of my stay in Novosibirsk I had a good

interpreter (a Hungarian Jew, formerly prisoner of war in Siberia, then a general in the Red Army during the Revolution, and now head of the foreign department of the State Bank in Western Siberia), and he availed himself of every opportunity to supply me with information – he was sending money regularly to feed his unemployed brother in Budapest. he had never been hungry but if he ever were he would steal and fight for food, if Russia had made the progress during the past 50 years which she has made during the past 10 she could face the world at war single-handed, etc., etc.

14. We left by motor late for the model pig collective farm and did not return until very late in the evening. As I am sure this letter is going to be much too long I will not attempt to describe the pig farm except to say that it had much fine and expensive equipment. The pens were clean and well white-washed, the pigs were not only well bred (all from imported English Whites), but well fed and in good condition, and the three childrens' gardens they showed me contained many healthy children (excepting a few cases of obvious malnutrition) being taught anti-religion and other good communist subjects. Dr. Schiller visited the same farm later and he confirmed my impression, by saying it was by far the best pig farm he had visited in the Soviet Union. In one of the pens I noticed a pig with its four legs stretched and although it was rather dark I thought something was the matter so went into the pen and discovered first that its legs were made of iron bolted to the floor, then that its mouth was wood, then that it was entirely made of wood except the skin and ears, which were real. I could not keep from laughing so I remarked that a bore's* life in Russia was rather hard. But much to my surprise, after supper they put on a demonstration for my benefit and in the presence of several women assistants, a specialist, a fine microscope and much other scientific equipment, and several most ingenious pieces of apparatus, they produced 160 cubic centimetres of semen (the specialist in charge told me he had received as much as 600 cc.) from a fine bore purchased recently at an exhibition in England for 700 gold roubles. I made full notes of the methods and apparatus used, as a number of people in Canada asked me to make special enquiries about the artificial insemination work being done in Russia.

15. The farm had 828 pigs (and 600 commercial pigs on an adjoining farm), 300 workers (not including their families), 35 specialists and their families, a large meteorological station, an electrical plant, and much other expensive equipment. The pigs were fed on corn brought all the way from the North Caucasus, and oil cake from Omsk and Novosibirsk.

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*Note in margin: "boar?"

When I enquired why they went to such enormous expense for pig feed, the director replied that my criticism was a valid one, but that last year their crop (350 hectares) had been a complete failure. In view of the fact that they were doing a good deal of experimental work (much of it in my opinion very stupid, such as maintaining big silos to provide ensilage for pig feed) and that the stock would be used to improve the stock of commercial swine on the State pig farms, perhaps the colossal expense of maintaining such an enormous staff and such a large amount of expensive equipment can be justified, but personally I doubt it very much. When I was leaving I was presented with two very large bottles of cream, about 10 pounds of butter, and the warm regards of the workers on the collective farm to their comrades in Canada.

16. On the way back to town my guides wanted my impressions. I told them it was a most interesting farm and that they had fine stock. But they were not satisfied and wanted my criticisms. I replied that I could not understand why they needed 300 workers (not to mention the 35 specialists) to attend to about 1400 pigs. I told them that when farming during the war in Alberta my two brothers and I operated a 960 acre farm, had from 150 to 250 cattle and from 50 to 75 horses, pigs, and sheep, etc. and that we had no hired labour as we could do all the work ourselves. At first they thought that I was joking, but later they concluded that the explanation must be greater mechanization in Canada than in Russia. I did not have the heart to tell them that when we bought one of the first Fordson tractors, and later a larger one, we lost money and found we could work much cheaper under the conditions on our farm (similar to those around Novosibirsk) with horses.

17. On the morning of the 17th I went to see the head of the Department of Agriculture for West Siberia (until a few months ago he was the director of all State grain farms in the U.S.S.R.). He told me that at 12 o'clock on May 18th he would 'phone me and give me the results of the seeding campaign in all Western Siberia (on State, collective, and individual farms) up to the night of May 15th. How they do it is a mystery to me. Of course, much of it is done by millions of telegrams, but even so the confusion must be very great. For example Dr. Schiller sent a telegram from Omsk to a friend in Samara on May 28th. It arrived just 3 days after we arrived in Samara by train from Omsk. Another telegram, which we sent from some station in the Bashkir Republic, on May 29th, had not reached Samara on June 3rd when we left. I asked the director how they collected the statistical data of seeding on the individual farms (the official figures show 65% collectivisation in Western Siberia) and he and all the others in the office had a good laugh and told me that they (the individual peasants) had to come to the Chairmen of village soviets

and report on how much they had sowed. The director told me many other interesting things:

1. Last year the yield of grain in Western Siberia, owing to the drought, was only 1½ to 10 centners per hectare (centner 220 metric pounds and a hectare 2.47 acres).

2. Of the 124 rayons in Western Siberia, 38 had a complete crop failure last year.

3. In many districts the weather was unfavourable, but the very early spring and the frost (which forced them to stop seeding) had enabled them to get much more land and seed ready for sowing than they could have done had the weather been normal.

4. From a study of weather data over a period of 50 years, he knew they were going to have an enormous crop in Western Siberia this year.

5. Eighty per cent of the land and 60 per cent of the agricultural population had been socialised. This year 8 million hectares of grain would be sown (in 42 State grain "factories" and other types of State farms, 1.8; collective farms, 5.43; and the remainder on individual farms) as compared with 7.4 last year.

6. The seeding would be finished on May 22nd instead of June 25th last year. When I asked why the chart on the wall showed an increase of last year's sowing area from 7 to 7.4 million hectares, from June 25th to July 1st, they told me that after making a final survey last year they had concluded that their first estimate (7 million) was much too low.

18. After we finished with the director of the Department of Agriculture for Western Siberia, I was taken back to the Institute. I protested that I wanted to see farms, collective and individual, and peasants, and that the time I had already spent at the Institute was all I could afford. But they would not listen to me and insisted I spend the afternoon with them over their maps, plans, specialisation zones, charts and curves. There was nothing else to do, so I had to go through with the arranged programme. Among many other things, I was told that it cost only 2.9 to 4.2 roubles to produce one centner of wheat in the Western Siberian State farms.

19. In the evening I went for a walk with Munroe (the Scottish architect) and he told me about his visit to Kuznetz and, in his words, "what a horrible hole it was." But things there have changed because I read in a Moscow paper a week later that: "The decision of the government of the R.S.F.S.R. to rename Kuznetz 'Stalinsk' had met with warm response among the workers employed on construction of the giant metallurgical plant in Siberia. Many brigades, upon hearing the decision, expressed great enthusiasm, decided to adopt cost accounting and to speed up production." I should have mentioned previously that Mun-

roe gets 16 roubles per day. However, he gets all his goods at the closed store for nominal prices. For instance, at the G.P.U. Club (the only place foreigners can eat in Novosibirsk – not because it is G.P.U., but because the food is partly digestible) he paid 3 roubles for the same dinner (soup, 2 slices black bread, meat dish and sweet) which cost me 8 to 10.

20. On May 18th I was taken by a party of five (all Party men but my interpreter) to what I had been informed was a typical collective farm, but when I got there I discovered (not to my surprise) that it was made up of 80 per cent workers from the towns and 20 per cent of poor peasants – both specially picked. I took down all the statistics, but as it was most certainly not a typical farm in any sense of the word I will not trouble you with the detailed figures. The population of the farm was 370 (198 workers); the area sown to grain 550 hectares; 2500 frames for growing early vegetables; 120 horses and 3 tractors from the M.T.S. One of the tractors (they were all made in Stalingrad) had its cylinders out for repairs, and the other two had several men under and around them making repairs all the time I was on the farm. They took me to their kindergartens; one with 20 infants, one with 21 babies and one with 37 children. The babies and children all seemed clean and healthy – when I was there they were having lunch, porridge made of millet and milk. The director said things were difficult this year on account of the poor harvest last year, but if I would return next year he was confident I would agree with him that their workers had a higher standard of living than the Canadian farmers. A group of workers gathered as we left to send their warm fraternal greetings to their communist brothers in Canada. On our way home, while passing through a typical Russian village, which I would have like to stop and see, a boy threw a bottle at us and my guides explained that he was the son of an individual peasant as a collective farm boy would not do such a thing!

21. In the evening Dr. Schiller (the Agricultural Attaché of the German Embassy) came to see me and had many apologies for meeting me on the 18th instead of the 12th as we had arranged. The telegram he sent me to Saratov was not delivered and in Semipalatinsk (the capital of Kazakstan, from where he had just returned), as elsewhere in Russia, organising a visit for a foreigner was a complicated and difficult problem and of course took much time. We then traded information. Here is his story:

22. He had been in Russia for eight years and he knew the agricultural situation was very serious, but he could not have imagined that conditions anywhere could be so terrible as in Western Siberia and Kazakstan. In 1925 he had taken a long trip with camels through the central and southern part of Kazakstan and the plains were thickly dotted every-

where with cattle. A week ago he had driven by motor over 116 kilometres of good grass to visit a State farm out from Semipalatinsk and he did not see one single head of livestock. The population of Kazakstan was 5 million, 3½ million of which were Kirgizians, but many, many thousands of the Kirgizians had died of hunger and, in his opinion, one million must die as they were all nomads and without their cattle (the bulk of which had been collected by the Government for meat), they could not live. Many thousands of Kirgizians were travelling into West China and the North to Siberia in search for food. I can personally vouch for the accuracy of his statement about the suffering and starvation of many natives of Kazakstan in Western Siberia. At every station I saw hundreds of them – all thin, cold, rag-clad, hungry and many begging for bread. At one station I saw 500 of them in a cattle train being taken to work in Kuznetz. In Slavgorod many of them (I have photographs of them) were begging for bread, some getting on their knees and others lying down to do it. In two days motoring in one direction from Slavgorod I saw many small groups of Kirgizians camping on the prairie – every group beside a horse which had died and all eating the meat for food, and drying the skin in the sun to make boots, etc. In one place on the prairie I counted 22 Kirgizian graves (it is easy to tell their graves as they are very high, the dead being buried sitting, facing the East).... But I must continue with Schiller's story. Like myself, he had the statistics of the livestock population in the U.S.S.R. in 1930, but he was convinced they were too high, as they were based on taxation estimates. The Government had taken a census of the livestock population in February of this year and he had been told in confidence by members of the staff of the Department of Agriculture in Moscow that the results were so catastrophical that they felt the figures must be wrong. Personally he thought the figures were so bad they would not be published. In 1928 Russia had about 26 million pigs (or about the present pig population of Germany), but the latest figures from the census he was told were between 8 and 9 million. Personally he was convinced there were not more than 7 million pigs in Russia to-day and he thinks Russia has lost from ½ to ⅔ of her livestock since 1928. Many thousands of horses and cattle and other livestock had died since the census was taken in February. The reason for the sad fate of the poor natives of Kazakstan was, of course, the government collection of livestock. In the light of the information contained in this paragraph, the decree issued a short time ago, announcing a reduction, by one-half, in the government's meat collecting plan, makes interesting reading – also the wholesale dismissal and prosecution of State livestock farm directors and other officials which received so much publicity in the Russian press during, I think, March.

23. On May 19th we visited "farms" with a large party of guides (the Western Siberian representative of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, a member of the Western Siberian Soviet Council, the head of the Western Siberian agronomic department – the same fellow who accompanied me on the three previous days and who stayed with us night and day until we left Omsk on May 28 – and a number of others). As we met in front of the Soviet building, some poor Mongolians came up with their children and asked for bread in a manner which obviously embarrassed the representative of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. The first "farm" we visited was a closed co-operative workers' collective farm – 2000 people, 1000 workers, 740 hectares (240 of which to be sown to potatoes), 1600 rabbits, 302 horses, 10 tractors, and a few cows and hogs for their own use – financed by the State Bank and intended to serve the needs of the workers on the close-by factory which was to be built. I photographed a large group of school children who were visiting the farm to see what the Soviet Government were doing in agriculture – cucumbers ready to eat in May in Western Siberia. The next farm we were taken to was one of the famous Russian rabbit farms, about which so many pages of the leading Russian papers have been filled during recent weeks, through a fine pine forest. As we motored through the forest I saw many soldiers (cavalry and machine gun brigades) training. The rabbit farm, like all the other State farms, I visited, had many worker specialists, many buildings and other expensive equipment. They had 4000 rabbits. A large number of them were housed in big expensive new buildings, but they had just discovered that fewer rabbits died when they were outside, both winter and summer, so they would not need the buildings any more. They took us to their laboratories, skin-curing station, rabbit kitchens, etc. The rabbits were fed on different food every day during the five day week – when we were there they were being fed on burnt oats, as they had all caught dysentery from some unsuitable food they had received.

24. On the morning of May 20th a German architect, who had been in Novosibirsk 10 years and had drawn the plans for many of the big new buildings, took Schiller and me to see the town. We first went to the bazaar. We asked a peasant woman (she looked like a hard working type) what she wanted for a small live chicken. She replied, 20 roubles. We protested that it was a very high price. She replied that all of the previous day she had looked for bread or meal and the best she could do was to buy from the Government one pood (36 metric pounds) of rye meal for 80 roubles, and that the Government had collected the rye from the peasants and paid them 40 kopeks (4/10 of a rouble) per pood. We asked if she was a collective farm member and she said she had been,

but had left because now she goes hungry only 3 to 4 days a week whereas she was hungry 7 days a week when in the collective farm. We next priced what little bread was for sale – 2 small buns 1 rouble, one large slice of white bread 2 roubles, and, free of charge, the remark of a peasant standing by, that by the end of the time set for the second Five Year Plan such a slice of bread would cost 50 roubles! Very poor print cloth was being sold on the market for 6½ roubles per metre (our German guide told us the same cloth could be purchased for 13 kopeks in 1927). There was practically no meat of any description for sale in the bazaar (it was a very large bazaar), but we saw a little sausage at one rouble for a very small piece. There were a few potatoes for sale – 10 roubles per small pailful.

25. On our way home from the bazaar we saw a crowd on the street and went to have a look. A woman was sitting in the dust with a small baby at her breasts, and two young children were sitting crying for food. A woman went by and turned to us and said, "You can see such sights all over the Soviet Union," and a number of others spoke up and said, "Yes, she is right." Schiller turned to me and said (as he did many times in the next 2 weeks), "I am very astonished at the way people talk, they do not seem to care who hears them, I have never heard the people talk so much, so bitterly, or so openly before." We then passed a prison. I could not get a good look, as a wooden fence was built around it, but on looking through the cracks I saw many faces looking out from behind the bars of each window and I thought of the nice little speeches I had heard about Russian prison life (holidays, freedom, etc.) in Chatham House. Our German guide then took us to see a few of the large new buildings. The quality of the workmanship was simply beyond belief. In one large building they had forgotten to put in the steel reinforced beams, so they had made holes in the wall and put wooden ones in.

26. In the afternoon of the 20th we called on the Lord Mayor of Novosibirsk (the Chairman of the Soviet) and after exchanging compliments were driven in a Buick car to see the town. We first visited a large plant (at present only much extremely poor concrete foundation work) where 9,000 workers were working to construct a large factory where mining machinery would be manufactured by 40,000 workers. I would have liked to ask why they were building such a factory (they told us with pride that when completed it would cover 300 hectares) so far from the coal at Kuznetz and even much farther from the iron mines in the Urals, but I held my tongue. Next we visited a hospital and then an enormous American cafeteria, in the making, where 40,000 dinners per day were to be served, and where the food was to be analysed and scientifically balanced each day in the big laboratory they were just finishing. I won-

dered what they were going to use for food, but I did not ask any questions. The Lord Mayor told us that the population of Novosibirsk was 230,000 on January 1st, 1932, was now 250,000 and would be 700,000 by 1937 and that 60 per cent of the recent increase was due to peasants moving into the town. We were also told about the coming 3 universities, the 30 technical institutes, 25 scientific institutes, 300,000 k.w. electric production to take the place of coal, and 25,000 combines that were to be built in the new big factory under construction.

27. On the night of May 20th we left Novosibirsk, well supplied with food by the German Consul. I should add that the German Consul was exceedingly nice to me and on the two nights we dined with him he told us a good deal about life in Siberia during his 16 years residence. Much to my surprise a man came along with us. I said to Schiller: "Why does he come? We do not need him, and he has been with me for nearly a week now, and I do not like him." Schiller said: "I don't like him either, but he is the eyes of the Government and will come with us and make arrangements, besides it does not matter because things are so bad he cannot keep us from finding out a great deal." But Schiller was fooled, as our guide (the head of the agronomic organisation for Western Siberia) was not only obviously told to keep Schiller from talking to the people, but Schiller could not move out of his sight or hearing for more than a minute or two, night or day, during the next eight days.

28. We arrived in a place called Tatarsk[*a*]ia next morning, and had to wait until nearly noon for a train to take us south to Slavgorod. We went into the small buffet, got out our food and had breakfast while little girls and boys stood around and asked for bread. Later workers came in with their little slips of paper and got soup, two small slices of black bread, a small piece of fish and a glass of "coffee." As each worker finished his meal there was a scramble of children and one or two women and men for their soup plates to lick, and their fish bones to eat. Later we saw the train load of Kirgizians which I referred to earlier. I wanted to take a photograph of them, but Schiller warned me it was against the law to take pictures in railway stations. It is just as well I heeded his warning as later, when Schiller was photographing three miserable and hungry small boys, a high official of the G.P.U. came up and demanded to see his papers. Schiller gave him his special diplomatic card, so he just remarked that it was against the law to take photographs in the station. The amount of begging for bread all forenoon was very depressing. A German carpenter came to Schiller and told him many stories. We, of course, did not know whether there was a word of truth in what the carpenter said, but Schiller seemed to credit his stories. Among many other things he said that a few days before at Pavlodar (or in a town near

Slavgorod by some such name) he had seen 400 Kirgizians buried in one grave.

29. All the afternoon and evening, as we travelled south on the train, I was astonished at the tens of thousands of hectares of good land in unbroken stretches which was lying idle, growing weeds. The land had obviously been in crop last year or a year or two before. I would keep remarking to Schiller how amazed I was, but he replied that he was not surprised, because he knew last autumn when the peasants in the Volga and Siberia started to wander by the scores of thousands, that uncultivated land this spring could be the only result. During our train journey many Germans and Russians came to talk, and without exception their stories were painful to hear. As our guide was by our side every minute we could not ask many questions. Typical of our visitors were two Germans who came on to the train at a station where we stopped for some time. They had heard we were two German specialists and had come to ask if we could not help them to get work at Kuznetz, as they had families, and the authorities at Kuznetz wanted people without families. Of the 40 families living in this small village, 38 had left to look for work and food.

30. We arrived in Slavgorod late at night. The Mayor of Novosibirsk had telegraphed the Mayor of Slavgorod that we were coming, so a room in the small hotel had been specially whitewashed in our honour. Unfortunately, the whitewash had not been very effective as we both did a good deal of killing before we went to bed, and after we turned the lights out I would no sooner make a capture when I would hear Schiller across the room scratching and swearing and wondering when the bed bugs would let us go to sleep. Next morning (May 22) we took advantage of our guide's absence (he was reporting to the Mayor) to go straight to the bazaar. I shall never forget the visit. We were not there five minutes before hundreds surged close around us to tell us that all the people were hungry, that they (town workers, collective farm members, and individual peasants alike) worked and worked but got little bread, that people were eating all the dead horses and gophers, many were dying every day of hunger, etc., etc. We saw wheat on sale for 60 roubles per pood (36 pounds), wheat meal for 80 roubles per pood, meal containing a very high percentage of ground up chaff, and other fibrous material, 35 roubles per pood. A small boy on the point of death was standing holding up his little shirt displaying thighs only about 3 or 4 inches thick. As Schiller took a photograph of him, two women with tears streaming down their faces said: "That is what is going to happen to all of us. Will you give that picture to the newspapers in America, so that they will send us food?" A little later we were met by a formal delegation who

had been sent by a meeting in a church close by (Baptist) to ask us to come. We decided to go, and one-third of the bazaar (about 150) came with us and all wanted to tell us of the misery and hunger of the people. But, alas, we just arrived at the meeting door when our guide met us to say the Mayor was waiting to receive us.

31. While on our way to be received by the Mayor, we passed a group of Kirgizians working, under guard, digging a cellar. The Mayor was comfortably dressed, fat and cheerful. Most of the people in his rayon had come from the Ukraine a long time ago, 85 per cent of the peasants were in collective farms, they were sowing 120,000 hectares this year as compared with 133,000 last year, but the decrease in area would be more than made up by the improvement in quality; they would have a good harvest this year as they had 78,000 hectares ready for spring sowing last autumn; they had supplied 8,000 tons of grain to the government last autumn and winter and 35,000 tons in 1930; they had 12,000 cattle, and 10,000 sheep, they had not lost many cattle (two days later when a young bull died in our presence he said there was a bad epidemic in Western Siberia which had caused the death of many cattle) despite the shortage of feed; they were going to build many silos; they had 228 tractors (90 Case), 9,276 horses, 16,000 people in the town and 38,414 in the country. We then went in his car to see the town, the new bank, the new post office, and then to their institute, where the director told us all about his 230 students, who were being trained to be agricultural experts, showed us their study plan (I was struck by the high proportion of time directed to military study and Russian politics), and explained that 90 per cent of the students had scholarships. Then we saw the inevitable aeroplane with students who were 100 per cent up to plan, others on a horse who were only 99.77 per cent up to plan, others on cows, pigs, bicycles and motorcycles, and finally the 98.5 per cent students (I have not made these figures up, I copied them down from the boards) on a tortoise. Next we had a good lunch with our host in a special restaurant for "active" people, and were charged the usual price of only 75 kopeks. They wanted to show us the large local M.T.S. (machine tractor station) and other town sights in the afternoon, but we protested that we had come to see farms and peasants, so we (2 cars and 10 men) got out into the country immediately after an early lunch, and did not return until very late at night. As we drove for miles and miles across the prairie on both sides of the road were vast stretches of land (which had been in crop in recent years) untouched by a plough or implement of any kind, and all growing a good crop of weeds. Even Schiller who was not surprised the day before when for 10 hours we had seen enormous stretches of such land on both sides of the rail road, said from time

to time: "The peasants are wandering and the land is growing only weeds."

32. We passed through a number of villages which we would have liked to have seen and studied as they contained many deserted houses, but we did not like to ask our guides to stop. Finally we arrived at the first farm we were to see – a German Commune called "Rosa Luxemburg." The farm had 63 families and they had sown 100 per cent of the plan – 1,600 hectares of grain – had 120 cows, and like all the other collective farms in the region, had part of their work done by the Government machine tractor station. The second farm we visited had 270 people (22 families had left to work at Kuznetz). The next village we stopped in was the Soviet centre for the adjacent 6 villages which had sown 100 per cent of the plan – 4,700 hectares. We motored a good distance to the next farm, and saw many thousands of hectares untouched by any implement; much of it had been in crop last year and the old crop was still standing as it had not been worth cutting and it was one mass of weeds. We also saw many dead horses being eaten by the Kirgizians. The third farm we visited, an artel called "Red Victory," had 64 families (335 people and 133 workers), had just finished their sowing plan 1,460 hectares, had 73 working horses and 21 young ones, 295 cattle and 70 calves – 92 milking and 30 not milking. The 92 cows, which were milked three times per day, were then (the peak of the milk season) giving a total of only 553 litres per day; the average production per cow per year was to be 600 litres. We then looked through the collective farm plan book (the standard type – 47 pages of closely printed tables for records – for all collective farms) and discovered that the plan called for 7 centners of wheat, 6 of oats and 100 of potatoes per hectare this year, and for the delivery to the Government of 462 centners of milk for 2,772 roubles, or 6 roubles per 220 pounds (in the bazaars at Slavgorod milk was 1 rouble for ½ litre!). As on many other farms we visited, there were three types of cattle on the farm. First those fully socialised (i.e. 85 per cent of the milk to the Government and 15 per cent to the calves); second, those collectivised but for the use of the members; and third, those belonging to individual members.

33. Next morning May 23, we decided to get up very early, while our guide was asleep in the next room, and go to the bazaar. We were no sooner out of the hotel (6 a.m.) when who should appear but our guide. We told him we were going for a few minutes walk for some fresh air, and if he would please get out my tea and bread and Schiller's sausage we would be back in a few minutes for breakfast. We were not in the bazaar 10 minutes when our guide arrived to inform us that he had breakfast ready. We said we would come in a few minutes. Peasants and town

workers crowded around us by the scores and spoke very bitterly of their hunger and asked what was going to become of them. Our guide was very unhappy and said: "Come on, this is just kulak agitation, we will go for breakfast." But we were not ready to go, so Schiller and I parted and as Schiller knows the language thoroughly (there were many German speaking people there, but our guide also spoke German) and I know only a few words our guide stayed with Schiller. I thought I was going to have a fine experience, and did for a few minutes (many women crowded around me and talked and talked, I told them I did not understand, so they shouted "rabotat, rabotat, rabotat, khleb nyet" (we work, work and work, but do not get bread), but at 7.00 a.m. who should I be greeted by but the Lord Mayor himself. He said the cars were waiting to take us to the collective farms, so we went for breakfast. At breakfast our guide told us that these people in the bazaars said they were hungry yet they were selling food, was it not stupid of them to think we would believe them? We did not think it was stupid, and explained that under the new decree they were free to trade, and besides many of the people in the bazaar told us they were members of collective farms. He replied that they were only the remnants of the capitalistic elements – the individual farmers – and that they lied when they said they belonged to collective farms. The same day, when Schiller argued at length with the Mayor that we wanted to see individual farms (our programme had been drawn up for the next day to see only tractor stations, elevators, institutes, etc.), as according to the Government figures they still represented a very important part – 40% – of the peasants in Western Siberia, he was told that all the peasants around Slavgorod were in collective farms.

34. We drove for many miles before we came to the M.T.S. we were to visit. I said to Schiller: "Surely there are four directions from Slavgorod! Why should we come in the same direction to-day as yesterday?" and he replied that he had been wondering about the same thing. The first M.T.S. had 20 Case, 10 Fordsons and 9 Stalingrad tractors, and served 21,000 hectares. The director of the M.T.S. was a young communist about 20 years old – the usual type. I should have added that on the way home on the previous evening when visiting a pen of young cattle I asked why these 10 to 15 month old bulls were not castrated (a number of them were serving the yearling heifers) and was told by the agricultural expert (a boy of 18 to 20) who accompanied us on our tour for three days around Slavgorod, that they would soon be castrated. I argued that it should have been done when the calves were only a few weeks old, but he said: "No! The proper time to castrate cattle is when they are one year old." We then visited another M.T.S. (only a few kilometres from the border of Kazakstan). It had 49 tractors (37 Case),

was serving collective farms which had just finished their sowing plan (24,000 hectares), and, as in the case of the other machine tractor stations we visited, had a five year contract with the collective farms, at fixed prices, for doing part of their field work (at present the farms were using tractors for 60% of the work and 40 per cent was done by horses) and acted as the Government's agent for collecting the grain from the collective farms.

35. Our next stop was at a collective farm – an artel with 512 people, 248 workers, 130 families, 4,600 hectares of land (2,400 to be sown to crops, 1,900 already sown), 260 pigs and 200 cows (185 milking, each giving when we were there 4 to 5 litres of milk per day). They showed us their plan and in it we discovered (while turning over the 47 pages) that this year they were to give to the Government 1,700 centners of milk for 6 roubles per centner, and 950 centners of wheat for 5,880 roubles (6 roubles per 220 pounds). As stated above, we saw wheat meal for sale in the Slavgorod bazaar for 80 roubles per pood, approximately 480 roubles per centner, or eighty times the price to be paid by the Government for the wheat they collect this year. Schiller asked the president (an extremely stupid young fellow of 25 or 30) how much milk the members received per day. He hesitated for a moment, and then said one litre. A woman who had come into the office (the usual type, containing the usual large photographs of important Russian citizens which you see by the millions all over Russia) spoke up and said, "No, they only get one half litre and that is only for children and sick members." The chairman of the Soviet of the village (a woman) turned on her said, "**Will you not** shut your mouth or get out of here!"[3] But the woman replied that she would not keep quiet as it was necessary to tell the truth. I slipped out of the office and wandered over to a yard where women and girls were milking cows. In a few minutes no less than 30 women were around me telling me they were all hungry, and had very little bread and it was practically their only food. Two young girls (Komsomols or young Communists) left the cows they were milking and came over to tell me all the women were lying to me. I did not need to answer them as the crowd (by this time much larger) turned on them and said: "If what you say is true, why are your faces so thin! Why are these children so hungry? Why have we no bread?" etc., etc. They raised such a commotion that all our guides came out of the office to move us on to the next collective. I was enjoying the uproar too much to be ready to leave, so while the Mayor and Mayoress engaged Schiller in conversation our special guide came for me. He turned to the ringleader of the rebels and said something to her which I did not understand, but I could easily understand her reply. She shouted: "You promised us that our bellies would be out to here,

and our chins down to there with fat, and now look at us." In case I forget to mention it later, on practically every farm (on our whole trip, try as we would, we did not see a single individual farm, but we saw and talked to many individual peasants) which we visited in Siberia, and the Middle Volga as well, I had such a meeting with the women, and in practically every case heard a similar tale.

36. I forgot to mention that in the morning while sitting in front of the hotel (Schiller had rebelled against our third day programme of institutes, M.T.S. and agrotechnical work, and insisted he should see the large settlement of German Mennonites not very far from Slavgorod, so he was away with the Mayor and guide to 'phone the Mayor of the German rayon to say we were coming tomorrow) several women and their children came up to me. Did I speak German? No, but I understood a little Russian. They had been peasants, but they had to leave their farms as they had no food. Now they were working at construction work in Slavgorod, but their children were very hungry. They had heard in the bazaar that I was from America. Many of their relatives had gone to Canada in 1929 (Professor Aughowgan, Schiller's predecessor, had raised such a row in the German press in 1929 about the persecution of German colonists during the drive against the kulaks – best farmers – that the Russian Government granted visas to 5,000 of them in the Slavgorod area),[4] and did I know anything about Canada. Yes, my home was in Canada. No, where? In Winnipeg. Why my mother and three brothers are there, will you take a letter to them? Yes. Then I got a most pathetic letter, written in German, the substance of which was that they had no bread, their children were hungry, and they did not know what was going to happen to them. When I took the letter, I gave the woman my home card to show her that I really came from Winnipeg. She looked at it and started to cry; then the other women could not keep their tears back, and they all went off weeping. They were all fine looking, clean, healthy, hard-working women, and had intelligent faces.

37. The car in which the Mayor and his party were riding broke down a few miles out of town, and as we were ahead of them he had to walk part way home. At 1 a.m. he came to our room to get our impressions of his rayon. We gave him good tea (Schiller was sorry we had nothing stronger, as our guide was exhausted and had fallen asleep) and then Schiller told him how we were impressed with his extensive knowledge of agriculture, and how well known he seemed to be in all the villages we had visited in the last two days. He was very pleased and told us he had studied agriculture and machinery while in the Red Army. We told him that many people had told us they were hungry but we understood that that was because of the bad crop last year and we hoped they would

have a good one this year. He then admitted that conditions were very bad, but said town workers were getting 700 grams of bread per day and 400 for each member of the family and office workers were getting 500 grams per day and 300 for members. Schiller did not believe him because a German had come to our hotel the day before and told us that he was a night guard at a shop and got only 500 grams of bread for himself, 200 grams for each of 4 members of his family and nothing for the other 5 members. I think the German must have been classified in some category other than No. 1.

38. At school in New Brunswick we used to sing: "The 24th of May is the Queen's birthday, and if they don't give us a holiday we will all run away." Well, on May 24th we got away from institutes, technicians, experts, and specialists, but not from our guide, for a whole day and had a very profitable 14 hours visiting collective farms and communes. We first called on the chairman of the soviet of the rayon (the rayon had 54 villages populated entirely by Germans – 15,000) and found, as Schiller expected, that he was a communist imported from Germany. The first thing that caught our eye as we went into the main building in the village was a notice on a padlocked door which said: "Department of War. Entrance forbidden." The Mayor told us that in 1930 the average yield of wheat was 9 centners per hectare and 3 in 1931, but this year they were going to have 12 centners per hectare. They had heavy snow during the winter, had carried out the snow preserving campaign very well, and had had three heavy rains this spring, so they had plenty of moisture in the soil! There were 120,000 hectares in the rayon, 108,000 of which would be ploughed. They had finished their sowing plan of 50,000 hectares (38,000 wheat, 3,000 oats, 6,000 sunflowers, etc.) and were now working on a counter-plan of 4,000. The population had not decreased by more than 10 per cent in the last year by people going to towns to work, as many new people had come to live in the rayon. In 1930 only 30% of the rayon was collectivised, in 1931 80%, and now 96%. They had lost a small number of cattle in 1929, but now they had as many cattle and horses as in 1928 and this year they would have more! In his rayon they had not taken the last cow from the peasants; it was true that most of the cattle were collectivised, but they were for the use of the members. Last year the Government had collected only 3,000 tons of grain in the [*rayon*] and in 1930 between 6 to 7,000 (he had told us before that the yield had been 3 and 9 centners respectively). We were glad to learn that we had to visit only one M.T.S. as there was only one in the whole rayon. We had been told in Novosibirsk, at the Department of Agriculture, that it was the best M.T.S. in all Western Siberia and when we saw it we could fully believe the statement as, high as the

depreciation of the machinery was, it was not nearly so high as at the other M.T. stations we had visited. The director of the M.T.S. was also a good communist imported from Germany, and the presidents of all collective farms we visited were also good communists, but mainly of Russian origin. There were 47 artels in the rayon, 2 communes, and one of the simple type of collective – only the land collectivised. Eighty five per cent of the population were Mennonites. They needed 220 tractors to reach their aim of complete mechanisation, but now they had only 92 – all imported, Case, John Deere, I.H.C. and Fordson. In the first village we were in we were taken to the bakery. Schiller asked the woman in charge if she used wheat meal or rye. She answered wheat meal, but added, in a bitter, complaining tone, that they made her use all the offal from the wheat in the bread and the people all wanted whiter bread. The Mayor (we had left ou[r] Slavgorod Mayor behind, but by this time we were wishing we had him in place of our present host as, according to Schiller, he was more simple and not so accomplished a liar despite the fact that he – the Slavgorod Mayor – had lost his temper the night before with a collective farm member who insisted on following us to tell us how hungry he was) was very annoyed and reprimanded the woman and said: "You will have whiter bread after the big harvest you are going to get." **It is not a nice thing to put in a letter, but as it has a bearing on the problems of Russian agriculture, I think I should mention that on a number of farms we visited on different days, I happened to notice how very coarse was the texture of the human faeces, so apparently many of the peasants were getting even more fibrous material in their diet than grain offal.** Before I forget it, I should also mention that after leaving the "farms" around Novosibirsk I saw no kindergartens, and with the exception of many of the children in the towns (children of the proletariat, no doubt) the children did not look well and a number of them, both in Siberia and the Middle Volga, looked very poorly, thin and very swollen tummies – in a few groups which I photographed there were children with enormous, hunger-swelled stomachs.

39. Our next stop was at a Mennonite artel. In the office we were told by the chairman that there were 34 families, 173 people in the artel, that they had sown 1,040 hectares, they had 50 horses, 48 cows, 20 of which were collectivised, 10 pigs, 3 of which were collectivised, and 150 chickens. Many of their people had gone to Canada and Brazil in 1929 and some wrote home to say they were happy and others said they were unhappy and wished they had not left the U.S.S.R. A little later when I slipped off to see the women and children a large crowd gathered and all said Canada and Brazil were "ochen khorosho" (very good) and that

Russia and collective farms were "ochen plokho" (very bad). While we were in the office a strange south wind, which had been blowing hard all day, blew up a terrific dust storm and the room suddenly became as dark as night. I remembered what the Mayor had told us about the snow preserving campaign, the 3 heavy rains and ample soil moisture so I asked the chairman if he did not consider such weather at the end of May very serious. Before he had time to reply the Mayor said, "No, it is not serious, it is a good sign and will bring rain." I argued that the south wind was coming from the dry plains of Kazakstan, and perhaps from the arid plains of Central Asia. I did not see how it could bring rain. But he would not agree, so I told him that in the southern parts of Western Canada we had such dust storms last spring (that Western Canada was in some respects not unlike Western Siberia) and had no crop. He turned to 20 or 30 peasants who had gathered into the room (what sad and hungry faces they all had) and said, "Your plan calls for only 10 centners of grain per hectare, but this year you are going to get 12." Later we got an April copy of the local paper, published in the German language, and from it Schiller read to me that this year there was to be ample rain, that the drought problem was rapidly being liquidated and the yield was to be 12 centners. We sat in the dark room for half an hour and then a few drops of rain began to fall. The Mayor was very happy and turned to me and said: "You see, you are wrong in thinking Western Siberia is like Western Canada, we are going to have rain." I replied that we would see how much we got – it did not rain enough to dampen 1/100 part of the dust. Later I examined freshly dug cellars and silos and not only was the surface soil as dry as powder, but there was not a drop of moisture in the sub-soil, even down to 7 or 8 feet. We were told by the chairman that last year the income from the farms was 890 grams of bread per "worker day" – he did not say how many "worker days" the peasants had – and that this year they were advancing to the members 600 grams of bread per "worker day" – 500 minimum and 300 for members. When we came out to go to the next farm a young peasant came up and said he was hungry and that there was no order on the farm as he worked and worked and did not know what he was going to get for it. The Mayor asked him if he was not interested in his collective farm and he replied, no, not the way it was run now, whereupon the Mayor replied that he should be ashamed of himself, and had not the rayon (54 villages) received 3,000 centners of grain from the Government for seed and 3,000 for feed? I felt like asking him what was the sense of the Government collecting 3,000 tons and shipping it out and then shipping back 6,000 centners to feed the people.

40. On our way to the next collective farm, "Eiche," I saw another

group of Kirgizians eating a horse, which had died. We visited a number of fields to see many teams (6 horses per team all skin and bones and very nearly starved to death) hauling the famous Russian "buggar" – a primitive implement which "ploughs" and sows at the same time. Later we visited a number of fields to see the ploughing and, as I expected, although the soil was very dry, not a single moul[*d*]board was scouring. I have yet to see a plough in Russia which scours. The next collective farm had 1,073 people, 229 families and 420 workers, 10,000 hectares of land, 6,000 of which could be cultivated, 3,450 hectares sown – the plan called for only 3,190 – 270 horses, 50 cows collectivised and "in farm" (i.e. all their produce for the Government), and 130 cows owned and used by individuals (the proportions, we were told, had been settled at a conference of the members), 107 young cattle and 100 calves also "in farm," and 65 sheep, all collectivised. We had a look at the plan and, in keeping with our usual practice, Schiller read out the data in English and I marked them down. The collective farm was to deliver to the Government this year 1,940 centners of milk for approximately 15,000 roubles, 1,100 tons (metric) of wheat for 66,000 roubles (6 roubles per centner) and 40 tons of oats for 1,600 roubles. On our way to see the butter factory and barns we passed a deep pit in which 13 women were digging (all day I could not but notice how much better the Germans work than the Russians). They shouted that the ground was too dry and hard to dig as they had no picks and very poor spades. I went into the cellar to hear the women talk. The Mayor and our permanent guide took Schiller to see the butter factory, but the German communist who was president of the farm would not leave me and kept asking me in German to come and see the butter plant. I pretended I did not understand and told him in Russian that I was cold and was going to dig a while to get warm. He would not leave, but the women crowded around just the same and how they did talk. Low German is easier to understand than high, but I could not make out much of what they were saying as they all talked at once. But there was no mistaking that they were very angry at the president, and they all said they had to work hard, but got little to eat and were hungry.

41. The next artel we visited was called "Abenfelt." We were told there were 49 families in the farm; that they had sown 1,080 hectares as compared with only 700 last year; they had 46 horses but two had died the day before; all the calves were collectivised but none of the cows; 14 pigs, and 14 sheep, one of which was collectivised! Last year they got 2.4 kilos of wheat per "worker day" and the collective had bought 500 roubles worth of manufactured goods. As we left the farm the peasants who could not get into the office crowded around, and their faces,

like those of the peasants we had seen all day, spoke more eloquently than words of their feelings and sufferings.

42. We motored back to Slavgorod late and took the train for Omsk. We had no sooner got into the train (hard – 6 people on the boards of one small division) when a man spoke to Schiller in German. Our guide became unhappy and rushed off for the conductor and got him to move us into another coach. Schiller slipped away and I did my best to keep our guide with me as long as possible by giving him good Empire grown tobacco to smoke, and made him a present of one of my pipes, and then tried to engage him in conversation. He greatly appreciated the pipe, as his had been broken and he did not know how he could get another one, and enjoyed the tobacco, but he soon became nervous and restless and left to find Schiller. When they came back Schiller was very happy because our friend had found him in a queue with the German waiting to get into the W.C. When our guide fell asleep Schiller got up and had a good talk with the German. When he came back he said he did not know whether to believe what he had heard or not. The German was from Pavlodar where about 100 people were dying per day of hunger; during the winter and early spring only Kirgizians had died, but now Russians were dying too; factory workers were supposed to get 750 grams of bread per day and the members 300 and office workers 500, but during about half the days of the month by the time their turn came the bread shop was empty; and in one village the women were so enraged because their children were hungry that they went and led all the collectivised cows home; troops were sent and some of the women were shot.

43. We arrived in Tatarskai[*a*] on the morning of May 25th. Two Kirgizians (both as thin as crows, in bare feet, and only one or two thin rags around their bodies) climbed up on to our train and moaned and wailed that they were going to die. We gave them a rouble each, but they said they wanted bread. Then several girls and boys came into the train to beg for bread. It was a bitter cold morning, a cold wind was blowing and it was snowing a little, and the hundreds of peasants sitting and lying on the cold, damp ground along the railroad track presented a terrible picture. Later soldiers and the G.P.U. arrived to tell them they could move into the station out of the cold. We told our guide we wanted to get some fresh air and would he be so kind as to watch our baggage until we returned. We no sooner had engaged some peasants in conversation when who should join us but our guide – he had got the conductor to look after the luggage. After we got back to the train, Schiller said he would try one more experiment with him, so out he went. I stood with my back to the train window and tried to talk to our guide, but he was unhappy and got up on the top bunk so as to be able to watch Schiller

over my shoulder. He saw Schiller go into the station and could wait no longer, so off he went. A minute after he went in the right hand door, Schiller came out of the left hand one. Soon he came out and saw Schiller taking a picture of some small boys. Schiller could not see him from where he was so our guide went around the back of the building and came up to Schiller from the opposite direction just as the G.P.U officer was examining Schiller's documents.

44. In the evening of May 25th we arrived in Omsk (at all the stations along the line we saw much of the same conditions as described above) and to our surprise were met by a large delegation, including the director of the once famous Omsk Agricultural Research and Teaching Institute, an interpreter for me, and several others. I thought the whole scheme was a trick to keep us from seeing Omsk, and when we were immediately driven out to the country to stay at the Institute I was sure of it. But I now think that I was not quite just, as the treatment we received during the next three days convinced me that it was partly to keep us from seeing Omsk, partly to give us a good impression before we left Western Siberia, and largely Russian hospitality. When we arrived at the Institute we were taken to our bedrooms (beds placed in the offices of two professors) and then dined and wined and asked to raise our glasses to the plan, the next plan, the situation in the East, world brotherhood, and on and on to the wee small hours.

45. In the morning of May 26th, we were taken to the "Red Room" where all the chief professors (about 30 of them – they had 180 altogether and many assistants) had been waiting 1½ hours to receive us, and there we were tendered complimentary speeches, and then told all about the teaching work of the Institute. The programme of studies and work for the students was very interesting, but as this letter is already too long, I'll not bother to describe it. Forty per cent of the 1,200 students were workers, 35 per cent children of poor peasants, and 25 per cent all other types. Ninety per cent of the students' expenses were paid by the Government, or by factory and other types of scholarships, and 46 per cent of the students were Komsomols. We spent the rest of the day at the grain and soil institutes. One section alone of the grain institute – the experimental farm – had 80 specialists and 400 workers. The director told us that last year the crop around Omsk was worse than in the famine year of 1921.

46. We visited the mechanization section of the grain institute for a few minutes, were photographed three times while examining the machinery and then asked to write our impressions in a book. I wanted to write the following: "In a country like Russia, suffering from acute over agricultural population [*sic*], I cannot understand why you have

such a mania for mechanising your agriculture. Why do you let your horses die by the millions and starve what you have left, so that their working capacity is reduced by at least 50 per cent? Would it not be cheaper to feed your horses on hay and a few oats, instead of exporting wheat and selling it, with the costly and inefficient large organisations you maintain in foreign countries, for 20 to 30 shillings per quarter, in order to get money to pay for these enormous and expensive imported machines which you have not yet learned how to use properly? Would it not be better to feed your peasants so that they would work instead of spending so much money to haul oil to make the machines work, so many thousand miles over your badly congested and inefficient rail-roads? Under the conditions you have here, where your grain ripens unevenly, reapers and binders would be much better than combines as by using them you could keep the immature wheat (a few kernels of which greatly reduce the value of a whole sample) out of your bins. But if you must use combines, why not import, or make, small or medium sized ones instead of the largest and most expensive ones you can get? And, finally, if you must import the largest ones, why not use them as they are, instead of wasting so much money to make them larger. You might have known that green grain in large piles heats and spoils, before you built that enormous stooker." But, of course, I wrote something polite.

47. Later I had an interesting discussion with a plant physiologist. She told me that last year they had 13 centners of grain per hectare on one of the fields in their experimental station, whereas only 400 metres away a State grain factory had an average yield of only one centner per hectare – on the State farm they had poor technique and sowed much too early. In 1930 the average yield on the experimental plots was 17 centners per hectare and on a large State farm 300 kilometres from Omsk, they had 9.3 centners and in 1931 the corresponding data were 8.2 and 1.8. When they used the same methods and technique on the farms as they did on the station, they would have no difficulty in raising the yield on the farms enormously. I tried to argue that it was only natural that experimental plots, which received special cultivation and care, good seed, etc., should yield much more than farms, but I thought she was too optimistic about applying experimental plot technique to large farms and I was afraid they would find, as most agricultural institutions had, that the application of scientific methods to large scale, or even small scale, farming was a very slow and sometimes discouraging process. But she would not listen, and replied that in Russia they believed they would soon eliminate the problem of drought by breeding drought resistant strains, using better agricultural technique, etc. I replied that as a baby must have milk, a

plant must have water and that in Western Siberia, just as in Western Canada, the reason they raised such fine quality wheat was the very same reason – climatic conditions – why they must be satisfied with very low to only moderate yields. She answered that mine was a capitalistic country and in Russia they were building socialism. I told her that I could not see why the sturgeons in the Caspian Sea should lay any more eggs just because the type of government in Russia had changed, and there the argument ended.

48. In the evening we were taken to a large hall, already filled with professors who had been waiting nearly two hours, to hear a report on the second five year plan. To my astonishment the speaker was a man I had met in Novosibirsk (one of the most fanatical of all the exponents of the new religion I had met in the capital of Western Siberia). He was to speak one hour. He spoke for two. An interpreter had been furnished for me and as she translated every word the speaker said, I had to be courteous and take copious notes, but don't worry, I am not going to reproduce them here. When the speaker finished the crowd voted for a 5 minute rest and then they would have a discussion. I thought I would hear their much talked of self-criticism and hoped the university professors would tell the speaker that such a speech might do in some places, but that they thought they were intelligent men and therefore they could not enthuse over his optimistic forecasts. But nothing of the kind was to be heard. Man after man got up and **severely** criticised the speaker for being too pessimistic, and the second five year plan for not being based on a higher tempo. For instance, a specialist from the grain mechanisation department said the provision in the plan to produce only 1,300,000,000 centners of grain in the U.S.S.R., largely by increasing the yield per hectare by 40 per cent, was much too pessimistic, because when they applied their present knowledge to farming they could get such a yield, let alone what they would get when they applied the discoveries they were going to make. Then he had many wonderful things to say about bigger and better tractors and combines, etc. Many other speakers thought planning to increase the production of oil, electricity, coal, food, etc. from 3 to 4 fold was too slow. Another wanted to know why, as the speaker had said, foreigners were astonished at their tempo and alarmed because they were going to catch up and surpass the most capitalistic countries. Were they not building socialism on the solid foundation built by Marx and Lenin, were they not going to have 19 million pairs of boots in Western Siberia instead of only one-half a million just now, and 17 million metres of cloth instead of only 300,000, and had not Henry George said so and so? There were many more speakers and more than one of them wanted to know why they should have to wait 5

years for the River Ob to flow south instead of north as now it only made ice in the Arctic Ocean and they wanted it to make sugar beets and corn on the dry hot plains of Kazakstan. In case you think I have been trying to joke in this paragraph, I'll show you my copious notes when I get home and you will see that I have not exaggerated. Finally, the meeting was over and I went home and being exhausted fell asleep beside the library of one of the head professors – 27 volumes by the Institute of Marx and Engels, and 25 by Lenin.

49. On May 27th we had a typical example of Russian organisation. We were to leave at 7 a.m. to spend the day visiting farms. We left at 8 but in a few minutes we arrived at the river after the ferry was loaded so we (3 cars and 12 men) had to wait exactly 3 hours before we got on to the next ferry. We drove for 3 hours (here as everywhere else I was in Western Siberia, soil, both surface and sub-soil was extremely dry, and there was much land, which had recently been in crop, uncultivated) to the State grain factory "Borisovski." The director was having a sleep, but in half an hour he turned up. Before the decentralization of State farms (i.e. reduction in size), which was decreed last autumn and is still being carried out, this farm had 132,000 hectares, 110,000 of which was suitable for cultivation, and had 53,000 hectares of sown area. Now the farm has a total area of 82,000 hectares, and 30,000 hectares in crop (the other farm 23,000); and they hope to have 40,000 hectares in crop next year as they were going to summer fallow 28,000 hectares and fall plough 12,000. Last year the farm (only the largest section of the undivided farm) had sown 36,000 hectares, or 6,000 more than this year, and the average yield of wheat was from 2 to 2½ centners per hectare, whereas in 1930 they got 13 centners per hectare. There were 7,000 people on the farm (1,700 workers and they would now need an extra 1,000 for the harvest); 120 tractors, nearly all imported caterpillars (3,200 H.P.); no horses; many large trucks; 72 combines – were to have 100 for harvest; no end of other types of large and expensive agricultural machinery, most of it imported; and 1,500 sheep and pigs and 350 cows for the use of workers. Part of their straw was hauled 40 to 70 kilometres to cattle State farms, but most of it was burned. They sold their few calves to the cattle "factory." The director of the Institute at Omsk had told us with great pride that Russia had 270 aeroplanes fighting on the agricultural front and that we would see one of them to-day, but the grain factory director said they had finished sowing before the aeroplane arrived. In 1930 the cost of producing a centner of wheat was 4.2 roubles; in a year of normal yield it would be 5.7 and in a year of good crop only 4 roubles per centner! On the farm were numerous buildings, including a large new electrical station, a very large machine shop and

foundry – both full of very elaborate and expensive American and German machinery – a large club house – with culture room, moving picture, orchestra pit, etc., etc. – and a yard, the size of a small farm, full of machinery. We spent half an hour examining the machine yard, where we saw not only the largest combines, binders, drills, disks, ploughs, etc., etc. made but on a number of them special devices to make them "bigger and better." As on many other farms, and in several M.T. stations, I examined rather carefully the Russian made machinery and, as I expected, found it, without exception, to be of extremely poor quality. The complete lack of quality in much of the workmanship on the machines, such as castings and wheel weldings, was simply beyond belief. I counted four cemeteries in the yard and in the one I visited counted 23 dead tractor engines. I would not like to guess at what is the annual depreciation of the machinery, but whatever the true figure may be, it must be extremely high. The farm is subdivided, for purposes of work, into 9 smaller farms, and each sub-farm has a number of brigades, etc. There were 2 vice and 3 assistant directors, as well as agronomists, financial men, and many other administrators. When I enquired about the apparently high rate of machinery depreciation I was told that the tractors were worked 22 hours a day and 2,500 to 2,700 hours a year as compared with 1,800 in the U.S.

50. After lunch we visited three of the sub-farms. We saw a large caterpillar tractor drawing 5 seed drills – one man on the tractor and four men on the drills – over a very weedy and extremely poorly ploughed field. The weeds and grass were gathering in bundles in front of the discs, and the men were busy running from one side of the drill to the other to lift the discs up and leave behind the bunches. Of course, every time each half of the seed discs was lifted no seed was sown. When I asked why the land was so weedy they said it had recently been farmed by peasants. The peasants had been moved to another district.

51. At the beginning of my letter I said I would include as little personal opinion as possible, but I cannot refrain from playing a little with the above figures. As the farm has been operating four years, for two years has won the red flag in competition with all the State grain factories in the U.S.S.R., and, uneconomical as in my opinion it is, it is certainly very much more efficient than their big show farm in the North Caucasus – "Gigant," where the moving pictures were taken that were shown to delegates to the last Imperial Conference, and where 6,000 extra workers were brought to assist in the harvesting although it was fully mechanised – which I visited in 1930, I am sure I am well on the safe side in taking it as at least typical of the State grain farms. We will assume that the extra thousand workers during the harvest are equal to only 100 annual

workers, or that they work only ⅒ of the year, so we have 1,800 permanent workers instead of 1,700 and a population of 7,500 instead of 7,000. The farm had sown 30,000 hectares, or 4 hectares per head of population. Their 1932 plan calls for 9 centners of grain per hectare, but as they told us they got only 2 to 2½ last year, and as in Western Siberia (as in the Lower and Middle Volga, the eastern part of North Caucasus, the Urals and Kazakstan) 10 years usually give 1 to 2 crop failures, 1 to 2 poor crops, 2 to 3 medium crops, 2 to 3 good crops and 1 to 2 very good crops, 9 centners is too high, so we will use the liberal figure of 7½ (or say an average yield of 11 bushels per acre). In other words each person has a gross income of 110 bushels of grain (i.e. 4 hectares at 7½ centners per hectare or 10 acres at 11 bushels per acre). For simplicity we will assume that all the grain is wheat, although part is oats and other grain. The price of wheat at country stations in Western Canada to-day is about 40 cents per bushel, but as the price is extremely low we will double it and say the wheat is worth 80 cents per bushel on the farm, which will make the gross income for each person $88 per year, or $343 per worker and his or her family. Out of the $88, or $343, a person, or one family of about 4, has to be fed (I have not considered the handful of livestock they have – one cow per 20 people and about one sheep per 5 people) and clothed for any year, the machinery has to be paid for, the extremely high depreciation taken care of, oil has to be bought and freight paid on it for a 4 or 5 thousand mile haul, the electrical station, club house, and numerous other buildings have to be paid for, taxes should go to the government to help maintain its army and the hundreds of thousands of planners, etc., etc., and so on and so on. It may be objected that 4 hectares per head of population, or 10 hectares per worker, is a good size for Russia, but it must be remembered that the farm is fully mechanized and grows only grain, and is in an area of extremely limited precipitation and consequently very low productivity. For a comparison I have taken 5 of the collective farms in the Slavgorod area, discussed above, for which I have comparable data. Despite the fact that they are only partially mechanized, that all were supplying milk or butter to the Government as well as grain, that none had cars or big expensive trucks, that their overhead expenses for buildings and many other things, would only be a small fraction of such expenses in the grain "factory," that, as far as I know, none of them were going to sow large areas by aeroplane next year as the Government grain farm is planning to do, and, finally, that their members only get so many "worker days" per year whereas the workers in the grain factory were State employees, the area sown per head of population was 4.2 hectares. It is only fair to add that we probably saw the best collective farms and that, according to plan, they

all had to hand over very substantial quantities of grain and other produce to the government at virtually confiscation prices.

52. In view of these facts it is not easy to be optimistic about the standard of living of the poor Russian peasants or an important provision of the second five year plan which calls for a 300 per cent increase in the production of consumption goods.

53. When I spoke to Schiller about my rough calculation regarding the economics of the "grain factory," he said, "You must not waste time with such calculations. You should say a farm produces so many centners of grain, a few centners is sufficient to do each person a year, and, therefore, the rest is for the Government." But if it were possible to work with bread units only and take all factors into consideration (such as the bread for the tractor and machinery workers in the factories, the railroad and oil workers, etc., etc.) I am convinced that you could condemn the State grain farms as enormous white elephants. And if one were to make such a calculation for the past few years and take into consideration the prices received for exported grain and the prices paid for imported farm machinery the result would be even more interesting.

54. On our way home we passed through two villages with many deserted homes (we had been told in the morning when we asked to see collective farms and/or individual farms that there were none in the part of the country on the way to the grain factory). We arrived home at 11.15 p.m. and you can imagine our surprise when we learned that a big banquet had been prepared for us. The Mayor, and many other prominent citizens, had been invited, and they had all been waiting since 6 o'clock – the time the banquet was arranged for by our hosts who had taken us to the country. They held a conference for ¾ of an hour to see what they were going to do, as the Mayor and some of the professors had gone home. At 12 they returned to say a big crowd was still waiting and many were coming back, so we had to go. After numerous speeches and unnumerable [*sic*] toasts they insisted that I should speak to them. I protested that it was quite impossible for me to say more than a few very disjointed words in Russian and that as they did not understand English, there was no sense in speaking in my own language. But they would not listen, so I had to make a speech. I simply could not talk about planning, so I told them I had been sent by the Empire Marketing Board to make a study of their agriculture. That I thought they were too optimistic, but I hoped for the sake of the Russian people, whose standard of living was very low, that their optimism was well founded. If they succeeded in their plans, the primary producers in the Dominions would have to make some important readjustments in their agriculture, and that I was here to try and discover what, if any, readjustments our farmers should make. When

I mentioned the various countries that were represented on the E.M.B. I think they must have thought I was advocating world revolution because they gave me "a great hand," as they say in the States.

55. I forgot to mention that our car during the day was richly decorated with apple blossoms. Which reminds me that Schiller told me that last year, shortly after he had been appointed Agricultural Attaché, he was taken in a big Fiat car on a three weeks tour through the Ukraine and was supplied with a Government guide, a trip manager, and a chauffeur. He could not understand why every hotel they stopped at served such wonderful food, wines and liquors, until he discovered it all came out of the Fiat car. I should also have mentioned that on the previous night when we heard all about the second five year plan there were several very intelligent, but very sad, faces in the audience, but none of them spoke.

56. During the night and next morning we got 4 different stories about when our train left. When the right time was settled upon and we went to the station, we were told the train was not due for an hour and it was two hours late. We went to Torgsin (special stores for trade with foreigners who have valuta) and paid $3 U.S. dollars for three packages of cigarettes, ½ kilo of butter, and two tins of grapes. We could not get any sugar or meat, fresh or tinned, of any description. While waiting at the depot 20 soldiers with fixed bayonets brought a large crowd of prisoners out of 3 barred cars. We were surprised to notice several young Komsomol girls among them. A porter took two of our bags into the train and we gave him 3 roubles. He looked at it and said he could buy only a very small piece of bread with it. The director of the Institute, who the night before when using my remark about their optimism for a text for his second speech about the solid foundations upon which they were building, had quoted many rouble statistics, said the porter's remark was absurd and that 3 roubles was very generous remuneration for the service rendered.

57. While waiting for the train we paid a short visit to the dairy institute farm. They had imported 80 young pure bred Holstein bulls from Eastern Prussia last November, but had sent them all but 17 to dairy State farms and collective farms. We saw the 17 bulls and they were certainly fine stock and in excellent condition. On the farm were 600 scrub cows (and they were to get 600 more) which were to be bred (all by artificial insemination) by the 17 bulls. The farm had 25,000 hectares (3,000 in crop), 1,000 workers and 30 specialists. I did not ask why they needed 1,000 workers and 30 specialists to look after 1,200 cows, 17 bulls and 3,000 hectares of crops, but no doubt it is because they have not got their artificial insemination methods fully mechanized yet!

When we were there they were well pleased with these new artificial vaginas.

58. Before we left Omsk we were glad to say goodbye to our permanent guide. He produced from his book the following statistics regarding Western Siberian agriculture: 1932 sown area, collective farms 5,340,000, State farms 1,090,000, individual farms 1,400,000 hectares (these figures do not agree with the ones I got in Novosibirsk from the head of the Department of Agriculture for Western Siberia), horses 2,231,000, all cattle 3,000,000, sheep 4,200,000 (he did not give us the number of pigs although we asked several times) and 148 machine tractor stations.

59. In the afternoon and evening as we went south-west I was glad to notice that the begging for bread became progressively less, although we saw a tremendous amount of land, previously in crop, untouched and covered with weeds, miles and miles of good grass but no cattle. The prices were still fantastic. In the late afternoon we paid 10 roubles for a small wild duck, one rouble for ½ litre of milk, and 3 roubles for a large bun of soggy black bread with a high percentage of fibrous material. At Petropavlovsk, in Kazakstan, late at night, the prices were still very high. A peasant at the depot told us they had had no rain all the spring, but the grain had germinated, and if they got rain soon they would still have a fair crop.

60. Next day, May 29th, in the Ural district, I saw the first rain I had seen since leaving Moscow. The fields got smaller as we went West and much of the country was not suitable for grain growing. Prices were very high all day. For instance, I had to pay 8 roubles for 10 eggs in the afternoon. We passed through Chelyabinsk where they are building a large caterpillar tractor plant. A German specialist working on the plant told us they were making tanks in the two finished units. In the evening at Zlatoust, in the mountainous country, we were asked 8 roubles for a very small loaf of black bread.

61. We arrived in Ufa, the capital of the Bashkir Republic, early in the morning of May 30th. Conditions seemed to be a good deal better around Ufa than in the Urals and Western Siberia, but prices were still very high – we paid 5 roubles for 10 eggs, 2½ roubles for a slice of chicken, 2 roubles for 4 very small pieces of home made cheese, and 1½ roubles for a large bun of brown bread. We travelled through the Bashkir Republic until early in the afternoon when we reached the Middle Volga. Until we reached the grain regions of the Volga, the amount of provisions on sale seemed to be steadily increasing – butter averaged 5 roubles a pound, eggs 3 to 4 roubles for 10, milk ¾ to 1 rouble per ½ litre, black bread 2½ to 3½ roubles per kilo. Just before we left the

Bashkir Republic we paid 6 roubles for a very small loaf of bread and 20 roubles for 2 small chickens. I think the reason[s] why we saw more to eat in the Bashkir Republic than elsewhere were:

1. Collectivisation was not so far advanced (although at several places we saw the usual sight of the individual peasants settled on the poorest and hilliest land, and the collective farms on the best land and level fields) or as rapidly as in the main wheat growing areas.

2. They had a better crop last year and had had a good rain recently which gave them good pasture – hence the relatively large amount of butter on sale.

3. The knowledge of the new decree about trading was becoming wider.

62. On the train we talked to a woman from Karagandi (Middle Kazakstan) who had a sorry tale to tell. Her three grandchildren on the train were surprised to see so many cattle in the Bashkir Republic. The children came from the plains of Kazakstan, where the landlords in pre-revolutionary days bought young steers, drove them to their large grain estates on the prairies of the Volga and Ukraine, worked them all summer, then fattened them for sale; thus not only making a profit out of the oxen, but getting free draft power. Yet I am sure a director of a State grain factory would argue that the only reason Russian landlords and peasants used to be able to make a profit by exporting 165 million bushels of wheat per year in pre-war days was because they exploited the poor peasants. But to continue with the woman's story; she said that even the last chicken had been collectivised, that the horses on the collective farms had died and they were still waiting for the government to send them tractors and, in the meantime, their land remained idle; the poor Kirgizians were dying in the streets, the bazaars, and stations faster than the army could bury them; people were eating mice and gophers; the few dairy cows left had been worked so hard in the fields they gave little milk, and she was afraid they would not have calves next year; the government had sent a little seed and some maize for food to some of the collective farms, but they were eating, or selling the seed in the bazaar.

63. From the border of the Bashkir Republic, through the Middle Volga, to Buguruslan bread continued to get scarcer and scarcer (at several stations where there was a good deal of milk and butter for sale, I asked several people for bread and was told by them all that there was none and they would like to trade their milk and butter for some) and what little there was for sale was not only of extremely poor quality but very expensive. As we went south west the soil looked dryer (but nothing like so dry as in Western Siberia), but there were a good few fields of

fair to good crops of winter rye. The spring sown crops looked poor and thin and were mostly on land which was full of fields. There was a good deal of land which had been in crop, now uncultivated, but not nearly as high a proportion as in Western Siberia and, owing to the fact that much of it may have been left for summer fallow, I would not like to say that the amount of idle land was excessively high. From Buguruslan all the way into Samara we travelled through a valley (always misleading as an index of the conditions in any semi-arid country) containing many fair to very good fields of winter rye and considerable land with fair to good crops of spring wheat.

64. We reached Samara in the evening and as we wanted part of a day to ourselves we had not told anyone we were coming so, of course, there were no rooms. Schiller went home with a friend and I paid an izvosshchik[5] 17 roubles to drive to three hotels, in none of which could I get a room. However, I was given a place in a room with 13 other men for part of the night and after listening for a few hours to their complaining about the acute shortage of food I was moved into another room where there was a woman sleeping – also 9 other men. Next morning we went to the bazaar, where we found provisions not only scarce, but very expensive – chicken 16 roubles, etc. Schiller's friend told us that a 1st category worker in Samara got 800 grams of bread per day, and 300 per member of his family (office worker 500 and 250). A man came up to us in a beer garden and told us that he was a second category worker and a member of the Party, but that conditions were very bad and that in the bakery where he worked 500 people had just been dismissed. He said his rations were: 750 grams of bread a day and 300 for members, 400 grams of sugar, 400 of millet, 7 kilo of meat, 25 grams of tea, all per month and with the exception of bread nothing for members. They had no butter and could not buy it because it was 9 to 10 roubles per Russian pound, or 400 grams, in the open market. Another worker came and sat down with us and said conditions were getting steadily worse, especially since they had started to pay very much higher salaries to directors and specialists than to workers. We suggested that all would be well when they finished the second five year plan. They answered that they had nearly finished one plan and they had to pay 10 roubles for a pot of potatoes though last year millions of roubles had been collected from Samara workers to ensure a good supply of potatoes and other vegetables. They worked 8 hours a day in their factories, but they had to spend 4 hours per day at meeting, or doing some sort of shock work. On May 1st they had seen a moving picture of the unemployed in Germany, but they could not understand why the unemployed in Germany had suits and hats and here unemployed people did not even

have pants. We went for a walk along the Volga and saw some terrible sights – thousands of hungry people in rags – and noticed that the bread and fish and other articles being sold were extremely expensive.

65. In the afternoon we went to the Department of Agriculture to get them to organise our trip to the country. We were told that in 1932 the area sown in the Middle Volga would be 10,969,000 hectares (8,893,000 in collective farms, 1,276,000 in State farms and the rest in individual farms) as compared with 8,695,000 in 1931 (State farms 1,112,000, collective farms 8,625,000) and that up to May 25th they had completed 90 per cent of the plan. They had 260 State farms and when decentralization was completed they would have 300. They would have this year 2,814,000 hectares of spring wheat, 1,200,000 of oats, 700,000 of maize, 132,000 of peas, 197,000 of barley and millet, 105 of soya beans, flax, sunflowers, etc., etc. They had 115 machine tractor stations, but by the end of the year they would have 260; they had 4,777 tractors (67,251 H.P.) and at the end of the year they would have 5,897 (84,900 H.P.). We enquiried [*sic*] about livestock and were told that according to the February census figures they had 934,687 horses, of which 791,770 were work horses, 1,547,617 cattle, of which 925,896 were cows, 234,274 pigs, 1,869,686 sheep, and 6,831,300 people on June 1st last year. Last year the drought had caused a loss in the Middle Volga of 3 to 3½ million tons of grain. We asked about comparative livestock data and after waiting more than an hour they produced the figures (taxation estimates) as at November, 1931 (only 3 months before the census was taken): 994,000 horses (i.e. according to their own figures 59,313 horses died in the one region in 3 months), 849,000 of which were working horses (i.e. a loss of over 57,000 in 3 months in one region containing only about 4½ per cent of the human population of the country, yet the whole world is told only about Stalingrad rapidly mechanising Russian agriculture by making 120 to 150 tractors per day, or less than 50,000 per year), cattle 1,556,000 of which 935,000 were cows, 1,870,000 sheep, 243,000 pigs. Last year they had only 2½ centners of spring wheat per hectare, but this year they were going to get 7½. In the next 5 years they were going to irrigate 3 million hectares from the Volga. This year they were very short of draft power so they pressed a very large number (he did not have the figure among the tables he had been giving us the other data from, but he thought it was 700,000) of their dairy cows into field work and they had worked very well. They were worried about the problem of finding labour for the harvesting as there was a great shortage of labour in Russia due to very many country people moving to the towns. They were going to build a packing plant in Samara to handle 400,000 beef cattle (i.e. more than a quarter of the total present

livestock population of the whole Middle Volga) per year and also a large number of swine and sheep!

66. In the evening we went for a short boat trip on the Volga for some fresh air. Passengers on the boat told us stories similar to the ones the workers had told us in the beer garden.

67. We left Samara early in the morning of June 1st and took a local train (Maxim Gorki – one narrow aisle and three wooden platforms the full height and breadth of the car – and as many people as can crowd in are sold tickets) to Bezinschook about 2½ hours ride from Samara. The Department of Agriculture would not listen to our argument the day before that we did not need a guide and said they would most certainly send one with us. But fortunately something happened to the guide and we got away alone. Of the 75 or 100 people in our car only 3 (youths about 16 to 20) were upholders of the Soviet government. The remainder were not only bitterly opposed, but they did not care what they said. A young chap of about 20 or 22, a member of a nearby collective farm, said he got only 4 kilos of meal per month. I asked him about meat and butter and he asked me why I joked. We were told many interesting stories about life on the collective farms (the opposition of the three young Communists was very beneficial), but I will not take time to repeat them. In the village near where we got off the train we were told that the 800 families had only 60 cows!

68. I forgot to mention that the conductor on our train from Omsk to Samara told me that he had not eaten all day, his salary was 67 roubles per month, that more than half of it (47 roubles he said) went to compulsory State loans and lotteries and he needed the other half to buy bread in the closed shops for his family, so he had to go hungry on the train as he had no money to buy the goods on sale at fantastic prices along the way; that he talked to many travellers and they were all very sorry to hear less talk of war as it was their only salvation!

69. From the depot we went to the large grain research station close by (the one which Prof. Tulikov, whom I mentioned in my last letter, had been head of for 16 years) and asked to be shown farms. But we were not so lucky. They had planned a three day programme for us. The first two at the institute and the third visiting machine tractor stations. We protested and said the best we could do was one day at the institute and two days on farms, not machine tractor stations. For hours the director of the institute told us wonderful things. The institute's tasks were to fight drought, to move winter wheat north and spring wheat east, to see that in the Middle Volga and Bashkir Republic, by 1937 15.2 centners per hectare of winter wheat and 9.3 centners of spring wheat were produced in the northern and eastern districts, and in all other districts

over 17 of winter wheat and 11.5 of spring wheat. By the large development of chemical fertilizers, by 1937, 35,000,000 of extra grain would be produced in the U.S.S.R. and by 1933 12 million extra tons. The fertilizer would all be sown by aeroplanes. They had sown 100 hectares of wheat this spring on the experimental station and 800 on collective farms with an aeroplane they got from the agricultural air port of Samara. They were changing spring wheat into winter wheat, they had sown wheat in snow and mud and got good results, and, as the optimum spring sowing period in the Middle Volga was only five days, they were going to sow 50,000 hectares of spring wheat in the snow next winter as an experiment. This spring, in one rayon alone, they had sown 27,000 hectares of wheat in the mud in order to get it in as early as possible. They were going to raise wheat with a minimum of 18 to 19 per cent protein. They had 600 workers and 49 specialists in the grain experimental station, but they were much under staffed. They had just discovered that they could make bricks out of straw, and sugar out of the bricks. I told him that as a student of biochemistry I had also made sugar out of straw, and even out of wood, but that it was done to demonstrate the constitution of the chemical family of carbohydrates and that as a commercial project it was quite impossible. But he did not agree and thought their sugar from straw might offer serious competition to sugar from beets.

70. We were then taken through the institute and shown the laboratories and the library where I got a photograph of a wall covered with photographs, drawings, figures and slogans. On this photograph, one of the very interesting things which comes out clearly is the group of small photographs of the 6 heads of departments, accompanied by their symbolic figures riding on a train, horse, dog, rooster, tortoise and snail, which represented the tempo with which the 6 departments had kept up to the plan for having articles in the scientific journals and press. We also saw the fine big red flag which one of the departments had won for most nearly achieving Stalin's six historical points of – income must be equal to expenses, etc. Later we were taken to the department of economics, where we were told by the director that they had changed the methods of economic research and were putting them on a firm Marxian basis. They, like many others in different parts of Russia, asked me about Campbell (the Montana wheat farmer who was invited – for no other reason that I know of than because he had the largest farm in the world – by the Russian Government to help them organise their grain factories). When I told them that I did not know him personally, and had never been on his farm, but understood from friends of mine, who I considered good judges of large scale farming, that his farm was not an economical enterprise and that he really made his living from writing, they were not

at all happy. They next asked about mechanization in western Canada and did not like my reply that, in my opinion, Western Canada had mechanized her agriculture too quickly and that during the previous summer I had motored several thousands of miles in Western Canada and has seen innumerable tractors in farm yards (while horses worked in the fields) because the farmers had no money to buy oil, but had plenty of oats and fodder, which they could not sell at a profit, for horses.

71. While on our way to lunch we met three young Germans who had smuggled into the country (in the hay being shipped with a circus) without visas. When the Government discovered that they had entered the country illegally they were told they had to stay a year for punishment. They received 50 roubles per month for driving tractors, had to pay 22 roubles for food (one said he was much too fat when he came but had lost 50 pounds) and the other 28 they spent on cigarettes. They said they had come in with a circus, but now they lived in a real one.

72. When we came out from lunch (black bread, soup, eggs, butter and tea) it was raining hard and an old man had come to stand under the porch for protection. Schiller gave him a rouble, but he said he was very hungry and could we not give him a bit of bread.

73. In the afternoon we visited the experimental plots. One of the interesting things we saw was a 100 hectare field of spring wheat sown by an aeroplane. The young wheat was so thick it had already turned yellow (all the other crops were remarkably good and of excellent colour) and when I said I was afraid the experiment would not be a success as the wheat would obviously not make a crop, they explained that they had sown 120 kilos per hectare as an experiment instead of only 80, the normal amount, and that next day they would show us the 800 hectare field on which only 80 kilos were sown. Unfortunately we did not see the big field. The head of the selection department who, with the director, showed us over the plots, told us that last year they had up to 14 centners of winter wheat and 1 to 4 of spring wheat per hectare on the experimental station, but only up to 6 centners of winter wheat on the farms. He said they had no rain at Bigenschook from the 29th April to the 27th May, but they had a good rain recently and the crops were growing well. Our observations on that day and on the two following days confirmed what he said, we saw many fields of excellent winter rye around Bigenschook, and while coming from and going back to Samara. The spring wheat did not look as good as the winter rye, but it was all good colour and obviously not suffering from lack of moisture.

74. In the evening we were told that next day we would be shown all their agro-technical methods and some departments of the institute which we had not visited. We protested and finally they agreed to our sugges-

tion that we leave early next morning to see collective farms. We were given a room in the girls dormitory, and although the bed was made of rough boards and straw was used for a mattress, the place was clean and we had a comfortable night.

75. Our first stop next day, June 2nd, was at a machine tractor station. The M.T.S. had 55 tractors (a few Alis-Chalmers which they said was a very poor tractor, 2 Case and the remainder McCarmic-Deering) and served 17 collective farms with an area of 65,000 hectares, 98 per cent collectivised, with 44,000 hectares of spring sowing (9,600 in winter crop) and which had 4,000 horses. The station was to have 250 tractors. I counted 8 tractors with their engine blocks out, and saw scores of worn out pistons (a mechanic working in the machine tractor station whom we spoke to the next day told us that they could never catch up in repairing the broken and damaged machinery). The machine shop was well equipped with large machines imported from Indiana and Germany. The director told us the machine tractor station had a 15,000 rouble profit last year and that this year they would get 100,000 roubles from the collective farms.

76. The first farm we stopped at was a commune organised 12 years ago (a landlord, who was now a vice chairman of a State farm, had turned his farm over to his workers). The president of the commune had been there only two months. We asked him how he had got the position and he told us the members had elected him. We told him we thought it very strange that the members should elect an outsider head of the commune, and he replied that he had been in the Government department which looked after milk collections and had come in contact with the members in his work. They had sent 50 kilos of butter to the bazaar the day we were there and expected to get 500 roubles for it (they said butter prices had dropped 50 per cent in two weeks, largely owing to the better pasture, but partly to the new decree) which would be given to the members to buy goods in the bazaar. The next farm we visited (Gigant Collective Farm No. 2) had 290 dairy cows, producing, when we were there, 6 litres of milk each per day, and 5,000 acres of sown crop. We visited a cheese factory and were told by the woman looking after the cheese that she thought the new decree a good thing, but by the time the government got its share of the cheese and other dairy products there was very little for the members, let alone for selling in the bazaar.

77. We motored for three hours looking at the crops and saw many fields of fine winter rye (our guides said it would yield 15 centners per hectare if they did not get the dreaded hot winds during the filling period); and all the spring crops, though poorly sown and very weedy, and on poorly prepared ground, were healthy and of good colour.

78. The next collective farm we visited had 319 families, 1,400 people, 740 members classified as workers (210 men and 212 women working on the collective farm and 108 working in a local factory), 500 hectares of winter wheat, 2,900 hectares of spring wheat, 250 horses (26 had died since January), 240 cows (168 collectivised, but for the use of members and 72 "in farm"), 101 pigs (non-collectivised), 800 chickens; all their rabbits had died. A very large crowd of members came into the office and a number of them openly said we were not being told the truth by the chairman and our two guides, the director of the Institute and the director of the machine tractor station. The man in charge of the bakery was very hostile to our guides and told us that some of the things they had said were not true and that the workers got only 500 grams of bread per day and members 250. According to the plan the members were to get 1.65 roubles per worker day, but last year they got only 27 kopeks – ¼ of a rouble.

79. We left in the evening for Samara. As usual, we had no sooner got into the train than the peasants crowded around us. Two individual peasants, brothers, were on their way back from their old home in the Ukraine (they had already been on the train a week) to Omsk where they each had a cow and a horse, but had been able to sow only one hectare each as they could not get any more seed. They said they could live for 6 months on their little farms and the other 6 months they worked in a factory in Omsk. I asked them how they could afford to pay for a railroad ticket all the way from Kharkov to Omsk and they said they had made the money by mending shoes. As usual, we were asked what this and that cost in Germany and Canada. When Schiller said bread was 12 kopeks a kilo in Germany, a young worker spoke up (there were 3 people in the car supporters of the Government and all the rest were anti) and said that it was just about the same price in Russia – 15 kopeks. When Schiller said, here are 15 kopeks, please get me a kilo of bread, the peasants and workers in the car all had a great laugh. The mechanic from the machine tractor station, whom I spoke about previously, said that his month's work really represented 2 poods of grain. A bright young fellow (a student in the Samara Institute of Military Technique) asked me if I did not think the new irrigation project the Government had decided to build would relieve the shortage of food. He was very disappointed when I told him that I had worked for a summer on a big irrigation project in Southern Alberta and that, although it was constructed and operated by a very efficient company (the C.P.R.), in my opinion, it had proven to be a failure, and that in view of the enormous amount of capital (or food for workers) which would be required to carry through the projected Volga irrigation scheme, I was afraid he was too

optimistic to expect it to solve the food problem. The same story I told to officials of the Department of Agriculture in Moscow, Novosibirsk, Omsk and Samara, but most of them just waved it aside. A woman on the train told us that, since the new decree, issued in March I think, that the peasants[*] last cow was not to be collectivised, that on her collective farm, and others she knew of, the members had de-collectivised all the cattle and sheep and that many were being killed and sold in the bazaar. A young worker spoke up and told her she was a liar, because it was against the law to kill cattle and that even when cattle, or horses, died, they could not be eaten until a commission had stated officially that they were dead.

80. We were supposed to leave Samara for Moscow early on the morning of June 3rd. I got up very early, looked for an izvosshchik for an hour without success, and finally arrived at the depot one hour after the train was supposed to have left. As I expected, the train had not even arrived, so we went to one of the big bazaars to buy provisions for our train trip. We paid 12 roubles for a raw chicken and 2 roubles for a small glass of sugar. We passed a man with a cake of soap for sale at 2½ roubles, and saw many women and men trying to sell a shirt, an old pair of boots, rubbers, etc. Millet was on sale at 75 kopeks per glassful, butter at 5 roubles for what looked like about ¾ of a pound, eggs 4½ roubles for 10, milk 2 roubles per litre, black bread 3 roubles per kilo, 6 squares of sugar for 1 rouble (the woman said she had paid 8 roubles for 60 pieces in Torgsin and did not think 2 roubles an unreasonable profit); wheat meal 70 roubles per pood, a small pail of potatoes 9 roubles, 4 horses hoofs 10 roubles, [*a*] horse's head 12 roubles (the peasant said the horse had died and the meat had gone to the restaurants of Samara), a small pail of burnt bread trimmings 12 roubles; and another bag of meal at 72 roubles per pood. A large group of women gathered around us to tell us that their hunger and these fantastic prices were due to the "damn revolution." A woman pushed herself through the crowd and told us all the women were telling lies. The women told her that her husband was a communist and manager of a Government provision store, and, like all the other store managers, he was stealing the goods for his wife to sell in the bazaar. The crowd grew very rapidly but a policeman came and told the alleged store manager's wife to leave. Another woman came forward and also a man and told the crowd that the people in American [*sic*] were starving, but the crowd pointed to us and then shouted down the loyalists and asked them why we (Schiller and I) were so well dressed, fat, and always laughing if people were starving in our countries. Later we went to the home of Schiller's friend for lunch. The man of the house (a member of the Party and railroad worker) had left

at 5 a.m. to get their bread (800 grams for himself and 500 for his wife) and had to wait until 11.15 a.m. We had potatoes, onion greens, black bread and beer for lunch. We left Samara at about 2.30 p.m. Until we crossed to the right hand side of the Volga, at about 7 o'clock, the winter rye was very good and the spring sown crops weedy, but of good colour. As soon as we crossed the Volga the winter rye and spring crops got progressively poorer, at least until it was too dark to see, and the area of land in crops in recent years, but now uncultivated, steadily increased. There was a good deal of butter for sale at about 5 roubles per pound and also plenty of milk, but at station after station where we tried to get bread there was none for sale – yet we were passing through an area which had a good crop last year.

81. Next morning (June 4th) I got up at 3.30 a.m. (it was not difficult as on the boards opposite, above and all around me peasants were telling workers on the train what they thought of them) to watch the fields. From early morning until it got dark at night (it was a very slow train so the distance covered was not nearly as great as the time would indicate) the winter rye was very poor, badly winter killed, very short, thin and weedy and with very poor heads. What little spring sown crops there were (all day I was amazed by the very large area of land recently in crops but now lying idle) were extremely poor. All day long peasants spoke of the passive resistance they were offering.

82. In the afternoon and early evening we passed through a section of the Central Black Earth district and there the amount of land idle seemed to be even greater than in any place we had seen during the trip, excepting Western Siberia. I kept remarking to Schiller how astonished I was, and he said he was surprised too. Later he told me that he had been informed confidentially by an official of the Department of Agriculture in Moscow, a man in a position to know the facts, that the maximum spring sowing they expected this year was about 82 to 84 per cent of the plan; that a number of the officials thought that to expect even 82 per cent was insane optimism, and that not more than 70 per cent of the plan would be fulfilled. He said all Russian statistics are compiled in three sets – one for publication, one confidential set for the directors, and one very confidential set for the very high officials. The Government would not, he argued, weaken its prestige by publishing figures showing that the plan *as a whole* had not been carried out by less than about 90 per cent no matter what the truth might be. I argued that the figures recently published were serious and that to have sown only 75 per cent of the wheat by May 25th was really very hard on the prestige of the Government, as certainly whatever wheat was sown after the end of May would, under normal Russian weather conditions, give a very low yield.

He agreed with what I said, but contended that the published seeding figures would gradually increase up to the 25th or end of June and would certainly climb up to at least 90 per cent.* I have repeated Schiller's story for what it is worth. Of course, I have no way of telling what truth there may be in it. The enormous area of uncultivated land I saw in Western Siberia, and in part of the Middle Volga and in the part of the Central Black Earth area I have seen (I would not risk generalising about the other areas I have seen, as owing to the relatively large amount of land which should be summer fallowed it is impossible to say if the large amount of uncultivated land I saw was above normal) lend weight to Schiller's story, and if what his informants told him is true, it is exceedingly important. The hunger and passive resistance of the peasants, the shortage of seed, the very large number of horses which have died, and the extremely poor condition of the horses used for the spring work also give colour to his story. Against what he says, however, I should place a story told me yesterday by my Czech. coal mining engineer (mentioned in a previous letter). He stated that he sees all the coal control figures, and is familiar with the methods by which they are compiled, and that the coal data published in the papers are accurate. Incidentally he tells me that, despite the fact that 15 new mines have been opened in the Don Basin, that they have many more workers than last, and that 300 new mines needing coal are to come into use this year, the present production in the Don Basin is only 120 to 130,000 tons per day as compared with a planned production for June of 190,000 and a production of 130,000 at this time last year. He attributes the low production to the hunger of the miners and says that without bread a Russian will not work.

83. This morning (June 10) I had breakfast with a German engineer who is working in a Moscow fruit plant. He said that they had just received word from Berlin that their recent shipment of two car loads of fruit (pulp, preserves or juices I suppose) had been refused as the stuff was such a mixture that the German Chemical engineers could not tell what it was made from. He said the workers in his factory were very apathetic, especially since their food rations had been reduced, and that yesterday some of them had waited for hours in line to find that they could not get their present ration of one pound of black bread per day.

84. On the train from Samara to Moscow a woman (the wife of a Party man – an architect) who had been on the train five days, told us that in Central Asia and all the way from Alma-Ata to Samara food was very scarce and very expensive.

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*Note in margin: "They have!"

85. Dr. Schiller very kindly gave me a copy of a long article regarding Russian agriculture during 1931 which he has written for publication in a German economic journal. **Mr. Vincent, of the Embassy staff, made an excellent translation of it for me, a copy of which I am enclosing.[6] The Ambassador has sent copies, with a covering letter, to the Foreign Office and the Department of Overseas Trade.** The tone and substance of the article, although much more comprehensive, is much the same as the report which I wrote for publication by the Canadian Wheat Pool, following my visit to Russia in 1930. Although Dr. Schiller asked me to treat the article as confidential until it is published, I am sure he will not object in the least to our office making full use of the interesting information it contains about many phases of Russian agriculture. **Please call Graul's attention to the wool data and Mason's attention to the material about sugar beets and other crops.** I have not had time to read it carefully, but on glancing through it I was struck by the very critical tone of the text and the relatively optimistic tone of the conclusion. On our trip I had many arguments with Schiller about Russian agriculture and I think the following three points based on our discussions, are a fair explanation of the difference in the tone of the text and conclusion of his article.

1. The conclusion is partly sugar coating as Schiller does not want to be told, as his predecessor was, that he is not welcome in Russia, or, to put it in his own English: "You can be very critical of Russian agricultural development, but you must have no evil consequences."*

2. Coming from Germany, a country of small agricultural holdings, and limited mechanisation of agriculture, he is more optimistic than I am about the economics of both large scale and mechanised agriculture.

3. Schiller told me that, having been in in Russia 8 years and having become accustomed to conditions, he was many times amazed during our trip how many more points I found to criticize than he, and that I was constantly drawing invidious comparisons which had never occurred to him. I think the latter point a very valid criticism of my point of view, because try as I do to remember that only 2 to 3 generations ago the Russian peasants were serfs and that for centuries they were exploited by landlords and left in ignorance, drunkenness and filth by an externally gorgeous but internally corrupt church, I cannot help being influenced by the environment of Canadian and American farms and U.S. and Canadian ideas of efficiency, and therefore I am more critical of the Russians than is fair.

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*A line was drawn beside this paragraph, and "Note" was written in the margin and underlined.

86. It is nice of the London *Times* to ask me to write them some articles on Russian agriculture and I would like very much to do it, but I really do not think it would be wise. It would give me great pleasure to inform the English millers that if they are looking forward to several more profitable years by buying Russian wheat at from 20 to 30 shillings per quarter, they are living in a fool's paradise; to tell Broomhall publicly that I do not agree with his discussion, in one of his recent grain trade year books, of a letter I sent him in the early part of 1931 about Russian agriculture; to hint to the bears of the wheat market that they have "played up" the story of Russian flooding the markets of the world with dirt cheap wheat for more than it was worth; to let some Canadian and U.S. newspapers who gave so much space and no little credence to the optimistic speeches about Russian wheat production by the Russians at the last world wheat conference, that they were wrong and only assisting the fall in wheat prices, but I really think it is better to wait a wee while. In the first place, many people think the *Times* is hopelessly biased about the Russian question, so no matter what I wrote, many people would say, oh, that is only some more of the *Times's* spite. In the second place, the Russians naturally do not like the *Times* and recently refused a visa to Lukin Johnson, the London correspondent of a string of Canadian newspapers, simply because, as far as I know, he was working in co-operation with the *Times*. Thirdly, I am confident that in a few months the Empire Marketing Board can publish a report on Russian agriculture which will not only be of substantial service to the primary producers of the *Dominions but which should, with the name of the E.M.B. and being couched in conservative and careful language, do a great deal to prick the bubble of propaganda about the terrible competitive menace of Bolshevik agriculture.

87. When discussing Schiller's story about the inflation of Soviet sowing statistics, I forgot to mention a very important point which he raised about sugar beets. Last autumn the Government stated that despite the 20% increase in the area planted to sugar beets, the production (based on an estimate while the beets were still growing or before they were harvested) of sugar would be only 2.7 million tons. He had been in the sugar beet fields in the Central Black Earth district and the Ukraine during harvest and had come to the conclusion that the estimated yields were too high and that from 25 to 30 per cent of the beets were spoiled

*A line was drawn beside the italicized words, and "Note" was written in the margin and underlined.

in the fields during harvest (in some cases the winter came on before they were harvested). He had, therefore, reduced the Government estimate from 2.7 to 1.8 millions tons. But even on the basis of his greatly reduced estimate of 1.8 million tons, and the rations of the population, there should have been enough for domestic consumption and something for export. As very little had been exported and as workers with cards could not get sugar for weeks and months, he was now convinced that this estimate should have been 1.4 million tons, or, in other words, he should have allowed 400,000 tons for Government "bluff" in acreage data.

88. I meant to tell you while discussing the attitude of the peasants to the collective farms that on the trip I read in Russian papers that G. B. Shaw had told the South African *Cape Times* that never since the days of Napoleon had the world seen such energy as the Russian peasants were now displaying, that in a recent Kremlin decree "the enthusiasm of the collective farm masses" is praised, and that I notice a recent issue of the *New Statesman and Nation* **(one of the editors of which, a namesake of yours and also a professor at the London School of Economics, told a Chatham House audience in my presence last winter that the real wages of the Russian people were rapidly rising)** in a special supplement on the U.S.S.R. states that Soviet agriculture "had turned the backward peasant into a modern mechanic."

89. I fully realise that this letter is much too long to expect very many people to read it all. If I had had time I would have classified it into sections, but as I am leaving in a few days for the Ukraine, where I expect to be 3 weeks to a month, I simply did not have time. In writing this letter I have tried to keep the interests of many people in mind (especially many friends in Australia and Canada who, having been influenced by all the optimistic reports which they have read about the tremendous increase in the productivity of Russian agriculture as a result of its socialisation, are alarmed about competition from Russian agricultural products and are consequently very much interested in everything they can find to read about Russia) and have naturally made it much longer than is necessary for any one individual.

Sincerely yours,
(sgd) A. Cairns

P.S. In a speech delivered in Winnipeg not long ago MacKenzie King told Western Canada that it was idle for her to think she would not meet with increasing competition from Russian and Argentine agriculture. I think he was right about the Argentine, but I am afraid he has been misinformed or mislead [*sic*] about Russia. But I must

be apolitical so I should tell you about the special decorations Export Khleb (the Russian Grain Export Trust) had for the May 1st celebrations. They had a special structure on the top of their building and from it were protruding 4 card-board cannons – perhaps they had read one of Bennet's [*sic*] well known 1930 election speeches in which he said he would blast Canada's way into the export markets! Bennet has a good sense of humour and as I have heard him joking about his "blasting" speech I am sure if he happens to read part of this letter he will not object to the comparison.

P.P.S. Please ask McLeod to send copies of all my letters to Premiers Bracken, Anderson and Brownlee of Western Canada. I know they are all very much interested in Russian agriculture and I think they will appreciate having my observations.

I have a great deal of raw material (much of it gathered in 1930 and last winter in London) for the report I intended to prepare on Russian grain growing for the Ottawa Conference, but I have decided not to prepare such a report as I have not yet seen the Ukraine and other important regions, and I really think I can spend my time to better advantage wandering about the country than writing a report in Moscow.

A. C.

Minutes

This report by Mr. Cairns is the most vivid picture of life in the country side of Kazakstan, the mid-Volga region and Western Siberia that we have yet seen. It differs from the account given by the German Agricultural Attaché (N 3569) in that that report was written for publication, whereas this one is a stark record of things seen and heard, and if published would mean the end of Mr. Cairns's periodical visits to Russia.

It is a record of over-staffing, over-planning and complete incompetence at the centre; of human misery, starvation, death and disease amongst the peasantry. The pity of it is that this account cannot be broadcast to the world at large as an antidote to Soviet propaganda in general and to the *obiter dicta* of such temporary visitors as Mr. Bernard Shaw, Lord Marley and others.

It is clear as daylight from this report that the only creatures who have any life at all in the districts visited are boars, pigs and other swine. Men, women, children, horses and other workers are left to die in order that the Five Year Plan shall at least succeed on paper. The contrast between the lot of the peasantry and those who are responsible for it is striking indeed. These latter live in a world of self-deception – a fool's

paradise, in which their main preoccupation seems to be at the present moment to bring the weather into line with the Plan, the Plan being like the law of the Medes and Persians, and to make the River Ob flow somewhere indefinitely to the South rather than empty its waters in the Arctic Ocean. Even the rabbits are allowed palatial habitats whereas the persons whom they are supposed to feed cannot even get a crust of bread. Famine is not only a danger to be feared. From what Mr. Cairns says it is actually there and the appalling conditions of 1921 are apparently being reproduced. No wonder Stalin has been forced to "let up" on his distribution plans for meat & grain.

Briefly it would appear that again the dead hand of bureaucracy is laying waste the country-side, and Mr. Cairns's conclusions on page 66 et seq. seem to follow naturally from the first part of the letter.

He has the lowest opinion of the Plan in so far as it affects agriculture, while as regards the actual accomplishment of the Plan, it is so appallingly bad that Mr. Cairns is convinced that all we have heard about it is pure bluff and that the rest of the world need have no fear about it whatever.

It seems to me that this report should be in the hands of all those who are to have a say at Ottawa. As the outcome of the Ottawa Conference will probably be the acceptance of the principle of the wheat quota, it would be not only to the common interests of the Empire, but also an act of humanity for the Empire at least to make up its mind to exclude Russian wheat from its markets until we can be satisfied that the conditions in Russia are such that it would be impossible for Mr. Cairns to paint another picture such as this.

Query: Copies to

Min[*istry*] of A[*griculture*] & F[*isheries*]
Board of Trade
D[*epartment*] O[*f*] T[*rade*]
Export Credits
Dominion Office
Treasury and W[*ar*] O[*ffice*]

and propose that this report be made available to the Delegates at Ottawa for their conf. information (i.e. unless the E.M.B. are already acting in this sense).

C. H. Bateman
28th June 1932

[....]

This would be of great interest to Mr. Henderson, of the Econ. Adv. Council. (He is getting a [*illeg.*] from Mr. Lloyd.)

E.M.B. are having this specially copied.

They will send us ten copies. We will distribute to Govt. Depts, as suggested above.

They are consulting with Cabinet Offices regarding Ottawa distribution.

F. Gwatkin 30/6

I have seldom read a more convincing document. It is now clear that collective agriculture in Russia is a failure and that there is no prospect of Russian grain exports on any appreciable scale, for the next few years at least.

As Tacitus' Romans "made a solitude, and called it peace," so the Soviet Govt. have "made a famine, and called it communism."

L. Collier

June 30th.

Sir L. Oliphant

It is a long job to read this. But, if you have time for it, I think it will reward you with some hair-raising revelations.

L. C.

June 30th

Seen by Sir L. Oliphant (see slip opposite). Now circulate as proposed.

L. C.

July 4th.

6

Conditions in Ukraine
Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 18 July 1932

Sir, Moscow, 18th July, 1932

As will have been apparent from my despatch No. 239 of the 4th May,[7] conditions in the Ukraine are apparently unsatisfactory. Agriculture in particular has not accomplished what was expected of it and there is a severe food shortage. Moreover, low agricultural productivity in the Ukraine is a serious matter for the rest of the Union, inasmuch as it is one of the most fertile parts of European Russia, and is expected under normal conditions to supply a considerable and increasing surplus. It is doubtless due to the seriousness of the situation that the Central Government has thought it necessary to make use of the Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party, as reported in my despatch No. 381 of the 18th July, to address a series of admonitions through the mouths of Molotov and Kaganovich.

2. Though Molotov and Kaganovich made a gallant attempt to gild the pill of the dissatisfaction of the Central Government by lauding the very real achievements of Ukrainian Bolshevism in the sphere of industry – e.g. in the Don Basin coal area, Kharkov, Dnieprostroy, Tractorstroy, Turbinostroy, etc. – it was clear from their speeches that the main reason for their presence at the Congress was to take the Ukrainian Party organisation severely to task. It appeared that in the current year 81% of the sown area was under collective farm or State farm management, but despite the success of collectivisation, matters were not proceeding by any means satisfactorily. To quote Molotov: "They" (the Ukrainian Bolsheviks) "have not been able to ensure the necessary practical leadership of collective farm organisation and have not been able to give effect in practice to the fundamentals of the agricultural campaigns, viz. the sowing and harvesting campaigns." A serious situation had thus arisen for industry, seeing that it was impossible to maintain the tempo of socialist construction if agriculture did not also advance *pari passu*.

Ukrainian communists had carried out their duties in regard to agriculture in a mechanical and happy-go-lucky manner and had in many cases permitted the occurrence of gross deviations from the Party line. In some cases, and in particular in the Graboff area, actual instances had occurred of "kulak provocation,"[8] while elsewhere speculators had encouraged the weaker vessels on the collective farms to dispose of wheat and agricultural produce individually, instead of selling it in the lawful manner through the collective farm organisations. During the Second Five Year Plan it was necessary to increase the supply of foodstuffs to the toilers two to three times as compared with the First Five Year Plan (this is a very candid admission that there is far from being enough to eat at present) and the shortcomings on the part of the Ukraine were naturally jeopardising the fulfilment of this part of the general Party programme. The agricultural plan for the Ukraine for the present year provided for 366 million poods as against 434 million poods last year (see my despatch No. 244 of the 10th May last), but even then the plan could hardly be fulfilled unless the mistakes and gross shortcomings of the past were eliminated. The Party conference had laid it down that the cereal yield of the Ukraine in the course of the next two or three years must be raised by 1½ times the amounts harvested in the most favourable of recent years and must be realised in the present year. (It is difficult to imagine that this objective will be attained.) The Ukrainian Bolsheviks must therefore energetically carry out the Party directives in the strengthening of the collective and State farm organisations all over the Republic. In the words of Kaganovich: "If either the village or the collective farm cell is ideologically feebly-armed and does not play the part of organiser and agitator, then all will not be well on the collective farm."

3. Molotov and Kaganovich rounded off their speeches with the usual admonitions, the former holding out to the collective farm worker the prospect of two and a half times as many manufactured goods as were available last year, as a reward for productive prowess on the food front.

4. It remains to be seen whether or not the exhortations of Moscow can succeed in inducing the individualistically inclined Ukrainian peasant to adhere more closely to the general Party line.

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.
Esmond Ovey

Minutes

We should soon receive Mr. Cairns' report on the Ukraine which will give us a real picture of conditions there. As it is, we have already good

reason to suppose that the situation is worse than "apparently unsatisfactory." Please see also N 4396/480/38 [....]
J. D. Greenway
July 26

7

Crimea and the Ukraine
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 1 August 1932, Forwarding a Report by J. M. K. Vyvyan

Sir, Moscow, August 1, 1932

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an interesting and succinct report by Mr. Vyvyan, third secretary at this Embassy, upon a short tour he has recently made in the Crimea and the Ukraine.

2. The picture of the state of the country presented in this report is of a kind already familiar from the accounts of travels in other parts of the Soviet Union submitted to the Empire Marketing Board by Mr. Cairns. I would, however, draw special attention to section III of Mr. Vyvyan's report, in which he submits some useful first-hand observations upon the working of collective farm trade, the establishment of which as an incentive to the production and distribution of foods-stuffs is the latest manoeuvre of the Soviet Government for the solution of what still remains their most vital problem, that of feeding the people under socialism.

3. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.
William Strang

Enclosure in No. 7

Report on a Week's Tour in the Crimea and Ukraine

I.

The observations contained in the following account of a tour in the south of Russia, during which I was absent from Moscow for only ten days in all, are not intended to reflect conditions in the Union in general, or even in the predominantly agricultural parts of it. In the case of the Soviet Union it is more true than elsewhere that no section of the country is a

microcosm of the whole. The system of centralised distribution combined with the restrictions on internal migration (of which one example is the fact that the movements of Ukrainian peasants to the towns or from north to south is stopped by withholding railway tickets) prevent either the prices of food-stuffs or the remuneration of labour from tending to equality in separate areas as they would do if the levelling influences of trade and a normal labour market were free to operate. As a result of these restrictions the condition of the agricultural population varies very widely from place to place, and there is no reason to suppose that the districts through which I passed, and which were chosen almost at random, were especially typical.

According to Mr. Cairns, of the Empire Marketing Board, with whom I travelled for a week from Simferopol to Rostov, conditions in the small towns which we visited together made a far more favourable impression upon him than any he had so far encountered this year, before coming to the Crimea. But the appreciable relaxation of tension which he observed is not only due to the fact that he had come from the neighbourhood of Kiev, where conditions have been notoriously acute, or to the superficial appearance of increasing plenty caused by the gradual extension of free trade in agricultural produce as a result of recent decrees. In the Crimea in the beginning of July and in the Ukraine a week or two later, the harvest was in full swing and probably began to ease the grain shortage. Even if a proportion of the grain is not being handed over to the collective farmers during the actual progress of the harvest in accordance with the Government instructions, it has probably allowed the reserves of last year to be drawn upon more freely, while the work of harvesting has undoubtedly absorbed a large amount of seasonal labour throughout the Union and thereby eased the condition of the mass of semi-nomadic agricultural unemployed.

The first section of this report is an account of my itinerary from Simferopol to Rostov, containing some details of the State and collective farms which Mr. Cairns and I visited between these two places and which Mr. Cairns will probably present to the Empire Marketing Board with further technical observations. We both have good reason to believe that these farms were the most presentable that the local authorities, through whose intermediary we visited them, could show. In the first place, as will be apparent from evidence, both material and in figures, of their capital investment on buildings and stock and their insignificant production compared to the number of their employees, they were for the most part not the type of organisation which could continue to exist under conditions of free competition. Secondly, the local authorities concerned were reluctant to give us facilities for visiting any further farms under

their jurisdiction, and by informing us that no transport was available for visiting them, made it well-nigh impossible for us, while accepting their assistance and hospitality, to do so. Thirdly, the quality of the crops on the farms which we actually inspected, though very variable and not always superior to that of the crops belonging to other farms which we passed through by chance in the same neighbourhood, was incomparably better than that of the deplorable fields on either side of the railway line which I had an opportunity of observing during the daylight part of my train journeys through the Ukraine.

II.

I joined Mr. Cairns, who had been travelling for some weeks in the Ukraine and Crimea, on the 10th July at Simferopol, and we made arrangements through the People's Commissariat for Agriculture of the Crimean A.S.S.R. to visit a neighbouring State farm on that day. This farm, known as the "Simferopol Agricultural Combine," and formerly a co-operative enterprise, is of a mixed farming type, now obsolete in view of instructions that all farms established in the future are to be specialised. The sown area and the amount of stock maintained was not impressive considering that 500 workers were employed and that the population of the farm, including dependants, was 800. Two thousand four hundred hectares were sown, about 1,500 with grain, and the live-stock consisted of 2,000 sheep, 1,700 pigs, 2,300 rabbits, 1,500 laying hens and a number of cows of which I have no record. It was fairly evident that excessive outlay had been made on excellent farm buildings, which we were informed accounted for 1½ millions out of a total capitalisation of 5 million roubles. These buildings included two silos which were wasted by being filled with weeds, seemingly gathered at random, instead of with the leguminous fodder suitable for the purpose. The live-stock, except the hens and rabbits, was extremely poor, and all the officials of the farm to whom I spoke, including the head of the local Communist cell, complained of this fact. The scrub cows were only giving 7 litres of milk a day, and their average over the year was only 3-5, scarcely enough for the needs of the farm population alone. The pigs mostly consisted of this season's litters, of which 200 have to be slaughtered and delivered to the State in the third quarter of this year. None had been available for delivery during previous quarters. I gained the impression that the efficient working of this farm was greatly hampered by the intricacies of a system of centralised supply. Although the farm delivered grain to the State, 50 per cent. of the grain fodder for its live-stock was planned to be obtained from centralised organisations,

although I was informed by one of the overseers that this supply was usually in arrears. Again, although sufficient grain for the farm population was grown on the spot, their bread (800 grammes a day and 400 for non-manual workers) was supplied from the co-operatives in Simferopol.

During my visit to this farm I was closely accompanied by the head of the local party cell, who was evidently regarded as a nuisance by the farm officials, not, in fact, belonging to the farm, but being a metal worker in the town, who interfered with its management. This Communist abandoned himself to an orgy of self-criticism which consisted in disparaging the farm, but eulogising its future. He insisted on me partaking in the farm canteen of an unpleasant meal which we shared with a multitude of flies, and invited us to drink to the world revolution. At present, he said, there were twenty-three Communists in the farm and although only ten of the workers were Tatars, four of the latter were party men. His work in this farm was only a small side of his party employment, and I must admit that he had the figures and organisation of the place at his finger-tips and, as he followed us about, reminded me of a disappointed but laborious salesman.

On the 11th July we visited another State farm in the neighbourhood (Kara Kyat), mainly occupied in fruit growing and apparently dispersed in separate sections over a considerable area. Detailed figures of the crops are not worth recording, but it may be of interest to observe that 850 workers and a total population of 1,250 persons were supported on a farm with only 1,500 hectares besides a few orchards under cultivation, and no live-stock except draught horses and oxen and forty-five cows. As an instance of the waste of labour, the fact may be mentioned that we counted no less than thirty people employed on one old Ransome thresher in a field that had been harvested. These workers, we were informed, received 52 roubles a month in the summer and 30 roubles in the winter. Their food in the canteen costs 50 kopeks a day. Nevertheless, the farm administration was able to provide detailed figures of costs, among which a reckoning of 7.97 roubles per hectare of apple trees may be mentioned. To judge, however, by this year's crop, even this figure would be scarcely profitable, for many of the apple trees were diseased and few were fruiting. The other fruit trees, especially cherries, appeared to be in fair condition and the vegetables, including 60 hectares of tomatoes (the whole yield of which was contracted for by a Simferopol canning factory), were satisfactory. On this farm I saw one instance of extremely efficient labour which should be recorded – a shed engaged in packing cabbages of fine quality for despatch by rail. The women employed were on piece-work, each worker making her own mark on

the crate as it was finished by her. In addition, two women were on test, observed by two men employed for this special purposes, who made detailed entries, including productivity, periods of work, rest, &c., of the women employees. The result of their observations of all workers combined would establish the norm (standard) on the basis of which next year's wage rates would be calculated.

On the 11th July Mr. Cairns and I also visited a commune, the most highly developed form of collective farm approximating to a State farm. The manager was a glib and efficient Jew who answered a number of questions regarding collective farm organisation in general put to him by Dr. Schiller of the German Embassy, who was with us on this occasion. Our visit was, however, short and I have no figures relating to the farm which are worth recording.

On the 12th July we arrived at Melitupol in the Ukraine and were met by the President of the Executive Committee of the Area (rayon), who had been notified by the authorities at Simferopol of our arrival. That morning we visited a neighbouring State farm of the name of "Bolshevik." This was mainly a grain farm, a few live-stock only being kept, and no milk or meat delivered to the State. Nearly 6,000 hectares were under cultivation and over 2,000 under wheat. Statements made as to the estimated yield at this harvest are a good example of the confusion which makes Soviet estimates in advance somewhat unreliable. On this farm Mr. Cairns and I saw the best crops he had seen while we were together and he would allow the best field a yield of 12½ centners per hectare, the excellent crop being slightly spoiled by the hot winds in the beginning of July. Nevertheless, the State agronomist, who had come out with us from Melitupol, allowed the winter wheat an average yield of 10, spring wheat 8, oats 8 and barley 8. This was certainly not an underestimate and applies to the best crops which we saw. On the other hand, the official estimate for the yield of all grains in the rayon, which the president of the local executive committee volunteered to us, was 10 centners per hectare. The two statements are irreconcilable and the president's figure is probably typical of the calculations which have swelled Osinski's recently published estimate for the whole Union to 7.8 centners per hectare.

On this farm 400 workers were being employed, including seasonal labour, and only 126 continually. Considering the size of the farm, this figure compares favourably with that of every farm we visited. The workers wages varied from 25 roubles a month to 200, the latter figures being the pay of tractor drivers. Their food costs 12 roubles a month. As was the case at most other farms, the manager complained of the lack of tractors, and on my asking him why he did not use horses, he

replied the cost of a horse was 11 roubles per hectare and that of a tractor hired from the machine and tractor station about a rouble. State farms are supposed, however, not to hire, but to possess their own tractors. Considering the published figures of Soviet tractor production, it is remarkable that of all the tractors I saw on a week's tour, about seventy to eighty, only three were of Soviet manufacture, while Mr. Cairns tells me that, on his tours, he has observed a proportion of about one in ten.

On the same day we visited an artel collective farm called "Chekhograd," founded on a village in which all the inhabitants are Czechs. The buildings, though not new or expensive, were clean. There was a club house with stage and cinema, the walls being covered with posters depicting methods for fighting typhus and also for avoiding gas bombs from imperialists. The population appeared clean and contented, and I spoke to several of them without any officials being near. The farm consisted of 165 households with 372 workers living in their own houses, and some apparently having their own poultry and occasionally a cow. The workers were divided among six brigades on piece-work which was reckoned up by the brigadier. Each brigade had its own "production plan," determined by a general meeting of the collective. "Chekhograd" was a mixed farm with about 2,000 hectares under grain crops, and possessing 300 milking cows with an average production of 8 litres per day. As regards the yield of grain, 8 to 9 centners per hectare of wheat were expected and 12 to 13 of barley. Fifty per cent. of the farm's produce was contracted for and 50 per cent. was free for their own consumption or for the market.

On the 15th July, before we left the town, a British subject of Russian origin, naturalised in Canada and the husband of a woman we had spoken to in the market, came to see us. It was the usual case, he had returned to Russia in 1921-22 and had been unable to leave. He left me a letter addressed to His Majesty's consul, but begged that no reply be returned to it as he was afraid of the attentions of the G.P.U. Last winter they had suspected him of having dollars in his possession, as he in fact had, and had kept him in a small cellar with seventy-five other people in indescribably filthy conditions for eleven days, but he had not given up his money.

After he had left we drove off with an official to visit a neighbouring State farm growing fruit and dairy produce. The information which we obtained on this farm emanated exclusively from the manager's office, since when he accompanied us for a drive round the property, which necessitated a considerable detour to avoid a horse which had died between the shafts and blocked the main road, scarcely any produce was visible. The cherries had, indeed, been plucked, but literally not a single

fruit was to be seen on the trees, and a few fields of vegetables and some grape vines were the only growing produce that we saw. The manager's comment as we left was therefore amusing. "You see," he said, extending his arms, "we have vast perspectives."

On the other hand, some of the particulars which he supplied were interesting, and the fact that most of the capital was recently invested may excuse the farm's present condition. It was a tax on our credulity, however, to accept his statement that 90 per cent. of the produce was suitable for export. From this and the two neighbouring rayons, he said, 600 tons of fruit had been exported to Germany in 1931. The farm comprised altogether 22,000 hectares, mostly poor sandy land, and employed 700 workers, and a total population of 1,200. There were 500 hectares under grain, I understand for local requirements. A number of live-stock was, however, maintained and apparently 100 of the pigs slaughtered per year were delivered to the State. Ten to 20 cattle and 100 pigs were killed annually for the farm's requirements, and this supply for 1,200 people is an adequate commentary on the universal shortage of meat. The manager admitted that the workers obtained little meat, but stated the bread ration was 800 grammes a day for workers and 400 for dependants, the usual amount for a State farm or factory.

Of the 400 permanent workers, 32 were Communists and 150 Komsomols; they were all trade union members. The 300 seasonal workers were, said the manager, collective farm workers obtained by contracts with the trade unions to which they belonged. As, however, it is well known that collective farm workers cannot be trade union members, and I have been more than once so informed, this statement cannot be accurate, and many of the seasonal workers are evidently drawn from the ranks of the agricultural unemployed, if not impressed.

Before leaving this farm we noticed some new dwelling houses in course of construction, and were informed that in these flats, families were to have two rooms apiece, and unmarried workers would be five to a room, and that this accommodation was considered admirable. I believe, however, that this farm was considered to be the only remaining one in the neighbourhood which we had not seen, considered suitable for our inspection, for on leaving Melitupol a G.P.U. officer told us that none of the collectives in the district were worth inspecting, and we were eventually forced to leave by the unwillingness of the authorities to give us facilities for further local visits.

On the 14th July we arrived at Sinelnikovo, a smaller more primitive prairie town than Melitupol. The latter had boasted an admirable amount of new construction of both schools and workers' dwellings, and Sinelnikovo was not lacking in this respect. The first visit which we paid was

particularly impressive, to a research institution for maize growing, on a magnificent scale with an array of fine new buildings, both attractive and practical, situated on the outskirts of the town. The institution had evidently been equipped regardless of expense with excellent blood-stock, and stables which can scarcely have a superior anywhere. I am not competent to judge the utility of such an institution, which I was informed by two specialist professors detailed to deliver lectures to me, was founded exclusively for the purpose of studying the effects of maize feed on cattle and pigs, with a subsidiary interest in experimenting in soya bean cultivation. When pressed for an opinion, I remarked that the problems of this institution and those of a typical agricultural producer, *i.e.*, a collective farm, were very different. "Not at all," he replied, "in both cases our sole task is to raise the standard of living of the workers and to build socialism." No less than eighty-eight specialists were employed in the institution, and, if I understood the director rightly, as much as 1 million roubles were expended annually.

On the 15th July we visited the "Lenin" commune, a collective farm established in some form or other as early as 1921, and of which the authorities were particularly proud. It was the classic type of collective farm with pictures outside the entrance representing a smiling-faced "shock-worker," a villainous-looking "malingerer," and various other symbolic types daubed on pieces of tin. Some buildings construction in the last few years were in a poor state with broken windows and so forth, but some admirable new workers' dwellings were being put up, including magnificent silos and stables, regardless of expense, constructed from the farm's own brickmaking plant. We visited the creche for young children and noticed very many of the inmates, although well cared for, had the pot-bellies common in Russia owing to unsuitable diet.

The farm comprised 4,300 hectares, some under grain, some under pasture. There were 952 cattle and those we saw were fine stock, while the pigs, "English Whites," were equally good. The workers we saw seemed contented. There was a large proportion of Communists, and I imagine that the population of the farm was, comparatively speaking, well fed. We ourselves made a curious, though delicious meal of milk and honey and rye bread, and some extremely indifferent locally grown raspberries.

This farm was evidently a favourite of the State. The estimated wages of the worker, who receive a dividend in kind, was 2 roubles a working day, and he would receive money advances at the beginning of the month calculated on the working days he could show for the last month. Great pecuniary assistance had, however, obviously been received from the State, in spite of the fact that capital reinvestment of profits was stated

to be 700,000 roubles. The figure of the State's assistance was stated to be difficult to determine, but this excuse is not difficult to interpret.

Our visit to Sinelnikovo was disappointing, since we had only inspected two showy institutions, neither of which are large-scale or typical agricultural producers. There was some ample compensation, however, in the fact that our early arrival on the 14th July, and the unpunctuality of our train to Rostov when we left on the 15th July, gave us an opportunity for mingling with the crowds at the railway station, which is an important junction thronged with immigrant peasants. Some of the conversations which we had at this and other railway stations is recorded in the final section of this report.

III. *Collective Farm Trade*

The institution of so-called collective farm trade, combined with the establishment in every town of large free markets encouraged by the State, is a dominant feature of the Soviet Government's policy of decentralisation of distribution. The series of decrees successively reducing planned deliveries by agricultural producers of grain, meat, dairy produce, fruit, vegetables and potatoes, all hang upon the institution of these markets, and the latter have therefore become a focus of interest in agricultural districts and the most obvious subject of discussion with local authorities. Some personal observations on the subject may therefore be worth recording.

Collective farm trade, as the channel of distribution, will not be theoretically complete until, if ever, bread and meat regularly reach the market. At present bread of various qualities is to be found in the bazaars at comparatively high prices, while meat is scarcely to be seen. The effect of the reduction of grain deliveries to the State in respect of this year's harvest will not be shown until the 15th January, 1933, when trade in new grain is permitted. Meanwhile, a certain amount of bread is apparently marketed by the collective farm trade through the Area Collective Farm Union, which in some cases maintains its own shop in the bazaar, but mostly by individual peasants or separate members of the less developed (artel) collective farms. The produce of collectives is supposed to be marketed by non-working members of the farm, and I met with two cases of such people who were living in the town and trading on their own, baking bread from grain supplied out of the stocks, not of their collective farm as a unit, but out of stocks belonging to individual members, in these cases, their husbands.

Meat is practically non-existent in the bazaars, and with the exception of live chickens I saw only one case of fresh meat being sold, and this

is a shop apparently belonging to the Collective Farm Union, where some ill-killed beef, with the blood left in it to increase the weight, was selling with assorted bones at 6 roubles a kilogramme. The supply was so small that only a small queue had collected, and the price was naturally enormous to the working population of a small town where the equivalent wage of about £2 a week in England would probably be in the neighbourhood of 100 roubles a month. Although no restrictions now exist on the slaughter of cattle by collective farmers or to the sale of meat by them, the scarcity is maintained, for the reason, I believe, that scarcely any cattle remain in the hands of individual peasants or individual members of collectives, except milking cows. One woman collective farm member told me at a market where an individual peasant was complaining of the confiscation of her draught horse, that it was better in a collective, as they had given back the horses, though, indeed, not many of the cattle. Even the local authorities, if questioned on the subject, do not pretend that members of the collectives often possess cattle of their own.

The collective farm markets are, however, thronged. In Simferopol, with a population of about 100,000, I do not think that less than 5,000 people were congregated in the bazaar in the morning. The produce sold consists in main of bread, meal, vegetables, milk, eggs, butter, potatoes and large quantities of fruit. Only a small proportion of the latter, of which the supply far exceeds the demand, appears to be sold.

Nothing, however, is considered too trifling to be worth putting on sale, and on the long boards on trunions which form the booths, or the ground upon which the less privileged sellers are squatting, one may often see a glass tumbler full of millet or sunflower seeds priced at a rouble without the glass in the former case or 65 kopecks in the latter, together with a handkerchief full of wheat-flour mixed with bran as some old woman's sole stock-in-trade. Many other curious products are on sale, handfuls of fried sticklebacks, platefuls of dry, boiled entrails, lumps of dirty sugar, or even sugar sweets, to be used in default of all else to sweeten tea or its local substitute, made of burned grain and boiling water. The small markets at railway stations on the main line present the same picture, but on an infinitely smaller scale, and in the Ukraine and the Crimea prices were fairly uniform during the time of my visit.

The greater proportion of produce in the bazaars which I saw consisted, however, of good, clean fruit and vegetables, and of bread and dairy produce. The following prices, which do not vary much in Simferopol and Melitupol, the largest towns which I visited, may be of interest.

The price of bread varies greatly according to quality. In Simferopol, where the most comprehensive selection was on sale, rye bread varied from 3.50 to 8 roubles a kilogramme; the cheaper quality included a great deal of bran and even fibrous material. The bread which forms the rations on the State farms and communes is of about 4 roubles quality. Nearly white wheat bread was 2.50 roubles for about half a pound, and in Melitupol there was rye bread as low as 3 roubles a kilogramme, which, we were told, was 6 to 8 roubles before the harvest. Chickens were about 13 to 15 roubles each, and similar prices are asked in the Ukraine. Milk (boiled) was from 1.20 to 1.40 roubles a litre; eggs, 5 roubles for 10 (in some places in the Ukraine, 7 to 8 roubles for 10). Butter was from 13 to 18 roubles a kilogramme and of poor quality.

In connexion with these prices, the distribution of produce and the statement of the prices obtained for it by one commune which I visited near Sinelnikovo may be recorded. The management of the farm showed us their official entry of yields of dairy produce during the first ten days of July. No entry of prices obtained was made, and these were given verbally. Out of a total production of milk of 28,526 litres, 7,601 were contracted, 3,792 sold in the bazaar, 5,907 consumed on the farm among a population of about 500, and the rest made into cheese or butter. Ten kilog. of butter only were consumed and 3 sold on the bazaar. For contracted milk, 35 kopeks was obtained; in the bazaar, 1 rouble a litre; while in the bazaar 10 roubles a kilogramme was obtained for butter. The cheese was contracted for at 2.80 roubles a kilogramme, and sold in the bazaar for 4.5. On the same farm, I was informed that 11 roubles a centner was obtained for contracted grain, and that the bazaar price was not recorded. The bazaar price for meat was 4 roubles a kilogramme, and a record of the contract price was stated to be inaccessible. Not much of this information agrees with Mr. Cairns's and my experience, particularly the bazaar prices of meat and milk, and I do not believe that information as to the contracted price of meat was not available.

The attitude of the management of collective farms of the commune type and of local authorities appeared to be on the whole unfavourable to collective farm trade. Responsible as they had been for the execution of the policy of collectivisation *à outrance* and of centralised distribution, they find that the new decrees tend to cut the ground from under their feet. At present more "left" in tendency than the Central Government, they suffer from the time lag which prevents any swerve in the party line at Moscow from producing immediately its appropriate local reaction. In Sinelnikovo, I mentioned the new decrees to one of the little Jews, who, both here and at Melitupol, sat at the elbow of the somewhat obtuse president of the Area Executive Committee, and acted as a sort

of ideological pilot fish. He made the appropriate racial gesture, and remarked: "As a party man I have to carry out the decrees; it is all right so long as all decisions as to the amount of produce put on the market remain in the hands of the farm management." In the more highly-developed farms (communes), this will probably remain the case, and what profits are made will be reinvested in ambitious buildings, "technicums" and research institutions. A recent decree has, however, limited the amount of funds to be reinvested instead of distributed to collective farmers as individuals, and this measure may have some effect in the "artel" farms, which constitute the vast majority of the collectives.

Collective farm trade is considered in many quarters to be the beginning of a wholesale reversion to Nep, and to have had already a considerable effect in stimulating the agricultural workers. Mr. Cairns has told me that when the decree was issued he was in Siberia, and special copies were made locally and distributed to the peasants. He has been travelling in the country for most of the time since it was issued and has, I understand, noticed a great increase in the produce available at the markets and some decrease of prices. Collective farm trade is, however, so hedged about with the restrictions implicit in collectivisation that it will be some time before its effects can be anything but local. When the new season's grain is allowed to be sold there will be little available for sale, in spite of a small reduction in planned deliveries, unless the harvest is better than recent observations can lead one to suppose. Again, there is little cattle in the hands of collective farm workers to provide meat for the market, and it seems probable that where restrictions on slaughter have been actually removed and not left to the discretion of the farm management peasants will prefer to fill their own stomachs rather than to put more meat on the market.

The Soviet press has been much occupied with the principle that the peasants should exchange their products for manufactured goods and commodities not available in the villages; but, in point of fact, manufactured goods in the small towns which I have visited are scarcely to be seen in the neighbourhood of the markets, if elsewhere, and then only at exorbitant prices. Sugar and tea are unobtainable; sugar was not even to be found at the Torgsin shops at Simferopol and the other towns at which I stopped. At Melitupol a queue had formed in the market place to buy paraffin from an itinerant wagon at 12 roubles a bottle, which they said was cheaper than in the shops. Even in a large city like Rostov, there was the curious sight of queues waiting all the morning to enter a "sports outfitters" in order to buy canvas running shoes which had been unloaded on this shop, apparently unexpectedly, and sold for about 15

roubles a pair. This did not betoken a sudden enthusiasm for athletics, but merely the fact that other shoes are unobtainable.

At the high prices which bread at present fetches, it serves merely to supplement the rations obtained in State farms or factories, accordingly as it is bought by peasants or town workers. So far, it is therefore difficult to see how the collective farm market can supplant the extremely inefficient system of centralised distribution, and with the collectives in their present enslaved condition there seems little likelihood of trade by them constituting a return to Nep. The essential difference between collective farm trade and Nep is that, in the former case, there is no individual capitalisation, and the individual collective farmer does not carry stocks or plan production according to the probable market, he has not the power to do so. There is, however, the possibility that the collectives themselves may become *entrepreneurs* if they are once encouraged to accumulate working capital for trade as opposed to production, and they might acquire an ever-increasing share in the distribution of food-stuffs over long distances and not merely locally. This is to some extent done by the marketing organisations to which collective farms belong, and even State farms in some cases put their goods on the collective farm market. But until trading enterprise on a large scale by the farms is encouraged and the profits are properly distributed among the individual collective farmers, collective farm trade seems likely to remain a haphazard and ineffective form of distribution, totally incapable of meeting the needs of the large industrial centres.

IV. *The Popular Outlook*

The most striking feature of the attitude of the inhabitants with whom I came in contact was their apparent fearlessness, outspokenness and disregard for the authorities. People to whom I spoke would suddenly form in groups, which included members of the local G.P.U., would ask questions about conditions abroad, and freely condemn in one breath the Government, the party and the future of the Soviet Union. My observations were admittedly extremely limited – confined to travel companions and to the crowds of workers on holiday, and migrant peasants at such a railway junction as Sinelnikovo, where main lines from north-south and east-west meet. I had no such experience as Mr. Cairns has had, of passing through by chance collective farms, where the peasants gathered round his car with complaints and even threats, because my visits were, I feel, very carefully designed by the authorities. At Sinelnikovo, however, our experiences on arrival became known, and we were accompanied by an official, who would not leave us on our depar-

ture. Nevertheless, it is impossible so much as to have one's shoes blacked without being met with the same outcries: "We have no leather here like yours, no bread, no meat – nothing. There is nothing to live for!" This was said to me with a G.P.U. officer within 2 yards. Except in the case of rare Communists, there seems to be no patriotic inclination to hide conditions from a foreigner. He is the natural receptacle for complaints against the "system," in whom I found on two occasions that even Communists were willing to confide.

On our arrival at Sinelnikovo Station on the 14th July I saw, for the first time, people huddled on the roofs of the trains, and the first questions which we asked bystanders was to account for the queues and heaps of would-be passengers, some of which were scarcely distinguishable in appearance from the beggars and cripples, many of them children, that wait at stations to ask for bread or alms. The first man to whom we spoke was most communicative. The peasants, he said, were either fugitive members of collective farms who would not work, or those who could not get work. Many peasants from his neighbourhood (Voronezh) had been arrested and transported. But in Voronezh, Kiev and Chernigorsk conditions were worse than elsewhere, and in one area (rayon) of the Voronezh district the numbers of live-stock had fallen, as a result of collectivisation, from 400 cattle and 200 sheep to 10 cattle and 50 sheep. Meal in Voronezh was 80 roubles a pood (36 lb.) and meat 10 roubles a kilogramme. This man then joined a group of young peasants in search of work and the conversation continued, apparently on the same lines, in Ukrainian, which I could not understand.

We then began a conversation with a clean and pleasant-faced boy of about 15, who grasped a model aeroplane inscribed "To the defence of the U.S.S.R." He was going to Simferopol to live with relations, having spent three years in Baku, where, although conditions were good (with meat 5 roubles a kilogramme), life was insupportable owing to the beastliness of the Turki inhabitants. He had been at school there and had then worked in a motor repair shop. Had he been a pioneer? No, he would have nothing to do with such things – they were filthy! "The whole Soviet Union is ruined," he added. We then met a pro-Soviet leather worker from the Donbass, who spoke of the crisis in the capitalist world, and remarked that the Soviet Union was in transition. He lectured us for some time on this theme until a group joined up and began to question his statements, treating the prospect of any improvement as being a rather humourous suggestion.

The station restaurant was patrolled by some scavengers, who were not, however, beggars. We had finished a tin of sardines and emptied some tea-leaves into it, and, when we left, one of these unfortunates

went up to the tin and began to scrape the mixture of oil and tea-leaves into his mouth. A crowd of the more mobile passengers (those who have waited for a day or more usually lie in heaps on the platforms) then approached me and began to ask questions. "Were not conditions bad?" I was non-committal, and suggested that the new harvest would bring plenty of bread. An old man laughed and exclaimed: "Whatever the harvest is we shall get no bread – nothing," and was greeted with approval. A man, who turned out to be an above-ground mine worker in the Donbass, however, contradicted him, and began a disquisition on the future, employing the usual figures of Communist rhetoric. I was therefore surprised when the same man came up to me a few minutes later, accepted a glass of so-called beer and began to talk. Conditions varied, he said, but even for the Donbass workers there was nothing to eat. All the food went to the engineers and specialists. He said this, he added, although he was a Communist and a shock-worker.

I record these conversations as possibly being significant, although they took place at the Soviet equivalent of a caravanserai where the unemployed and discontented migrant labour congregates and voices its grievances more than anywhere else. I had a perhaps more interesting discussion with a fellow-passenger in an aeroplane from Rostov to Moscow, which left the former place eight hours late on the 7th July, and consequently stopped at Kharkov for the night. He began to talk at Kharkov, when I told him how impressed I had been with the appearance of well-being of the people as a whole in Rostov and Kharkov, how the finely-tended parks were crowded with comparatively well-dressed people and the restaurants filled with workmen in overalls who ordered dishes costing 10 roubles each. I knew, of course, that the majority were of the portfolio class, employees of the infinitely multiplied administrative offices and departments, whose imitation leather satchel, which sometimes contains nothing but a lump of old bread, is like the external soul of a warlock from which it must never be parted, the badge of their class. My fellow-traveller confirmed this opinion, which I did not express so crudely, and asked me if I had not seen hungry people in the streets. I had, in fact, seen two men at different times apparently unconscious, lying on the pavement in Rostov, their faces covered with flies, and had suggested to a policeman that he should so something about it; but I did not mention this. My companion then said that though conditions in the towns were so far tolerable; he was a Communist and an ex-Red army man, and would speak frankly. When he went into the villages he was "revolted," and on my remarking that it was a pity the children were fed so extensively on bread, he replied: "Bread! They don't get much

of that! In a collective farm I know of the allowance for a worker's whole family, perhaps as much as five or six children, is 150 grammes a day."

He was the manager of an industrial co-operative factory and received 300 roubles a month. Some of his skilled workers received as much as 400, and this, he said, explained how I was able to see workers in the more expensive restaurants (which are not, I may here remark, anything but common eating-houses in actual fact). He then volunteered that the big factories were extremely inefficient, and that the much-vaunted Selmashstroy at Rostov, which manufactures agricultural machinery and is on show to tourists, had to close down for a period recently and send its workers on holiday, as the Kharkov tractor factory had done. Most of its lathes had been broken by inefficient operation, and to enable it to restart new lathes had been imported by air from Germany.

We concluded our conversation by discussing collective farm trade, the comprehensive title which it is convenient to give to the subject-matter of the recent decrees designed to conciliate the peasants, and which is of great interest to all politically-minded Russians. His opinion, which he told me was widely held, was interesting, that any concession to the peasants is bound to affect industrial workers adversely, and that the Government cannot afford to estrange the proletariat of the towns. There is much to be said for this view, for the Soviet Government cannot perform the miracle of the loaves and the fishes with an indifferent harvest, and it appears that the new policy has been instituted too late to stimulate the peasants to produce a harvest which will be much, if anything, of an improvement on that of 1931. To judge from the Soviet press, the Ukraine was more remiss than any other large grain-producing district in its sowings, and I cannot therefore draw any general conclusion from crops that will yield on the average a bare 4 centners a hectare, through which I passed for six hours in the train between Sinelnikovo and Rostov. Mr. Cairns will, however, shortly report to the Empire Marketing Board on this subject at length.

Minutes

Though Mr. Vyvyan's tour was largely in the nature of a "personally conducted" trip, so that the collective farms and other undertakings which he visited (e.g. the Lenin commune) were less unfavourably situated than the majority of similar institutions, his account, for which he might be thanked, is excellently put together, and being quite objective is a valuable one. Section III is especially interesting [....]

J. D. Greenway

August 6.

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Mr. Cairns' Investigations in Soviet Union
Andrew Cairns (Moscow) to the Empire Marketing Board, 2 August 1932

Cable No. 1

For publication by Dominions. Source to be kept confidential, if wish, may credit to "London correspondent."

Autumn sown grains in north west Ukraine poor to fair: south west and south central fairly good to poor: south east extremely poor: north east and north central fair to poor stop Ukraine as whole winter wheat and rye good where seeded in time in good seed bed as spring and summer climate favourable but much sown late and amount well prepared land small bulk preparation poor to extremely poor stop Winter wheat and rye harvest very considerably less than last year when whole southern half of Ukraine had good to very good harvest stop Practically all spring sown crops poor to very poor being short thin and choked with weeds due late seeding on unprepared land stop Very large areas oats not worth harvesting due to smut sugar beets very poor smothered with weeds and much caterpillar damage stop Crimea about same crop as last year very good winter wheat where land well prepared but much poorly prepared land where crop fair to poor stop Grain crops in North Caucasus universally extremely poor compared to a record yield last year considerable part of which was lost by late rains and bad harvesting stop Very heavy winter kill due hard frosts before snow but more to late seeding on unprepared land stop Both winter and spring crops choked by weeds hence heavy loss of grain by combining stop Extremely heavy further losses by heavy infection of stem rust both winter and spring wheat stop Quality of all wheat poor to very poor being badly shrunken by rust and bleached by heavy frequent July rains stop Crops in Middle Volga promising in early June but insufficient rain since then must have considerably reduced prospects stop Reports from Lower Volga conflicting some say crops poor to extremely poor insufficient rain and high temperatures

especially during heading and filling period tend confirm latter reports stop Western Siberia had no rain and no soil moisture beginning of June but good rains since then must have greatly improved prospects stop Highly probable despite late seeding and unfavourable weather in some parts that Volga especially middle area and Western Siberia have considerably to materially better crops than last year when crop extremely poor and in many part of all three regions virtually complete failure stop Ural region has had good to very good rains and should have very much better crop than last year stop Very little rain and high temperatures in Kasakstan indicate poor crop stop Grain exports depend entirely on Government policy and urgency of need of foreign currency as country needs all grain for food especially in view of continued acute shortage other foodstuffs lack of vegetables in winter months which at present constitute so large part diet and complete consumption all grain reserves excepting Army supplies from unusually large crop of 1930 stop Foregoing and other factors such as tremendous discrepancy between open market and collection prices freedom of peasants to sell in open market after December and acute shortage manufactured goods to trade for grain all point to unprecedented difficulties in collecting Government share of harvest stop Much poorer crops than last year in areas immediately adjacent to export outlets.
Empmart

Cable No. 2

For Dominions – Strictly Confidential

Reference other cable based on six weeks inspection just completed of Ukraine Caucasus Crimea stop Revisiting Volga and Central Black regions will report by cable last week August stop Convinced official acreage data grossly inflated as have seen very large areas all over country which in crop recent years but now idle have definite proof further appalling loss animal draft power during present year very large part of which not replaced by tractors also widespread resistance and wandering of peasants stop Official provisional forecast of grain harvest 7 point 8 centners per hectare or point 2 above 8 year average absurdly too high assumes near average harvest in important areas of Ukraine and Caucasus former certainly materially below average and latter only third to half of last year stop Official forecast also based on extremely optimistic early June local forecasts in Volga and other hot semi-arid regions frequently subject to enormous depreciation in late June and early July stop Grain crop certainly very much smaller than 1930 but as last year's crop

very much smaller than officially admitted or recognised outside do not like to generalise about comparative size this and last years harvest tentatively of opinion this years appreciably larger stop Latter point much less significant than appears as despite use of considerable reserves from 1930 very materially smaller exports than 1930 very drastic compulsory restriction of consumption There was acute widespread hunger and not inappreciable amount actual starvation stop Practically unanimous bitter hostility of collective and individual peasants alike will seriously interfere with governments collection plans despite reduction in the same stop Have specific data of further very heavy losses of all classes of livestock this year in Ukraine and Caucasus as well as in last years drought areas and very little hay made to feed remainder stop Extremely little summer following plan very slow progress in harvest mean late and poor seeding autumn grains.
Empmart

Minutes

Prospects on the whole, except for S. Ukraine, Urals, Middle Volga & possibly W. Siberia, are poor [....]
J. D. Greenway
Aug. 10

Interesting: but unfortunately one can form no very clear view of the export prospects.
H.J.S.
10/9

9

Protection of Property of State Undertakings, Collective Farms and Co-operatives
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 10 August 1932

Sir, Moscow, August 10, 1932

I have the honour the transmit to you herewith a translation of a decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., dated the 7th August, instituting severe sanctions for the protection against pilferage of the property of State undertakings, collective farms and co-operatives, and of goods conveyed by rail or by water.[9] By this decree goods in transit, and the property of co-operatives and collective farms, including crops in the fields, are to be treated as State property and the maximum penalty which may be inflicted in case of pilferage is the supreme measure of social protection, namely death. The decree also provides severe penalties against kulak or capitalist elements who use threats against loyal collective farm workers with the object of disorganising the collective farm system and damaging collective farm property.

2. In order to provide the Soviet public with illustrations of the extent of these predatory and hostile activities, the *Izvestiya* of the 10th August publishes an article under the heading "Pilferage of Transport – The work of the hand of the class enemy." It is stated that during the first quarter of the current year more than 40,000 consignments of goods were pilfered. Pilferage takes place, according to the writer of the article, principally when the goods are being loaded, when they are being transported, and when the trucks containing them are standing in sidings at "large technical stations," that is to say, during the greater part of the time they spend in the care of the transport organisations. According to the same authority, a large band of thieves and ex-convicts has recently been "working" the Chimkent and Tashkent districts. Armed with knives and revolvers they have carried off slippers, sandals, stockings, biscuits, rice, etc. The arrangements for carrying away the stolen goods were entrusted to a band of horse thieves, who as a result of the great

decrease during the last two years of the equine population of the U.S.S.R., have presumably been unable to pursue their usual calling. Thirty-five of the thieves were arrested and fifteen were shot. At Usyata, on the Tomsk railway, a number of "kulaks" carried out a regular programme of pilferage. The class enemies "concealed themselves under the mask of journeyman sawyers, carpenters, day labourers, etc." Five of these were condemned to be shot. But class-enemies are not the only culprits. It appears that the workers themselves have sometimes been at fault. At Samara, for instance, the tally clerks, watchmen, luggage clerks, and goods yard inspector, were all members of a robber band and three of them were condemned to be shot.

3. The decree is also directed against the taking of grain by marauding or merely provident peasants. To pluck an ear of corn by the wayside is now in this country a capital offence.

4. I am sending [*a*] copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.

William Strang

10

Mr. Cairns' Investigations in Soviet Union
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 12 August 1932, and Andrew Cairns to E. M. H. Lloyd, 3 August 1932

Confidential

Sir, Moscow, 12th August, 1932

With reference to Sir Esmond Ovey's despatch No. 323 of June 21st, I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a further report by Mr. Cairns on conditions in the Ukraine, Crimea and North Caucasus. This report is of special interest as it deals with two of the chief grain producing areas of the Soviet Union, and as in the course of his travels Mr. Cairns visited such well-known establishments as the State farms "Verblud" and "Gigant," as well as "Drusag," the German agricultural concession in the Kuban.

2. I will not attempt to summarize or comment on Mr. Cairns' account of his journey. The truth about Soviet Russia is best apprehended not by facile generalisation but by the merciless impact of multitudinous fact. Mr. Cairns is by training and temperament singularly well qualified to acquire and sift the facts about Soviet agriculture and his reports have a unique value as a mirror of the state of the country at the present time.

3. Mr. Cairns leaves Moscow to-day on a final journey to the Central Black Soil Region and the Volga.

4. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.
William Strang

Enclosure in No. 10

Dear Lloyd, Moscow, 3rd August, 1932

I left Moscow on June 15th and returned July 30th. During my six weeks absence I saw a good sample of the Ukraine, Crimea and Northern

Caucasus. As I did not have time to write an account of my observations in time for yesterday's bag, I sent you two draft cables, one for publication by our correspondents, and a confidential one.[10] This letter will go out in the next bag, about the middle of August.

In view of the fact that prices and crop prospects vary considerably, depending on the time of year, I am writing this report in the form of a chronological description of what I have seen and heard.

I rose very early on June 16th to watch the fields. Up to 11 a.m., at about which time we reached the Ukraine, the farming seemed to be done mostly by individual peasants as the grain was largely confined to small strips. All morning and forenoon the crops were very poor – a good deal of winter kill, thin and short. At a station close to the Ukrainian border the peasants I spoke to in the bazaar all cursed collectivisation. There was practically no bread for sale and small buns of very coarse black bread were being sold for one rouble each, and small chickens at fifteen roubles each. From 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. the fields increased in size rapidly (more collectivisation), but the bulk of the crops were very poor, thin and very weedy. The spring sown crops were extremely bad – late and almost smothered in weeds. In such an old district, where, according to the official statistics, every acre of suitable land is supposed to be cultivated, I was surprised to see a great deal of land recently in crop, but now uncultivated. From 1 to 7 p.m., at which time I arrived in Kiev, I collected prices at many stations, of which the following are typical. At the first large station a loaf of extremely coarse black bread sold for 10 roubles. I asked the women why the bread was so dear and they said a pood (36 pounds) of very poor rye meal cost 90 roubles, and as they could not afford to buy a pood, they had to pay proportionally very much more for smaller amounts. In the depot, the Government were selling small rolls for 1½ roubles, and thin slices of pork fat (about 2 by 3 inches) for 2 roubles. I saw very little butter or milk and no meat for sale at all the bazaars I visited during the day. Every station had its crowd – from scores to several hundred, depending on the size of the town – of rag-clad hungry peasants, some begging for bread, many waiting, mostly in vain, for tickets, many climbing on to the steps or joining the crowds on the roof of each car, all filthy and miserable and not a trace of a smile anywhere. All day long I saw much fine grass, but practically no livestock of any kind. I did not see a single good crop until we got very close to Kiev. The autumn sown crops were generally badly winter-killed, spindly, weedy and short, and the spring sown crops were choked by weeds. But all crops were of good colour, indicating that they had ample moisture. I did not see a single tractor all day. In the late afternoon there was a little butter for sale at 2 roubles per pound and slices of

heavy, black bread (from a loaf about the size of a Canadian 5 cent loaf) at 1 rouble each. The peasants said the cheapest and poorest rye meal was 100 roubles per pood. At the depot in Kiev many people asked for bread.

In the morning of June 17th, I went for a walk and soon came across a small street bazaar. The chief trading was being done in wild strawberries and green vegetables (mostly pulled much too soon). The following are typical of the prices quoted: Milk 2½ roubles per litre, old potatoes 1.2 roubles per Russian pound of 400 grammes, very little coarse black bread at 6 roubles per kilo, small rolls 1.3 roubles, 10 eggs 5½ roubles, leg of chicken 2½ roubles. Several women followed me around the bazaar, but I could not make out much of what they said as they all talked at once, some in Ukrainian and some in Russian, and two of them were crying between each sentence. But what first class actresses they were! Despite the tragedy of it all, I could not keep from laughing at the expressions on their faces as they drew their finger like a knife across their throat, pulled in their cheeks and held their hands on their stomachs while they pretended to vomit, and while they bent their backs and hobbled about. I can understand only a few words of what people say unless I am directing the conversation, so I finally got one woman alone and made her stop talking and answer my questions. She said there was practically no bread because the Government had collected so much grain and exported it to England and Italy; that the collective farms around Kiev were very bad; that all the members were hungry and many were leaving; she had left her village with many others because she could not get food and that some were dying of starvation; she had a job in Kiev but it was impossible to keep from being hungry as she could not buy much food with her small salary. Later I found a little butter being sold in small pieces at the rate of 12 roubles per pound. It was the most expensive butter I have seen in Russia and when I asked the peasants why, they all said there were no cattle as they had all died or had been killed. I asked several women why they did not belong to a collective farm; they said they did not join, or had left, because they and their children were very hungry. In this bazaar, as in scores of others I have visited, I noticed that many of the hens for sale contained a good few fairly large and many small eggs, so they had obviously been killed while still laying.

In the afternoon (after a fair lunch at the Intourist hotel for 15 roubles) I called on Narkomzem – the Department of Agriculture. I was turned over to the Vice-President of the collective farm centre – an extremely stupid man who had been in Chicago several years (a mechanic in a printing shop) and understood English. He said he had just returned from

a month's inspection trip of the surrounding villages and had found them very interesting and beginning to improve. Last summer, and especially last winter and this spring, conditions had been extremely bad as the peasants did not like the collective farms and would not work, but now they have learned that if they do not work they cannot live, so they are beginning to work. Last year they had a good crop, but this year they were going to have a better one! He said they would take me to see institutes in Kiev for two days and to farms on the third day. I protested and got him to agree to only one day for institutes.

In the evening I met a man (the manager of a very small co-operative store) who had been in New York. He said he was a third category worker and received only 100 roubles per month. From the Government he got 200 grammes of black bread per day for himself and 200 for his boy and had to buy everything else at open market prices. He asked the price of white bread in the States and remarked that it cost 5 roubles per pound in Kiev. I asked him why prices were so high and he said it was due to inflation and the great shortage of food, because the peasants did not like the collective farms and, when forced or taxed into them, would not work; pointing to the crowds he said: "There they are, wandering up and down the streets." He said the purchasing power of the monthly income of the average worker in Kiev was about five dollars. While climbing up a very steep hill to get a good look at the beautiful Dnieper River, I came across two women pulling what at first I thought was dandelions or young leeks for greens, but upon examination it turned out to be tender grass. I asked them what they were going to do with the grass and they said "make soup." They were third category workers and got only 125 roubles per month and only 200 grammes of bread per day. I pointed to the river and remarked that it was very beautiful; they agreed but said they were hungry. Later I climbed to a high hill to look at several very large churches. All were in a terrible state of dilapidation; one had been used for a prison, another was being used as some sort of club for workers, and around the others were many old priests begging, and groups of women and children, in rags and filth, taking turns at killing the lice in each others hair before retiring for the night on the damp grass. On the way back to my hotel I saw a horrible sight – a man dying on the street. He was apparently insane as he was going through all the motions of eating and rubbing his stomach with apparent satisfaction. A crowd gathered around and some, thinking he was begging, dropped a few kopeks, but he was quite unconscious and soon stopped moving. Further on I took advantage of a foreigner's privilege and took my place at the head of a long queue and got into a store to see heavy, warm, soggy bread being sold for 10 roubles per loaf, and a little pork

fat at 12 roubles per pound. Outside the store were swarms of people; some retailing the bread at a rouble a slice, others buying a few young vegetables, and a few begging or eating bits of bad vegetables or fish scales picked up from the street. I asked several people why things were so dear, and, seeing I did not understand a word of Ukrainian, they pulled in their cheeks, pretended to vomit, drew their finger's across their throat, and said, in Russian, "Kushat' nyet, nichevo nyet" (there is nothing to eat, nothing at all). A woman was selling bread for 6 roubles per kilo, which she said you could buy for 5 if you stood in line for hours and got into the shop before it was all gone. I spoke to two young peasant girls and heard much abuse of the collective farms which I could not understand.

In the hotel next day, June 18th, I tried to get eggs and strawberries for breakfast, but had to be satisfied with bread and butter and slightly coloured water called tea. I asked why I could not get strawberries when the whole of Kiev seemed to be living on strawberries and premature vegetables, but was told they did not know. All over Russia, even in special foreign restaurants and shops, I have had similar experiences – they don't seem to want your money and show no enterprise whatever.

We were supposed to visit five institutes around Kiev, but thank goodness it turned out to be a free day, so I had to visit only two. The first one was for research and teaching work in the sugar industry. The teaching department had 50 professors and 600 students – 60% from collective farms and 40% from State farms. The right side of the Ukraine, called the Kiev Oblast, has 63% of the peasants and 66% of the land collectivised. The professors I met seemed intelligent, well educated and had good laboratory equipment, but the directors were of the usual type. The second institute was a very large sugar experimental station, said to be the finest in all Russia. On the way home my guide (the Chicago mechanic and Vice-President of the collective farm central organisation) tried hard to get me to agree to visit the other institutes on the following day, but I would not be moved. He said he would take me to an institute where they were turning out 400 expert sugar engineers every year and that although they were very short of such engineers just now, as they had built many new sugar factories, they would soon liquidate the problem. With the exception of my stay in the tourist hotels of Kiev, Rostov and Kharkov, I got no sugar during my six weeks absence from Moscow, despite my offer of dollars in Torgsin (special shops where one can buy for valuta, foreign currency, only) in six different towns.

In the evening I found one of the largest bazaars in Kiev and had a most interesting time. Mens' soft leather top boots, 300 roubles; ladies' split leather shoes, 120 roubles; a few small squares of sugar at ⅔ of a

rouble each; butter 10 roubles per pound; eggs 6 roubles for 10; very small tins of fish 7 roubles; old scabby potatoes 1 rouble, and very small new ones 1½ roubles per pound; bread 10½ roubles per loaf; a policeman offering a pair of completely worn out top boots for 5 roubles; pigs feet 4 for 10 roubles; and scores of men and children, with badly swollen tummies, in rags, asleep on the ground (while flies by the thousand crawled over them) or begging or picking up scraps of vegetables and fish scales to eat. A terrific rain storm broke and I had to stand under a roof for 2 hours, during which time many people crowded around to try and make me understand them. Many of them were quite young, and nearly all were town workers. They were unanimous that things had never been so bad, that nearly everybody was hungry, that the peasants would not work, because they were all hungry, and were moving into the towns by the thousands, that less than 80% of the crop had been sown by collective farms and that the individual peasants had eaten their seed. All pointed to a crowd of over 500, everyone soaked to the skin, waiting for a store to open where bread was only 8 roubles per loaf and said in effect: "there is the Five Year Plan for you." Apparently they were not exaggerating about the number of peasants who had left the farms, as my Government guide told me earlier in the day that the population of Kiev had increased from 400 to 600 thousand in 2 years, and the number of workers by 110 thousand. On my way home I stopped to give coins to 3 small girls (they were all nearly dead with hunger and the smallest one certainly could not have lived more than a few days longer) and a crowd gathered around to tell me there were many such children in Russia. A man came forward and called me comrade, and said the people were telling lies because soon, with mechanization, kolhoses and sovhoses, everything would be lovely, but the crowd shouted him down. In the hotel I got my key from a young Jewess who said she had come there from Philadelphia for a visit in 1929 and saw "what was what"; so she had returned 9 months ago, given up her U.S. citizenship and never wished to return to America.

On June 19th the Government were to call for me at 8. At 10 a.m. a messenger came with a note saying it had rained so hard that we could not go to the country, but that they would call at 11 to take me to see collective truck farms near the city. At 2 p.m. another note arrived to say their car was broken and they could not get another one. I returned to the big bazaar and spent two hours visiting several Government shops and stands. There was no real meal, either rye or wheat, for sale but oats were being sold at 3.6 roubles per kilo, peas 7.5 per kilo, lentils at 1.6 per pound, beans at 3.2 per pound, potato meal at 1.96 per pound, soya bean meal at 1.68 per pound, and many other different types of

"meal." There were many kinds – some poorer, some better, than the two samples enclosed – which were being sold for 2.9 roubles per kilo. You will notice that they are a mixture of ground chaff, oat and other hulls, bran, a little straw, very much fibre, a little flax and very little starch or other digestible nutrients. Shortly before I left London in the early part of April, the *Economist* published a series of letters over the signature of Frank Wise.[1] All of them told of how wisely and efficiently the Russians had sold their grain, especially as compared with the Canadians and Americans. How about presenting him with one of the samples to show him what a complete job of selling they really did! I wandered into a small repair shop and, to my surprise, found the owner could speak English. He had been in New York before the War, had been through the War and Revolution in the Red Army and ever since he had been trying, without success, to get back to the States. The Government charged him 1500 roubles per year for the privilege of working hard in his tiny shop (he was a very good worker as I watched him at it) and, in addition, had charged him 400 roubles as his "voluntary contribution" to the success of the Third decisive year of the Five Year Plan. He did not know what they were going to ask as a voluntary contribution to the success of the "Fourth and Final Year of the Five Year Plan," but he was sure it would be more than 400 roubles, as many people were watching him and every communist in Kiev seemed to be his boss. He said that before the Five Year Plan started there was plenty of food in Kiev and that he could buy all the white bread he wanted; now there was virtually nothing to eat. The people did not believe a word that the papers said, because they knew the collective farms were "no good" and that the peasants were too hungry and angry to work. The night watchman of the bazaar came and took me to see several groups of children with straw legs and enormous stomachs, women standing at shop doors begging, and women and children picking over garbage heaps; and also to see the "meal" I had seen previously. He had been a prisoner of war in Germany and liked it very much. Later I went with the New York man to his home – one small room for himself, wife and two children.

Next day, June 20th, I did not wait very long for Narkomzem to come for me, but went to see them. After passing through office after office, all filled with scores of planners, most of them arguing, I found the Vice-President of Kolhoz-center. He said he had already had a 4 hour party session and had a 6 hour one in the afternoon so could not go to the country with me. I told him it did not matter as I could easily get an interpreter from Intourist, so he took me to the President of Narkomzem, who told me he would like to take me to the country, but his car was

also being remounted. We next went to the office of the President of Kolkoz Center. The office was empty when we arrived, but soon there were 13 people in it, all arguing (apparently unaware that I knew a few words of Russian) which communes or collective farms were good and which were very bad. They then 'phoned about ten people for a car, but none of them would let their car go out to the country as the roads were very bad. I said I would gladly pay dollars and hire a car from Intourist as I could not afford to waste any more time. They 'phoned, but Intourist refused to let their cars go out of the city. While they argued further I picked up some tables on the President's desk and noticed that up to June 15th the collective farms had sown 72.7% of the spring seeding plan and only 37.8% of the potatoes and the individual peasants only 44.6% of all spring crops. Later the President arrived and said he would get a car in the morning for sure. I went back to the hotel (a distance of only three blocks, yet I was asked by 5 people for bread) to sit alone in a big dining room over a 20 rouble meal while 12 men played music to help my digestion.

In the evening I went for a very long walk in a new direction, saw a woman dying on the street and finally wandered into a big church where, to my surprise, I found a very large crowd worshipping very devoutly. Later I saw a christening and a wedding. The bride appeared to know the elaborate ceremony by heart, but the groom knew only the wine-drinking part. I was surprised to see a good proportion of young people worshipping in the Church. Outside a crowd gathered around to tell me the wedding was very poor because people needed every kopek of what small wages they got for food, as the Government gave them only a very small piece of bread each day. On the way home I saw a truck load of rye meal being unloaded into a big bakery. The men carrying the bags told me the meal would cost over 100 roubles a pood in the bazaar. As usual, a crowd soon gathered around and all agreed that conditions were very bad, that people were hungry because there was no bread or anything else, that the peasants were not working so there would be less bread next winter, and that the collective farms were in a very bad condition. One man followed me all the way back to the hotel. He said he was a second category worker and got 180 roubles per month and 525 grammes of bread per day, that first category workers got 600 grammes of bread per day and street car conductors only 400 and absolutely nothing else. What surprised me most in Kiev was not what the people said (although conditions there seemed to be worse than in any place I visited in the next five weeks), but that they should all – young, middleaged and old alike – be unanimous and that none of them seemed to care what they said or who heard them, even the police and G.P.U.

Next morning (June 21st) the car actually arrived in good time and we set out for the country. As we passed several big gun wagons along the road, and also a very large military camp, I remarked that never in all my life had I seen so many soldiers as I had seen in Russia. My interpreter said perhaps it was because we were fairly near the Polish and Roumanian borders, but the Government guide told her to tell me it was because everything was open and above board in the Soviet Union, whereas in other countries the soldiers were kept in secret places. I thought of the hundreds and thousands of armed soldiers I had seen in every village, town and station I had seen, and of the large numbers I had seen even on farms, but I did not say anything. We drove for a good few miles over extremely poor roads (the crops were very weedy and poor in most places, but here and there I noticed a good field where the cultivation had been good; all the crops were of good colour as the weather had been ideal all spring) and passed quickly through several villages, in all of which the people looked thoroughly miserable, before reaching our destination – the October Revolution Commune. After many narrow escapes we got stuck in the mud. The Government guide started out for a nearby kolhoz and the chauffeur shouted at him to bring horses which could pull, because most of the horses in the country were starved. While waiting for the horses, I took advantage of the Government's absence and had an interesting conversation with my interpreter. She told me she got only 130 roubles per month and, being classed as a third category worker, only 300 grammes of very poor bread per day, 1¼ pounds of sugar per month and a small cake of soap. Everything else she had to buy in the bazaar. She said she was so thin partly because she had to study and work very hard, but largely because she had a baby boy 18 months old and that she could not possibly describe the difficulties she had in raising him as it was practically impossible to get anything babies needed. She said first category workers were supposed to get 800 grammes of bread per day and second category 600 and 500, but they got less. I questioned her further and she said: "Please let us not talk about it any more as it is too painful. Things were very good in Kiev in 1928, but they have been getting steadily worse ever since. They are terrible just now and from the questions you ask and what you say you have seen I know that there is no use my pretending otherwise to you." Later she told me that the housing conditions in Kiev were extremely bad and that many people living in basements had been drowned a few nights before, owing to the floods caused by the heavy rains.

In about an hour the Government man returned with 22 peasants (apparently the collective farm had no horses available) who pulled the

car out. I gave some of the peasants tobacco and paper to make cigarettes, and was sorely tempted to ask them questions, but from their faces I could tell what their answers would have been, so I did not ask my interpreter to put my questions. Just as we were approaching the Commune we had to stop to find our way around a water hole. A large group of women passed on their way out to work in the fields. They asked me, according to my interpreter, to come and help them so I asked them how they liked the Commune and they said the Commune was alright but they got very little bread. I was rather annoyed – because my coat had jumped out of the car on a bump half a mile back and picked up by someone before we noticed it and returned – so I asked them why they had very little bread and, much to the displeasure of my guide, they replied that the Government had collected and exported it all.

The president of the Commune, who was waiting for us, said they had finished the spring sowing plan and had just completed a counter plan of 20% more than the Government plan for the commune. The farm had 1,233 hectares, 725 in crop, 183 winter wheat, 37 spring wheat, 54 oats, 20½ potatoes, 15 cauliflowers, 7½ tomatoes, 20 barley, 180 clover and alfalfa, 10 maize, 148 milking cows, 236 young cattle, 90 horses, 198 pigs, 80 hens, 250 chickens, 3 tractors, 257 workers, 515 people, 56 members of the Communist Party, 36 Komsomols and 100 pioneers. I had already learned from experience that the number of Communists in a commune or artel was a direct function of the amount of money the Government had supplied for capital equipment, so I was not surprised to find a very large and expensive brick barn, a fine machine shed, a large brick building for the workers' club, a fine office, a big building used for a kindergarten, a small park and fine flower beds, fairly good livestock and, of course, good land. In 1930 they got 90 poods of winter wheat per hectare, 71 in 1931 and were expecting 110 this year. The wheat I saw was all very good, but it was all on ground which had been manured, a practice which is virtually unknown in Russia. The director said they were getting 900 to 1,000 litres per day from 145 cows, 50% of which went to the Government factory for 40 to 50 kopeks per litre, depending on the percentage of butterfat; the members got ½ litre each day and the rest was sold in the kolhoz bazaar for about 50 kopeks per litre! I was also told that the commune was not interested in the bazaar as they preferred to sell their produce to the Government. I asked the president how long he had been in his present position and was surprised to learn that he had been a simple member for 6 years (the commune was organised in 1924 out of 3 artels which were organised in 1919) and the president for 3 years. He said only a communist could become president of a commune and the Government guide added that it was not

necessary to be a communist to be the president of an artel. I have not been on an artel yet that did not have a party man as president. After we visited the barns, nearby fields, and, of course, the inevitable kindergarten, the president completely gave my guide's game away by asking me to sign the visitors' book. Before doing so I looked through it and read all the passages in English which had been written by American and English tourists. All of the notes contained many words of high praise, a good few writers said Russia was setting a splendid and noble example to the world, but I looked in vain for a faint hint that the farm was not exactly typical of what one would expect to find in Russia, and found instead expressions of regret and humility that the authors' countries were doing nothing of the kind. I could not quite see why establishing a show place for foreign tourists who visited Kiev, and putting red pants on a group of children, was a particularly great accomplishment so, after praising the farm as the finest commune I had seen in Russia and enumerating several of its good points, I wrote that I regretted that it was not exactly typical of Russian farms.

When we left the office I learned to my surprise that we were going straight back to Kiev. I protested vigorously. I said I had waited three days to get out into the country and could see no sense in returning to Kiev in the early afternoon, and asked why I could not see the artel a few miles from the commune. My guide was troubled, but after a discussion with the president said he would take me to another one instead. On our way to the farm he wished to show me, we passed through several villages (all containing many very unhappy-looking people), but we stopped in only one and that only accidentally. We were just entering the village on a narrow street, when some horses took fright at our car and we had to stop. I immediately took advantage of the opportunity and jumped out and went over to where some women were standing. They all said they were very hungry as they had no bread, but as I could make out little else they were saying, I called to my interpreter to help. She hesitated, but I insisted; so out she came, followed by my guide. Soon a large crowd gathered and oh how angry they were! A woman came up weeping and wailing, and said she could not work much because she had a bad heart, and the Government had taken her horses and cows and that she had practically nothing to eat. My interpreter turned to me and said, "she is a kulak, it is the class struggle in the village; what is there to do, it is the class struggle." I told her I found it difficult to appreciate what she said, as I could easily see all the women in the crowd were genuinely sorry for the woman and that when she spoke they all said "pravda, pravda" (true, true). Soon a young fellow appeared and, according to my interpreter, told the crowd that if they were not satisfied

they should come to the village soviet (he was the secretary) with their troubles, but the crowd fairly howled him down. The temper of the crowd was getting hot so noticing that most of the girls were wearing crosses I looked at one. The girl's mother was very pleased and said: "God gives us everything and he will get us out of the mess the Communists have got us into." Her remark made my guide very cross, but he had scarcely started to reprimand her when an extremely angry peasant came rushing forward and said his children had nothing to eat, to which all the women said, "pravda, pravda." The secretary of the local party said, "it serves you right for hiding your grain from the Government collectors" and all the women said, "nie pravda, nie pravda" (it is not true, it is not true). I suggested that we should visit the office of the collective farm, but my guide said it was in another village!

Finally we arrived at the farm we were to visit – an artel called "Elich," or something like that. It had 1,362 people, 1,024 hectares, 820 in crops, 320 winter rye, 65 oats, 10 barley, 50 hectares young fruit trees and 5 bearing, 160 clover, 105 garden truck, 72 potatoes, 26 cows collectivised (136 for individual use), 97 horses, 84 sheep, 19 old and 22 young pigs, 12 oxen. Their main income was from vegetables. Last year they had delivered 75% of their vegetables and 25% of their grain to the Government, but this year they would not deliver any vegetables to the Government, but would keep 10% for their own use and sell 90% in the bazaar, to consumers only. They had also been relieved of delivering any grain to the Government this year, because they were in the "Kiev workers' area." They sold their milk wholesale for 1½ roubles per litre. They paid their members 50% of the estimated income (1.2 roubles per "worker day" of eight hours – some members earned two "worker days" pay in one day and some took a week to earn one day's pay) and last year each household had earned from 300 to 1,000 roubles! (Schiller jeered at these figures when I gave them to him later.) The members got 600 grammes of bread and 3 hot meals (usually means a bowl of soup) per day for 48 kopeks. My guide said something to the fellow in the office who had given me the figures and then my interpreter told me that he (the man who supplied the data) wanted me to know that he was not a communist. I smiled, turned to a young fellow who had just come in and asked him if he was not a party man and president of the artel and he said, yes – all the people in the room laughed. He told me later that he was a metal worker, that there were 400 households in the artel, 220 peasant and the rest metal workers' and that it would be much easier for them to change the psychology of the peasants than in a typical collective farm.

On the way back to Kiev I asked the government guide why the individual peasants on the right side of the Ukraine had sown, up to June 15th, only 44%, and the collective farms only 72% of the spring seeding plan. At first he said it was not true, but when I told him I had seen the figures in the office of the president of Kolhoz Centre he said he thought I meant the Kiev rayon only, where the collective farms had sown 87% and the individual peasants 60% of the plan. On further questioning he said the chief difficulty had been lack of seed. I asked why they should be short of seed when I had been told that they had a good crop last year. He said it was due to a mistake of the local party people, particularly the young communists, who were over enthusiastic and had collected too much and who even went so far as to collect grain to fulfil counter plans after the Government plan had been executed. I then asked why there had been so much abuse of the Ukraine in the Moscow press for not nearly fulfilling its grain collection plan and he finally admitted that the plan had been too high but that it was not the fault of the central authorities as they had been supplied with wrong information and too optimistic estimates of yields by the communist party locals. My interpreter added that she did not agree that all the fault should be placed on the local people, as the Moscow planners had been much too optimistic, especially regarding the Ukraine, and that all last autumn and winter many people were talking about the unreality of the plan. I asked her what would have happened if I had been here then and openly said the plan was unreal, and she replied: "If you were a Russian they certainly would have put you in prison!" Later I congratulated my interpreter for being so frank and told her I appreciated very much her not trying to give me only good news as I wished to see and hear as much as possible, good and bad, and then form my own conclusions. She replied sadly that she was glad I was pleased, but she was afraid that from the point of view of the Government she was a poor guide, but she realised that there was no use saying things were not very bad. She then added: "But you would be surprised to know the number of tourists who are satisfied with only the good side, and I think most of them believe all they are told." The Government guide asked what we were talking about and I told her not to translate what I had said as she might get into trouble and she answered that she must say something as she did not know him personally. Later she said: "But I'll be even more frank; when we were talking about food rations and living conditions this morning I told you only part, not all." The communists, she said, realised very well that the French revolution had been broken by the peasants and they were very much afraid the Russian peasants would break the Russian revolution if they were left alone as they were in NEP (when things were

very good, and there was an abundance of food and she could take a holiday and spend money and not worry about tomorrow). The Party was, therefore, determined to change the psychology of the peasants and eventually to make good communists of them. I said they might do so eventually, but in my opinion they would never do so in one, or even two, generations. She agreed, and added that although the communist papers and books said there would soon be plenty of food and clothes, she was afraid she would not see such days, although her little boy might, as in order to get plenty of food it was necessary for the Government to be on friendly terms with the peasants.

(Tonight I was talking to the correspondent of the Polish Telegraphic Agency and he made a remark which I though very smart. "Lenin said, 'the Russian soldiers won the war with their feet, by running away from it,' but I say the Russian peasants have won the collective farm battle with their bottoms, by sitting on them." Incidentally he also told me that 40% of the wheat harvest in Eastern Poland and a large part of the harvest in Roumania had been ruined by rust which had blown over from Russia. He was very emphatic that Russia could not export any grain this year and said he had just heard from friends that the Russian trade delegation in Greece had admitted that Russia would not export one shipload of wheat.)

When we said good night in Kiev, the Government guide said he was afraid my impressions were very bad as I had asked the peasants why they said they had very little bread. I told him that I had come to his country, not as a tourist, but to make a study of their agriculture, and that in order to make such a study it was very necessary that I should see good, bad and indifferent conditions; when peasants told me they were hungry what could be more natural than that I should ask why? I then added that I was pleased with the trip because I had seen that where the land was well cultivated they had a good crop, but I was dissatisfied because I felt that I had not been shown a representative picture. He assured me that the office had not told him what to show me; that he had planned the trip entirely by himself and that if I would stay another day he would take me to the other side of the Dnieper and show me farms which were not so good as the commune we had visited – the contrast would show me the great possibilities of good organisation and good management. They had made many mistakes in Russia and people who had been barbers or waiters in foreign countries had been brought here as industrial and agricultural specialists, but even they were better than many of their own people; he agreed with what I had said earlier in the day about their attempting to mechanize too rapidly; would I not

agree with him that they were learning by their mistakes. I agreed to stay another day, but I did not see the farms he promised to show me.

Next day, June 22nd, I was taken to visit the Jewish National Kolhoz near Kiev. The president was a very cocky young communist who turned out to be much too inconsistent a liar and much too talkative for the comfort of my guide. The kolhoz had 180 families, 300 workers, 90 hectares all in vegetables, 185 cows (the best on the whole right side of the Ukraine; some gave 3,600 litres per year and one had given 32 litres in one day), and 100 pigs. When I was told that last year they paid 3 roubles per "worker day" and that the average income for the year was 900 roubles per worker, I expressed surprise and asked why they were allowed to make so much when other kolhozes made so little. The president said most of the members lived in town and they used the money to pay for rent, light, clothes (only occasionally did they get co-operative tickets to buy clothes at fixed prices), etc. I asked what they paid the Government and he said that up to February last many of their products were contracted for, but now they sell them in the kolhoz bazaar and pay the Government a rent of 300 roubles per year instead. Later he told me that the members got their meals for 24 kopeks per day. I remarked that the farm seemed to be highly favoured and my interpreter said: "yes, of course it is, because it is populated entirely by Jews, and as a national minority they get many privileges," but the president said they had already paid the Government 3,000 roubles (he contended that my interpreter had made a mistake in saying 300 before) for rent this year and had subscribed 16,000 roubles to the latest Government loan, whereas their plan called for only 13,000. I argued that 3,000 roubles was nothing at all in view of their net income of 900 roubles per worker, as grain kolhozes had to give the Government from 25 to 30% of their gross production and therefore, if I were a member of a grain farm, I would leave and try to join a fine farm like his. He then told me that already in the month of June they had 1,500 applications for membership from peasants, but they had to refuse them all as they had taken in recently 100 Jewish speculators whom they were going to reform. Later when he told me they had sold 20,000 roubles worth of flowers to Moscow this year and had made 180,000 roubles out of tomato juice from over-ripe tomatoes last year, I said: "all you say goes to confirm my impression that you have a very fine agreement with the Government, and enjoy very many privileges." He replied that they had paid the Government 15,000 roubles as a tax in addition to 8,000 roubles rent. He admitted they were very well off, but it was because they worked hard and knew how to organize (on the way home my guide said they made so much money because they were speculating) whereas on several nearby veg-

etable farms the members were hungry because they did not know how to manage a collective farm. The difficulty with the grain collectives, he said, was that the Government's grain collecting plan was based on forecasting yields and when a farm did not sow as much as the plan called for, or if there was crop damage due to winter frosts, hail or drought, the Government still collected the full amount of the plan, and the peasants went hungry. He further volunteered the information that it was almost impossible to remain an individual peasant any longer, as the very high taxes were forcing the individuals into towns or the collectives. My guide, who had been getting increasingly nervous and restless because the young Jew had so much to say, spoke up and declared that what the president said was misleading as the real reason why so many individual peasants wanted to join the collectives just now was because the collectives were mechanized and therefore more productive. I turned to the president and asked him why, in view of what my guide had said, there were only 63% of the peasants in collective farms in the Kiev oblast. He replied that the Government had no capital or machines left to equip collective farms, and that if they let the individual peasants into the existing collectives, they would immediately ask for bread, and because there was none for them they would make a row and cause trouble. What the Party wanted was peasants with livestock, not paupers. But my guide promised that by next year they would have 80% collectivisation, and 100% before the end of the second Five Year Plan. Being given further information by the president which indicated what a prosperous concern the farm was, I remarked that I had been all over Kiev and had seen practically no bread, milk, butter or meat for sale, but plenty of young vegetables and strawberries. I had therefore concluded that fruit and vegetable farms must be favoured by the Government at the expense of the grain and mixed farms. The president seemed to agree, but my guide would not. Later I was shown the farm's contract with the government and learned that whereas they had agreed to pay 135 roubles per hectare for the use of their land, the rent had been reduced to 97 because they had done such good work. The president explained that they practically lived on premiums and had just won a car and radio.

When we were leaving they asked for my impressions and I said it was a very fine farm, and that their cows were the best I had seen in Russia (the president said they produced from 8 to 9 litres per day on the average, as compared with only 3 to 5 on other collective farms), but taking the highest of the figures they had given me of their payments to the Government, they seemed to be very much favoured as compared with most most of the farms I had been on, and that I was bound to say that I did not think the farm at all typical of the collectives in the Kiev

district. My guide, who the night before had persuaded me to stay on an extra day to see representative farms, said if I would promise to stay a month in the Kiev oblast he would show me many farms as good and some much better. I asked about the one we had passed on the previous day where the peasants said they were hungry. The president of the Jewish kolhoz answered that he knew that district; the trouble was due to weak party discipline and kulak influence. He knew districts where party men had been shot recently by kulaks and in many districts the kulak influence was so strong that in some places kulaks were actually made presidents of collective farms.

I had intended going from Kiev to Odessa, but was persuaded by Narkomzem to visit the Dniepropetrovsk oblast first, where they said agricultural conditions were very good. I left Kiev early in the evening and arrived in Dniepropetrovsk late in the afternoon the next day of June 23rd. I got very little sleep during the night as at every station hundreds of peasants were fighting to get on to or into the roof, couplings and steps of the train.

I got up at dawn to watch the fields and all day was surprised to see so much good land which had obviously been in crop in recent years, now lying idle. The spring sown crops were everywhere very late and full of weeds, but all of good colour as the weather had been ideal. Where the land had been fairly well cultivated, the winter wheat was good to very good. A woman came into my compartment in the forenoon and whenever I would remark upon a field of good wheat we passed, she would say: yes, but there is very little of it. Every station we passed had its hundreds to thousands of miserable, hungry people and every train we passed was crowded inside and out with most unhappy-looking citizens. The same woman (her husband was in London and she worked in Batum) told me that she had waited four days for a ticket; that all the peasants around where she had been visiting were hungry; that the collective farms were cruel jokes; that black bread was 3 roubles per pound and white bread 24 roubles per kilo. I had not opened my food box since leaving Moscow and when I did I found my sandwiches were very bad, my butter rancid, and my loaf of white bread very mouldy. I threw the sandwiches out of the window and she asked me why I threw away food when I must be able to see that the thousands of miserable people we had passed all day were hungry. I agreed that they looked hungry, but I would not offer them putrid food. She said it did not matter. She took my very mouldy load, cut the mould off and gave the mouldy bits to the train conductor, and skimmed off the top of my rancid butter for him also; the rest of the bread and butter she kept for her two children and herself. She said she had tried to buy bread at four stations, but could

not get any. I made some tea and asked the conductor to join us. He was as thin as a crow – he got only 60 roubles per month, 5 pounds of bread per day for his wife, 6 children and himself, 5 pounds of sugar per month, and nothing else. As we passed a very long train of cattle cars everyone of which was packed with people like sardines in a tin, I asked the woman why so many people were travelling back and forward. I got the answer I expected – they were all looking in vain for food. I spoke to some men and women who were riding on the steps of our car and they said they had left their kolhoz and were on their way to Rostov to look for work. As usual, all day I looked for cattle, but saw only fine grass going to waste.

As soon as I got my usual *bron* (G.P.U. or Government order) for a room I went to Insnab (restaurant for foreigners). By mistake I sat down at a big table with about 15 German specialists and watched them eating a fairly good dinner for only 1.8 roubles. Later I got a very much poorer meal for 14 roubles.

In the evening I found the bazaar but it was already closed and all I saw was 3 poor hungry devils being arrested for stealing and many people being threatened with arrest for trying to sell after hours. While having a shoe shine a man came up and told me he worked in an office, was classed as a Third category worker, and got only 150 roubles per month and 200 grammes of black bread per day, absolutely nothing else except what he bought in the bazaar. He said he was glad he had no one dependent upon him, as he found it hard enough to get food for himself. Black bread was 6 roubles per kilo in the bazaar. He said second category workers in Dniepropetrovsk got 400 grammes of bread per day and first category workers (special type of factory workers) 800 grammes per day and 500 grammes of sugar per month. When I asked about meat, milk and butter he laughed and said all the cattle had been killed or died of starvation. Later while watching 35 men and women being herded down the street by six militiamen with drawn revolvers, I saw eggs being sold 10 for 6½ roubles, milk for 2 roubles per litre, and some skin and bones for 5 roubles per pound.

Next morning (June 24th) I called to see Narkomzem, but found the building closed as it was a free day. On the steps three komsomols (young communists) spoke to me. They asked me a lot of questions about prices in England and America and after examining my pen, pencil, watch, etc. they told me that they had many collective and state farms and tractors, but not much to eat (they could see the humorous side of it), that butter was 8 to 10 roubles per pound, and that there was no meat and very little bread; all because the peasants would not work. Later I got into the building by a back door and met the vice-president of Nar-

komzem. He 'phoned for over an hour to try and get a car but finally gave it up and promised to send one for me next morning. On the way back to my hotel I passed through a small bazaar where I saw bread for sale at 11 roubles per loaf, and very thin meat at 4 roubles per pound.

In the afternoon I went to the central bazaar. Wheat meal (offal left in) 150, millet 120 to 150, bran 50, middlings 70, and very poor oats at 50 roubles per pood, and many types of "meal" (similar to the enclosed samples) at fantastic prices. Butter was 8 roubles per pound, eggs 10 for 7 roubles, rice 2 roubles a very small glassful (about ½ cup) and bread 14 to 15 roubles per loaf. At the present official rate of exchange of 7 roubles to the pound sterling, wheat meal at 150 roubles per pood is equal to approximately 286 pounds sterling per quarter, yet during the first three or four months of last harvest season, Russia sold in England about one half of all the wheat she exported for from 20 to 25 shillings per quarter. I know it is ridiculous to translate roubles into pounds at the official rate of exchange. I only do it to show how ridiculous the rate is and how stupid those people are who gather Russian five year plan rouble statistics and then return home to talk about phenomenal progress and the rapid rise in the real wages of Russian workers. But even taking the rouble at its purchasing power of 4 or 5 cents (or ½ to 1/10 of its nominal value) the price of the wheat meal in the very heart of the Ukraine (where much wheat was confiscated last year for export) works out at from $10 to $12.50 per bushel of wheat or roughly from 20 to 25 times its present international value. If you bear in mind the low wages (even in paper roubles) of the Russian workers and the fact that they (especially the second and third category ones) get nothing like enough bread from the Government, and also keep in mind the great scarcity and fantastic prices of other food stuffs, you will have a good idea of some of the hardships the people in this country have to endure. As in practically every other bazaar I have been in, people gathered around to curse the Government, to say the peasants were too hungry to work and to sneer at the State and collective farms. On the way home I read, printed in English, on big red banners stretched across the entrance to the central park: "The World 'Spartakiad' is a militan holyday of the proletarian sportsmen of the world – holyday of the triumph of the successful fulfilment of the first Five Year Plan of the Soviet Union which is of international importance for the proletariat." (Note: Wrong spelling intentionally.) The following morning (they were expecting the English workers football team in the evening) I saw about 40 rag-clad hungry children (who make their living by begging) being herded down the main street by militia men.

On June 25th we visited farms. The first one was a co-operative sovhoz. It contained 700 people, 300 permanent workers, 300 cattle, 125 of which were milking and giving 8 litres per day (last year 80 out of 125 calves had died and this year only 3 out of 102 had died), 42 sows and 225 young pigs, 1,600 hectares of land (1,027 of which was suitable for cultivation) 880 in all grains, 168 winter wheat, 120 maize, 45 rye, 240 oats, and a large area of garden truck. The president explained that the root crops and garden stuff were full of weeds because they simply could not get enough workers, but on the previous day 85 shock workers from a factory in Dniepropetrovsk had weeded two hectares. They had 4 tractors and 120 (all extremely poor) horses. The president said they would easily fulfil their contract to deliver 900 tons of vegetables to the closed shops in Dniepropetrovsk and would sell the rest on the bazaar.

The next farm we visited was an artel called Shevchenko, after the famous Ukrainian poet. The farm had 267 families, 360 workers, 243 cows, 232 calves, 70 young cattle, 221 working horses and 21 young ones, 2,096 hectares, 1,740 in crops, 225 of winter wheat, 101 rye, 15 spring wheat, 148 maize for grain, 120 for ensilage and 72 for green feed, 806 potatoes and 20 in garden truck. The president said the cows (160 of them were not collectivised as they belonged to private members) were then giving 10 litres per day and that the average production per cow was 2,000 litres per year. Last year they had hail and got only 40 poods of winter wheat per hectare, but they expected 70 to 80 this year. Where the land had been well prepared the wheat was really quite good, but it would not average anything like the figure they quoted. They showed me, with great pride and joy, their enormous new concrete and brick stable. They took me first to the "cow kitchen" where units, consisting of three boxes each, moved in and out on a endless belt or sort of conveyor system, in front of the cows, on a track which was soon to be electrified. Each of the three boxes contained food; when the cow finished one course, but not until, the lid of the box containing the next course was automatically raised and the conveyor moved in front of her and so on. The next great sight was a most elaborate piece of mechanism in four parts; in compartment number one the dust was to be sucked off the cow by vacuum pumps, in compartment number two she was to get a warm and then cold shower bath, in number three she was to be dried and rubbed, and in compartment number four she must pass a doctor's examination before being allowed to go to the milking machines. I had a hard job keeping a straight face, especially when my Jewish interpreter (the manager of Intourist in Dniepropetrovsk) wanted to know if I did

not agree that when Russian agriculture was thus fully mechanized, they would have surpassed America.

In the evening I overhead an interesting conversation between a German-American and a Russian-American in "Insnab." The first said: "Why in hell do you give men important positions just because they are communists and then as soon as they gum up the works you kick them out and put a worse bunch of ignorant communists in their place. The foreign workers are the best friends the Russians have, yet they (the Russians) won't listen to them." The second said: "You remind me of the story about the British Ambassador who went to South America and when asked, on his return, what he thought of the people, he said they were an ignorant lot of swine because he had been there six months and they did not learn English." Later I spoke to them and the German-American (he had homesteaded twice in Western Canada) told me that he sat home at nights "and tried to think this here system out until he went plum bugs trying to dope out the inconsistencies." He had been out of work in the States so he paid his passage over here and got a job at 300 roubles a month instructing Russians how to operate and take care of locomotives. They had 10 big U.S. locomotives in the yards, recently imported, but all of them were now spoiled because the Russians were all "norm crazy" and would not listen to him. They said they could not afford to wash out the locomotives every 1,000 kilometres, yet they were ruining them by not doing so. They insisted on using a mixture of anthracite and bituminous coal, although he had told them to send all the anthracite to the factories where it was sorely needed, to forget about their norms and to give the engines all the draft and soft coal they wanted. They saved coal by letting the steam pressure drop from 17 to 8 atmospheres when the train was running down a grade or on the level, then when it came to an upgrade the engine could not pull the train. The continual rapid contraction and expensation [*sic*], due to the sudden change of temperatures, were ruining the engines. When he first came they told him they could not afford to pay 200 roubles a month for an interpreter, but he discovered they were paying 468 roubles a month for his room so he raised particular hell with Moscow and finally they kicked out a lot of bureaucrats and put a lot of others in their place. My interpreter became very unhappy and said: "Why do you stay if you find so much to criticize? You are just trying to make money out of the country, whereas many foreigners come here and spend their own money to help Russia. I was a poor orphan boy only eight years old when the revolution started. My mother was very poor and as my father had been a worker, the Government educated me and now I have been sent here to open an office for Intourist." The German-American replied: "Like hell I am

making money out of the country! Why I could not leave if I wanted to. I have been working very hard for 6 months, yet the Government won't give me a cent in foreign money to go to see my poor old mother who is dying in Berlin." The Russian-American told him he had nothing to grumble about; he said the grub in Insnab was the best he had tasted in Russia and now he had to go to a rock-crushing plant 120 kilometres south where there was practically no food at all.

On the way home from the farm my guide (the chief agronom for the Dniepropetrovsk oblast) told me that the population of the city had doubled since the Revolution, having increased by more than 100,000 in the past two years, and was now nearly half a million. He also told me that between 4 and 5 next morning he would call for me to take me to a grain sovhoz. I got up next day (June 26th) at 4 a.m. and after fighting flies for five hours in my room went to Narkomzem to see what was the matter. I found them at a Party meeting. They 'phoned for a car and promised one would arrive in a few minutes. I waited until nearly 2 p.m. and then left for lunch. In the evening I met the vice-president of Narkomzem on his way home from a Party meeting. He was very surprised to hear that the agronom had not called to take me out to the country.

Next day (June 27th), having many unkind things to say to the agronom, I went to get my interpreter. I found him very upset because he had received a letter from the director of Intourist calling him a bureaucrat. He said he would like to go back to his factory as there he could see what he produced, but if he asked to go back, the union would put him on the black list for being afraid of his present job. I took him with me, and being as angry as I was, he translated all the unkind things I said to the government agronom. The more I said, the whiter and more frightened the agronom became so that when at last he pressed me to take a document to Moscow saying that it was not his fault, I felt sorrow for him and said there was no use crying over spilt milk. He tried to persuade me to stay two more days, saying the president would get a car from the G.P.U. and take me to the country. But I told him I had promised to meet Dr. Schiller the next day in the Crimea. (I am very sorry now that I did not stay, as I learned on 11th July that Schiller stayed in a town near Dniepropetrovsk for a week waiting for me to answer his telegrams telling me to meet him in Odessa, and I stayed in Simferopol several days longer than necessary waiting for Schiller to answer my telegrams. Needless to say neither of us received each others telegrams.)

But to get on with my story about the agronom. He was so anxious to please me that he called in the heads of six departments and I had a five hour session with them. As usual I asked a lot of questions about the crops and socialist organisation, before coming to the always delicate

subject of livestock population. They said that 90.6% of the land and 85% of the peasants in the oblast were collectivised; they had 92 machine-tractor stations; 3,800 collective farms containing 400,600 families; there were 4,300,000 people in the district and 553,600 families. The following figures which they supplied are interesting in that they show a decided planned shift from grain to technical and grass crops:

Planned sown area in 1932		Planned sown area in 1937
(in thousands of hectares)		
Winter Wheat	1,809	2,150
Spring Wheat	592	128
Winter Rye	436	200
Barley	669	321
Oats	165	110
Millet	46	10
Maize	506	800
Peas and Beans	7.5	15

They told me they had just completed a special survey of the grain crops and that they expected an average yield of 11 centners per hectare as compared with 8.9 in 1913 and 9.5 in 1928; they expected 11.7 centners per hectare of winter wheat and rye with year as compared with 10.3 in 1913 and 10.5 in 1928; and for spring sown crops (wheat, oats, barley, maize, peas, etc.) they expected this year 10.2 compared with 7.5 in 1913, and 8.6 in 1928. They, of course, attributed the increased average expected yields to socialist organisation, good agricultural technique, etc. Last year they had 9.2 centners per hectare for eight grains. The figures for this year are ridiculous; I give them only to show what optimists the communists are. Next I came to the problem of livestock. To my surprise I got the following data, which I am sure are reliable because I copied them down from the president's tables:

	1931	1928	1913	1937 (Planned)
(All figures in thousands of head and for the end of year)				
Horses	555	1,301	951	614
All cattle	648	2,163	949	1,019
Milking Cows	389	973	451	840
All swine	354	1,463	1,346	2,597
Sows	73	–	–	909

All sheep	261	1,940	596	499
Breeding ewes	151	–	–	360
Rabbits	385	3	2	1,386
Chickens	2,115	2,937	1,960	25,000
Bees (hives)	63	–	–	236

The above table illustrates very clearly the colossal price – in terms of one of the most valuable assets of the country, livestock – of the collectivisation of agriculture in the very heart of the Ukraine. The planned figures for 1937 illustrate the incurable optimism of the communists who, having caused terrific destruction in all branches of agriculture, are busy, also too often on paper only, with the "socialistic reconstruction of agriculture." Taking the figures for the end of 1928 to represent 100 per cent, the central oblast of the Ukraine (and I know of no reason to believe that it is not at least typical of the Ukraine as a whole; in all probability the Kiev oblast is much worse) lost in three years 57 per cent of the horses, 70 per cent of the cattle, 76 per cent of the pigs and 87 per cent of the sheep. It is doubtful if at the present moment the livestock population is appreciably greater than it was at the end of 1931, as the heavy losses during January to May of this year would certainly affect the greater part, if not all, of the gains due to the natural increase of young stock in the spring. But so effective is the Russian propaganda that Mordecai Ezekiel, the assistant chief economist of the U.S. Federal Farm Board, in a formal paper at the last annual meeting (Dec. 1931) of the American Farm Economic Association, stated in part as follows: "Even with the smaller grain harvest, other foods may be more abundant in Russia this winter than last, for livestock of all kinds is increasing rapidly, and in many regions the production of fruit and vegetables for canning has been expanding rapidly. It was experiences such as this" (a few weeks in Russia as a tourist in the winter of 1930-31) "reflecting the increasing diversity of Russian agriculture, that made me feel that some day the food standards of Soviet Russia would be far above what they had been under the Czars." In a private letter recently to my friend Dr. Black (the head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Harvard University and also the chief economist of the Farm Board), I mentioned that I did not think much of Ezekiel's analysis of Russian agriculture and got the reply that perhaps Ezekiel's zeal for reform had led him astray. I too believe in the need for many reforms but I do not like to see people like Ezekiel completely fooled by communist propaganda and guided tours, and my faith in one of my favourite papers is shaken when I read such comments as the following: "Every Liberal will be with Mr. Wells when he cries for a

movement which can "do for Liberalism what the Communist Party has done for the Communist idea in Russia.' If the same faith and energy and devotion which the Communists have awakened for the Five Year Plan can be mobilized in this country to support the changes which Mr. H. G. Wells outlines it will be well with us" – from editorial in *Manchester Guardian* of August 1st, 1932.

At the present time they have 92 machine-tractor stations with 3,900 tractors (2,137 imported), but in 1933 they plan to have 144 machine-tractor stations with 5,400 tractors, and in 1937 21,500 tractors. They do not expect the tractors to last more than four years, as they work from 2,400 to 2,500 hours per year and the life of tractors in Russia is 10,000 to 12,000 working hours as compared with only 7,500 in the U.S. So far they had only 159 combines, but the number would be rapidly increased.

The area sown of the principal crops, for the 1932 harvest, in the oblast by "sectors" follows:-

	Sovhozes	Kolhozes	Individual peasants
(In thousands of hectares)			
Winter Wheat	128	1,600	88
Spring Wheat	58	266	7
Winter Rye	9	367	65
Oats	38	146	2
Maize	35	252	26
Peas	2	10	7
Potatoes	8	50	29
Sugar Beets	5	11	–

(Note: The manufacture and sale of sugar is a Government monopoly; collection prices (recently doubled) are very low so individual peasants will not plant.)

I left Dniepropetrovsk at 4 p.m. on June 27th for Simferopol, the capital of the Crimea. Watching the crops until it got dark I saw what I expected and what I had seen in all other parts of the Ukraine I visited – good winter wheat where the land was moderately well cultivated, all spring crops late and very weedy, much land recently in cultivation now idle, much good grass but no livestock, practically no hay made, virtually no summer fallow, and everywhere a magnificent crop of weeds.

Nearly all the people in my carriage were important government employees as they all seemed to have ticket *brons*. A very cocky skilled

worker opposite me pointed to a small group of cattle out of the window and said "those are collectivised." I agreed that they were probably collectivised, but said I had seen very few cattle all day. He said they had many cattle, but they were all in the communes and collectives away from the railroad, so I asked him why butter cost from 8 to 10 roubles per pound in the bazaar. He replied that butter was only 1 rouble per pound to him and when I asked him how much he got, he said his body was quite strong and the others laughed. He asked the price of my clothes and thought they were very expensive as he had paid only 30 roubles for his suit, 12 for his boots and only 2 for his underwear in the closed workers shops. I tried as best I could to explain to him that he might just as well try to tell me the people in the U.S. were all happy because Henry Ford had a lot of money, as to expect me to believe that the Russian people (especially the peasants who still made up about 70 per cent of the population, despite the feverish rate of urban population growth) were enjoying life just because a handful of skilled workers were comparatively well-to-do. He was too stupid to see the point but a high official of the central transport department sitting next to me could see it, but he would not agree with my next argument that in recent years the number and productivity of people producing food in Russia had been declining very rapidly (without as yet any appreciable measure of success in substituting machine production), that the number of people wanting to consume food had increased very rapidly and, therefore, that an even worse food crisis than the present one was not only possible but probable, and that another drought would bring a serious famine. Later when he was telling me they must export grain this year to pay for machinery, I said that they could not expect their workers to work if they exported their food, and that I had heard that the miners in the Don Basin were working very badly because they were all hungry. To my surprise, he replied that what I said was only 50 per cent true. The skilled worker (who, a short time before, said he would give his shirt and pants to make Volgostroy the success that Dnieprostroy was) to my great surprise fully agreed with what I said and told the transport official that it was a big mistake to export food.

I arrived in Simferopol very early on June 28th. After having a look about the town I called on Narkomzem and was told they had 750,000 people in the Crimea, 82 sovhozes, 21 machine-tractor stations (with 2,000 tractors, 50% imported), 1,400 collective farms, and 4 grain, 4 cattle, 6 sheep, 2 seed, 3 tobacco, 12 fruit, 3 cotton, 5 wine, 1 horse, 4 canning, 6 vegetable, 7 chicken, 6 medicine and 3 rabbit sovhozes; eighty-five per cent of this agriculture was collectivised and they had completed the spring sowing plan and a counter plan of 15%. The four

grain sovhozes had 217,065 hectares, 68,000 wheat, 15,000 maize, 20,000 barley and a population of 10,000 people. They were expecting a very good crop of winter wheat (10 to 25 centners on the grain sovhozes and a little less on the kolhozes) because of mechanization, and good agro-technique! They had had good weather all summer but were getting too much rain and could not get started with the harvest. They had a very good crop last year also and in 1930 nearly as good a crop as they expected this year. They had taken a census of livestock during February and March of this year, but had been too busy to calculate the data! I tried later three times to get the data, once in another department and twice in the country, but always got the same answer. The only figure the director gave me was 82 to 85,000 cattle.

It rained nearly all the next day (June 29th) so we could not go to the country. I visited the central bazaar, where a large part of the population of the town seemed to be busy shopping, and saw more bread for sale than I had seen anywhere in Russia. The following are typical of the prices: Whole wheat bread 7 to 7½ roubles per kilo, brown bread 6 to 6½ roubles per kilo, old potatoes 2.40 and new potatoes 3.50 roubles per kilo, butter 9 roubles per pound, eggs 10 for 6 roubles, milk 1.50 roubles per litre, 2 small rabbits 25 roubles, mouldy maize 2.50 to 3 roubles per kilo, one goose 35 and an old hen 14 roubles, ground wheat 90, ground maize 70, peas 80, hulled barley 100, rice 150, millet 130, wheat meal 100 kopeks per small glassful, or about ½ to ¾ tea cupful. I spoke to some individual peasants who said their wheat would not yield more than 30 poods per hectare, as they had been pushed on to the poor, very hilly land and had only about 3 hectares each. They said they bought black bread the day before for 3 to 4 roubles per kilo, but to-day it was 5 to 5½. There must have been over 3,000 people in the bazaar. While conditions were undoubtedly bad, there was nothing like as much begging or obvious hunger as in the Ukraine.

On June 30th the roads were still too wet to go out to the country. In the evening I saw about 1,000 workers being lined up, given guns with fixed bayonets, and sent off marching and singing through the town. On July 1st Guntner (the chief agronom for the Crimea) took me south to see a large State fruit farm. The farm had 14,000 hectares of land all of which would be in fruit in 1937, 320 hectares in fruit trees now bearing, 680 hectares of young apple trees, 1,400 workers, 50 cows, 140 horses, 240 pigs, 17 tractors (7 Vickers), 30 hectares of vines, 11,000 rabbits, 3,400 hectares of wheat and 440 hectares, under the trees, in garden truck. We spent about two hours in the orchards, but I saw practically no fruit, even on trees obviously old enough to bear. The director said they had a very good crop of fruit last year and would have a big crop

next year, but this was an off year for fruit all over the Crimea. Later I visited three other fruit farms (one in the South Central Ukraine) and on each farm when I asked why there was practically no fruit, I was told the same story. The director told me that 6 of their 17 tractors were being overhauled, but later I saw 10 being, or already, taken apart. The director had had the experience, phenomenal for Russia, of being in the same position for 3 years. The grain crops around Simferopol were all very poor, but the land is not suitable for grain growing.

It rained practically all of the next two days (July 2nd and 3rd), so I spent a good deal of my time in the bazaar. Girls' cotton aprons were for sale at 35 roubles each, poor slippers (very widely used all over Russia as boots) 27 roubles, worn out patched shoes 45 roubles, mens' overalls 50 roubles, cotton trousers 25 roubles, mens' very poor quality cotton shirts 20 roubles, an old badly worn out cloth coat 70 roubles. I looked very thoroughly through the bazaar, but did not see an ounce of meat all day and what little butter and milk there was for sale disappeared in the first few hours the bazaar was open. However, I saw very many men, women and girls with a pair of garters, stockings, bloomers, or some other similar article of clothing, for sale at simply fantastic prices.

On July 4th the roads were still too wet to motor and on July 5th the Narkomzem car was still being remounted (I would like to know how many days a year Russian machines are being remounted) so I took a train in the evening for Grammatekovo (a small town in the heart of the Crimean prairie country, about half-way between Simferopol and Theodosia) where I arrived early next morning. From dawn until 6 A.M. on both sides of the railroad, at least 75% of the land was lying idle and what little crop there was was poor and very weedy. After having a look at the usual crowd asleep on the ground around the depot, and pricing the food in the station restaurant (butter 2.6 roubles per 100 grammes or 10.4 roubles per pound, and fat pork 3.4 roubles per 100 grammes) I was met by the director and others and driven to the nearby grain sovhoz. We had no sooner finished breakfast than the director of Narkomzem and the agronom turned up. The Narkomzem car had been fixed, so they drove half the night to the sovhoz. We spent 6 hours motoring over the farm. The winter wheat was by far the best I have seen anywhere in Russia and was a really good crop, clean, thick, long, with very well filled heads. My guides (15 men in two cars and one truck) were very proud of the wheat and were greatly pleased when I said it would yield very well, but they got a disappointment in every field we examined because I estimated the yield at very much less than any of them.

Whether it is simply due to lack of experience, or just their incurable optimism I do not know, but I have yet to meet the man in Russia that does not estimate the yield of a standing crop at least 25% too high. Personally, I think Schiller (being accustomed to the fine crops in Germany where they get the highest average yield of wheat in the world) underestimates the yield. For instance, he thinks the winter wheat and rye in the Ukraine will not average more than 5 centners per hectare. I think 6 centners a fair estimate, but to be on the safe side I am allowing 7 in my calculations – the spring sown crops will yield very much less. As I will indicate later, we were told by Narkomzem in Kharkov that all grains in the Ukraine would average 8½ centners per hectare, or about the same as last year and 25 to 30 per cent less than in 1930; that winter wheat would average from 11 to 12, and winter rye 10 to 10½ centners per hectare. The estimates are, of course, quite ridiculous, but I think Schiller's opinion that they are twice too high too severe.

But I must get back to the grain sovhoz. Although the winter wheat was free from weeds, it was not suitable for combining as it contained an appreciable amount of second growth, or wheat which had not germinated until the spring. However, it was all to be combined as, in keeping with the Russian mania for super-mechanization, they sneered at such "obsolete" harvesting machinery as binders and reapers. The wheat would not be ready to combine for a week to ten days, but they said they were going to start in two days. When on another section of the farm I saw 5 combines (3 stopped for repairs, one working and one with the red flag hoisted because there was no truck to unload the grain into) in a big field of barley. The barley was very poor (short, thin and very weedy), but the man in charge said it was yielding 75 poods per hectare! Later I took an interesting photograph – 37 people (22 of them women) working on a large pile of threshed barley; some turning it over to keep it from heating (as it had been cut too soon and contained about 20% of moisture), others fanning the weeds out of it with 4 small hand mills, and others shovelling wet grain on to the ground out of 6 enormous tractor trucks. In the afternoon I saw an enormous pile of grain on the ground at the elevator being worked over, to keep it from moulding, by an enormous crowd of workers. I was sorely tempted to ask some sarcastic questions about mechanization, but I refrained.

They took me for lunch to the adjacent model village which had been built as part of the wheat specialization technicum. The technicum was spotlessly clean and well equipped, and the students studying in the nice garden adjoining the buildings were clean and apparently working hard. The place was entirely run by German-Russians. The technicum gave a three year course to 450 students, all of whom had scholarships (35 to

85 roubles per month depending upon the number of dependents) from the Government. Forty per cent of the students were recruited from workers in the machine tractor stations and 60 per cent from collective farms; 17 per cent of the students were of German origin. At lunch I became very ill and had to be taken to the sovhoz and put to bed. I though I had caught malaria; the people on the farm said it was sunstroke; but when the doctor arrived he said it was poisoning. The following day (July 7th) my temperature went as high as 39.8° C. and then dropped to 39.4 where it stayed for several hours. I did not feel nearly so miserable as I did on the previous day, but the doctor was alarmed and called in a colleague. Next day (July 8th) I felt better and on the afternoon of July 9th, against the doctors' orders, I motored back to Simferopol. My nurse (from the kindergarten) said they had no sugar, tea or suitable meat for making broth all summer and that she could not get any for me. However, a fellow I shared a room with (a special representative of the Government in Moscow who was keeping his eye on the farm) killed two of his ten young chickens for the woman of the house to make broth. The nurse was greatly interested in my soap and towel (a cheap soft cotton one) and asked me why they had nothing like them.

The special Moscow representative gave me the following information about the farm. It was organised in 1928 and contained 43,000 hectares; 20,000 in wheat, 3,738 barley, 2,447 maize, 1,100 hectares of garden truck, potatoes, etc., and the rest in summer fallow. They had 120 tractors (14 caterpillar, 16 Hart-Par, 4 I.H.C. and 86 from Stalingrad and Kharkov), 100 combines (60 new ones from Rostov) and 46 trucks. They had no binders, but 16 large and 92 small winnowers, 12 pick-up machines. Livestock: 174 horses, 116 cows, 200 sows and 400 young pigs, 180 sheep, 1,500 chickens. Next year they would have 15,000 chickens and 400 rabbits. Last year their wheat (they grow only winter wheat) averaged 11 centners per hectare and barley 9. They expected a much better crop of wheat this year. From what I saw of the fields I would say the wheat would average about 12 and the barley 4 to 5 centners per hectare. They had from 2,500 to 2,800 permanent workers and a large number of seasonal ones. I asked why the wheat was so good on the sovhoz and so poor on the adjacent farms, and was told it was because the sovhoz had summer fallowed in April and May and the kolhozes had put it off until June and July.

On July 9th we motored about 130 kilometres in a circular direction to Simferopol, visiting several villages on the way. Easily 50 per cent of the fields (all fine soil and level land for the first 80 or 90 kilometres) were uncultivated and one mass of weeds; the oats, barley and other

spring crops were extremely poor (thin, short and almost smothered in weeds); the winter wheat was on the whole poor although there were a few fair fields. The woman who made up my bed in the hotel at Simferopol asked me if I was a Communist and then told me she got only 200 grammes of black bread per day and nothing else, and added that soon the Communists would be beaten by the peasants and then conditions would rapidly get much better.

On July 10th I was joined by Mr. Vyvyan of the Embassy staff. We could not get a car, but managed to get a team of horses and drove to a large combination sovhoz which I had passed the night before and especially asked to see. When we arrived at the farm we could understand why Narkomzem obviously did not want us to visit it. The farm contained 5,000 hectares, 2,400 in crops, 130 wheat, 378 oats, 401 rye for grain and 278 for pasture and hay, 233 barley, 196 maize for ensilage and 150 for grain, 100 sorgums, 340 potatoes, and 101 sugar beets. They said this rye would yield only 6 centners per hectare, wheat 10 and barley 10 to 11! Later they told us their wheat was very poor. They had 570 cattle, 1,916 sheep of which 753 were ewes, 1,677 pigs, 50 draught oxen, 70 horses, and 2,300 rabbits. They said their cows were then giving 7 litres of milk per day on the average and had given 5 to 5½ in the winter time, but later when I said I could not understand such cows giving so much in the winter months they changed the figures to from 3 to 5. We visited the pigs in the field. They were all razor backs and contained a very high percentage of runts. The man who showed us over the farm said their pigs were "race horses" because they could grow only half the necessary food for them and that the central organisation, which was supposed to supply the other half, had supplied only one kilo per pig during the whole winter. They doubted if they would be able to fulfil their contract to supply the central organisation with 200 pigs in the third quarter of the year. They gave their hens 100 grammes of grain per day (we were told in the restaurant that each of the 500 workers got 800 grammes of bread per day, but the man cutting and weighing the small chunks of black, very coarse bread gave us a very strange look when he heard the guide mention 800) and got 500 to 600 eggs per day from 1,500 hens. The farm had very large and very expensive stone and brick stables and silos (our guide said the buildings on the farm cost 1½ million roubles and that the capital invested in the farm was 5 million roubles). When we were there, one silo was being filled – entirely with only ground up green weeds. On the way home our guide from Narkomzem told us that it was against the law to establish such combination farms now and, to our surprise, he agreed when Vyvyan said that he could not see the wisdom of such a law.

We were joined by Schiller on July 11th. He was in a very pessimistic mood. From Moscow to Simferopol he had gained the impression from watching the crops that they were mostly weeds; the area of land recently in crops but now idle was very large; the only hay he saw being made was entirely weeds; the Government had, as he expected, increased the published spring sowings to over 92 per cent of the plan which was ridiculous. The outlook for export cultures was very bad, but he thought the Government would again export grain. The amount would depend entirely on how far the Government dare go in making peasants still more angry. He agreed with me that we would hear of unprecedented difficulties this autumn and winter regarding grain collections. He had just returned from a ten days trip to Kiev and Vinnitsa (the centre of the sugar beet industry in the Ukraine) and thought I was too optimistic about crop prospects in the Kiev district; he had been entirely free from Government interference there and in motoring about the country had seen very little grain and a great deal of weeds in the fields, while what sugar beets were not smothered in weeds were being eaten up with caterpillars. At Vinnitsa the sugar beets were badly infested with caterpillars and choked with weeds. The sovhozes and collective farms had sown their full quota of sugar beets, but the individual peasants had not sown any. The Government had just issued a decree saying the price paid was still far too low, and in any case, it was much too late to induce the peasants to sow beets. The winter wheat was free from rust, but the spring sown crops (especially spring wheat and oats) were badly rusted. He had just had a letter from the German Consul in Novosibirsk (Western Siberia) saying that as soon as we left there it had started to rain, that they had had excellent rains in June and the first few days of July, and the crops looked fairly good.

I had made arrangements the previous day for a trip to the country, so Schiller joined us. We first visited (after two long stops on the road to fix the engine of our new Buick car) a fruit and vegetable sovhoz. The farm had 1,500 hectares under cultivation, 500 in vegetables, 400 wheat, 50 barley, 450 hectares trees, 40 horses, 45 cows, 8 tractors and 850 workers. Most of their produce was contracted for, but they were allowed to sell some of it in the kolhoz market. They had a good crop of fruit last year and expected a big crop next year, but this year it was a failure. They paid the workers 50 roubles per month in the summer and 30 in the winter, but they all got 800 grammes of bread (and 400 for each member of the family) per day and their meals cost only 50 kopeks per day. Last year the cost per hectare of fruit trees was only 7.97 roubles! We saw 30 people with 2 teams of oxen and 2 John Deere tractors threshing wheat with a pre-war very small English threshing

machine. But we also saw a group of women working extraordinarily efficiently at packing cabbages – they were on test to establish records and norms.

We next visited a commune which had 120 workers, 36 cows (average production 600 litres per year), 20 good English White brood sows, a number of underfed young pigs, and a two year old colt produced by artificial insemination.

Vyvyan and I left Simferopol on the night of July 11th (Schiller remained in Simferopol for two days and then went to Sevastopol where he sailed for Odessa) and arrived very early next morning in Melitopol – in the South Central part of the Ukraine. We were met at the depot by the president of the political executive committee of the rayon and driven to a hotel where a room (swarming with flies and mosquitoes and with an odour which nearly made us ill) awaited us. We visited the bazaar to buy tomatoes and bread for breakfast. Black bread was on sale for 3 roubles per kilo (the peasants said it had been 6 to 8 roubles just before the harvest); butter 8 roubles per pound; eggs 10 for 5 to 6 roubles; and a little extremely poor meat in an empty store (there was none in the bazaar) for 6 roubles per kilo. We noticed a very long queue and went over to see a very large crowd of angry people waiting to buy kerosene at 12 roubles per litre from a waggon. The women said it sold for 8 to 10 roubles per half-litre in the bazaar. The woman from whom we bought our tomatoes (10 for 5 roubles) told us she had lived for 8 years in Vancouver, Canada, and had returned to Russia with her husband in 1921. She was very anxious that we should speak to her husband. Later he found us in a café drinking mineral water, but as he was too frightened to give us a coherent account of his troubles, Vyvyan told him to write his story down and bring it to us next day. He turned up next day with the story, but was too frightened to talk until we assured him we were not communists and showed him our passports. He said his Canadian passport had been stolen from him by the Government and that he was virtually a prisoner, watched every day, and not allowed to go near any port. Last winter he had been arrested and put in a filthy dark cellar with 76 other people. The G.P.U. had tried very hard for 16 days to get his dollars (he said he still had 7,000 Canadian dollars, some here, but mostly in a Vancouver bank) and then let him out.

After breakfast (buns 1 rouble each) we went with the president of the rayon to visit a grain sovhoz called "Bolsheviki." The farm had 8,502 winter wheat, 81 winter rye, 165 spring wheat, 303 barley, 200 oats, 200 maize, 350 sorgums, 93 Sudan grass, 364 alfalfa, and 1,500 summer fallow, 24 I.H.C. tractors, 68 horses, 4 combines, 15 reapers, 54 cows and 15 brood sows. When we were there they had 400 workers,

but the president said that they had only 126 in the winter time. The president said 6 of their 24 tractors were being remounted, but I counted 10 in the machine shop. We motored over the farm for a few hours and examined the fields and harvesting operations. We passed many very large fields which had been in crop in recent years, but were now lying idle growing a magnificent crop of weeds. I asked why such good land was not being used and was told it all belonged to neighbouring collective farms. There were a few small fields of good to fair wheat on the farm, but most of it was poor to extremely poor – very thin and short, and full of weeds. The barley was all extremely poor yet we were told that the field we saw being harvested was yielding 10 centners per hectare – it certainly would not yield more than 5. The president told us that the wheat would yield up to 13 centners per hectare and that the barley would average 12. Later the agronom told me he thought their winter wheat would yield 10 centners per hectare, spring wheat 8, oats 8 and barley 10. He said that they would have had a much better crop, but for a few days of hot winds during the first week of July. Taking the farm as a whole I think 7 centners would be a very liberal estimate of the wheat crop. The threshed wheat I saw was dry, but the kernels were small, and some shrivelled, due to hot winds and stem rust. We visited one field where each 6 to 8 foot binder was being operated by 2 men, and a 15-30 I.E.C. tractor (several binders and three tractors were being repaired in the field by a brigade of 20 young mechanics). I asked if it would not be cheaper to operate the binders with horses. They obviously thought my question a very stupid one, and told me they would need 6 horses and two or three men to operate each binder and that horse feed was very expensive. I felt like telling them that I had never seen more than 4 horses and one man per binder in Canada and would have liked to ask why kerosene was 12 roubles per litre in the bazaar. The highest salary paid on the sovhoz was 300 roubles per month which was for the agronom; the tractorists received 200 and the workers down to 50 (a few got only 25).

After dinner we visited a very fine Czechoslovakian kolhoz. The farm had 165 households, 372 workers, 1,186 hectares of winter wheat, 28 spring wheat, 39 winter rye, 440 maize, 64 oats, 400 barley, 241 of grass and hay, 20 potatoes, 664 cattle (300 milking cows, producing 8 litres per day when we were there), 203 working horses, 27 young horses, and 216 pigs. The president of the farm told us he expected an average yield of 8 to 9 centners per hectare of wheat, 12 to 13 of barley and 20 of maize. I asked him what the very large field we saw them harvesting would yield and he said they had many fields much better – the field would not yield more than 3 or 4 centners. But all the fields I saw were

much poorer, full of weeds, extremely thin and short, and one of them had a very heavy infection of stem rust and was certainly not worth harvesting. The president told us 50% of their dairy products were delivered under contract to the Government and the remainder sold through a kolhoz store. We asked why they sold their butter for 12 to 13 roubles per kilo in the store when we had seen it being sold in the bazaar for 8 roubles per pound (20 roubles per kilo) and they said it was necessary to sell in small quantities in the bazaar and that the demand was irregular. After visiting the buildings of the kolhoz (including a very large and very expensive club house) we returned to Melitopol. The president of the rayon told us that there were 45,000 people in Melitopol and 48,000 in the rural sections of his rayon, that the rayon would yield 10 centners per hectare of grain this year as compared with 9½ last year, and that the bazaar trade was individualistic .... The previous night, when driving us from the train to our hotel, he had told us that his rayon was 100% collectivised.

Next day (July 13th) we asked if we could be taken to Molochenko, an adjoining rayon,[12] but, although the president had told us on the previous day that we would be taken there by motor, were told there was no car available. We then asked for tickets to go to Askananovo,[13] where we wanted to see the largest grain sovhoz in the Ukraine and also the famous animal breeding station, and were told they would get them with pleasure. An hour later, however, we were informed that they had 'phoned the grain sovhoz and had been informed that they could not meet us at the station because their three cars were all being remounted. The president, thinking we were staying only one day, had obviously shown us all there was to be shown in the rayon on the previous day so they were embarrassed when we stayed the second day. However, by noon they arranged a trip to a large fruit sovhoz. The farm had 22,500 hectares, 1,200 hectares of garden truck, 178 winter wheat, 132 barley, 76 oats, 160 of bearing fruit trees, 80 horses, 32 cows, 300 swine, 32 communists, 150 komsomols and 700 workers. They said this wheat was very poor as their land was sandy, but added that it would yield 10 to 11 centners per hectare and the barley 6. They had 400 permanent workers, all of which were members of the trade union. The president said they got their seasonal workers from the collective farms where, as on the sovhoz, there was much fluidity of labour. The workers were given 800 grammes of bread per day (and 400 for members of the family), but got very little meat as they killed only 10 to 20 cattle and 100 young pigs per year to feed the workers. As they had to deliver 100 pigs this autumn to the meat centre they would have only 100 left. They had co-operative stores, but nothing to sell to the workers and he (the president)

thought the Government was making a mistake in spending so little on the light industries. A few of the workers got 4 roubles per day, most of them got 2¼ to 3, but their food cost only 40 kopeks per day. On our way to visit the fields we had to turn back and take another road as we ran into a horse which had just died in its harness – the president said it belonged to an individual peasant. We saw a large area of young trees almost smothered in weeds, a few very poor grapes, but no other fruit of any kind. When we were leaving, the president told us that we had come at an awkward time as all we could see was their "immense prospectives," and that they needed tractors and many more workers but could not get them.

In the morning the G.P.U. 'phoned to say they had my bag (the night we arrived from the Crimea it was apparently left in our sleeper, although the conductor said he had taken all our baggage out to the car) so we called in the evening and got it – minus only camera and razor.

The G.P.U. officer volunteered the information that all the collective farms in the district were very bad and when Vyvyan told him we had seen a very good Czechoslovakian kolhoz he said yes, it was a good one and looked at us as much as to say but you should have seen the others!

We left Melitopol at 2 a.m. next day (July 14th) and arrived in Senelnekovo about 5 hours later. We hung around the station for about three hours to watch several hundred miserable citizens. One worker from the Central Black Earth district said the trains were full of peasants who had been arrested for not working and were being sent to other districts. He knew of a farm in a nearby rayon which now had only 10 cattle as compared with 200 some time ago, and of another farm which recently had 400 sheep, but now only 50. Many peasants were leaving the collective farms, he said, because they could not get anything to eat. A bright looking boy, about 17 years old, told us that conditions were very bad, there was very little bread, and no meat, and that butter was 6 to 8 roubles per pound, but that things were very much better where he worked, in Batum, as bread was plentiful and meat could be bought for 5 roubles per kilo. Vyvyan asked him if he was a communist and he spat vigorously and said, "No, I don't have anything to do with such filth." A comfortably dressed man came forward and said he was from the Don Basin; there was no crisis there and soon everything would be lovely. A large crowd gathered around to listen to him, but not one was convinced and several were openly contemptuous. Vyvyan asked him if he was a Party man and he said no, but he was a candidate. Another worker said he had been a prisoner of war in Germany and even at the end of the war there was far more to eat than to-day in Soviet Russia. Vyvyan was surprised at how freely the people talked and especially at their apparent

disregard for the G.P.U., who were usually close by and frequently listening. He (Vyvyan) told the crowd that the crops were good and there would soon be plenty to eat, but they all answered "Nie pravda" (it is not true). The crops we saw from the train window in the early morning were like those around Melitopol – odd good fields of winter wheat where the land was well cultivated, but mostly poor and the spring crops all very poor and choked with weeds.

We called upon Ispolkom and were told that all the cars were in the country, but if we would wait until 4 o'clock the next day they would take us out to see a commune. We told them we would do no such thing, so they adjourned and came back in half an hour to say they would take us out soon to see their Maize and Sorg[*h*]um Institute. Vyvyan thought the president "an unsavoury looking devil" and asked me if that was what I meant when I wrote "the usual type" in my note book. The vice-president told us that as a Party man he was bound to carry out the new decree about kolhoz trade, but he thought it was wrong, especially when the members decided what and how much should be sold in the bazaar.

The Institute had many fine expensive buildings, very fine cattle and swine, and an annual allowance of 600,000 to 1 million roubles. They expected 15 to 18 centners of winter wheat per hectare (it looked like 10 to 12 to me) and 12 to 15 of maize. The wheat was full of very large bugs (*Anisophia Austrica* or something like that) which were doing considerable damage by eating holes in the kernels. I saw the same bugs in the Crimea and other parts of the Ukraine. As far as I know, the bug is unknown in America. We had lunch at the Institute – soup, a pre-Revolution hen and bread that we simply could not eat, even to be polite.

On the following day (July 15th) we were taken to see the Commune "Lenin." The crops on the way out (also in the opposite direction on the way out to the Institute) were poor to very poor – short, thin and, as usual, full of weeds. The commune had 4,300 hectares of land, 3,566 cultivated, 572 winter wheat, 50 spring wheat, 378 rye, 890 barley, 350 maize for ensilage and 250 for grain, 952 cattle (average production of milk per cow 2,400 litres per year!), 480 milch cows, 130 working horses, 24 brood mares, 457 pigs, and ten M.T.S. tractors. They said they had an average yield of 15 centners of wheat per hectare during the past few years and expected more this year! They expected 12 centners of rye and 8 of barley per hectare. They advanced 1 to 2 roubles per day to each worker, depending on the season, and the 389 workers had an average income of 3 roubles per "worker day." The Commune had a big new brick technicum, a large brick club and office building and, of course, 50 communists, 170 komsomols, and all the children were pioneers. We visited the kindergarten and noticed that a considerable

number of the children had very big tummies, but they all had red pants. Last year they delivered 12,000 centners of wheat to the Government. During the first ten days of July they produced 28,526 litres of milk, 7,601 of which they delivered to the Government for 45 kopeks per litre, and sold 3,792 in the bazaar for one rouble per litre. During the same period they produced 13 kilos of butter (used 10 and sold 3 for 15 roubles per kilo in the bazaar) and 1,158 kilos of cheese (915 they delivered to the Government for 2.8 roubles per kilo and the rest they sold in the bazaar for 4.5 roubles). During the first quarter of the year they had delivered 50 centners of meat to the Government and sold 20 in the bazaar.

We left Senelnikovo about 3 p.m. and arrived in Rostov at 4 next morning – July 16th. From 3 p.m. until it got dark the crops got poorer and poorer. The winter wheat was extremely weedy and looked as though it was badly rusted (but, of course, I could not be sure from the train), and much of it was not worth harvesting. The spring sown crops were extremely poor and simply smothered by weeds. There was much uncultivated land, formerly in crops, practically no summer fallowing, practically no hay made, and practically no livestock to be seen. For the country I watched for 7 hours, I would say a liberal estimate of the wheat yield would be 3½ centners per hectare. oats 5, and barley only 2½.

After breakfast (omelette, tea, bread and butter, 8 roubles each) we wandered into several stores and saw a woman's rabbit-skin coat on sale at 989 roubles, a few mens' shirts of extremely poor quality 35, mens' overalls 47, dresses made of shoddy 95.91[*sic*], and paper hand bags and cases 14 to 50 roubles. Practically all we saw in several produce stores was rows and rows of empty shelves, a few candies, plenty of cosmetics, vodka and wine, and here and there the odd pile (one pile to each store) of cabbages, carrots, parsnips or cucumbers. Although we saw many very thin children on the main street and in the central park, we both got the impression that the people were better dressed and that general conditions were better than in any place we had visited. After lunch (35 roubles for the two of us for fish, tomatoes, bread and beer) I went to Narkomzem and got a letter of introduction from the vice-Chairman.

I forgot to mention that I left the Crimea with the firm impression that conditions were much better than in the Ukraine, partly because of the composition of the population – 38% Tatars, who have far more brains than the Russians.

Vyvyan left by aeroplane for Moscow on the 17th and I motored with a group (6 tourists, 3 guides and two chauffeurs) of American tourists to Verblud – the large experimental State grain farm about 70 kilometres

east of Rostov. All the way out the crops were extremely poor – short, very thin and very weedy and many fields were not worth the cost of harvesting. What little summer fallow there was had a magnificent crop of weeds going to seed. There was practically no hay made and no cattle in sight. A Jew from New York said he had been told that there were bumper crops all over the country. I asked him if the crops we had seen looked like it and one of the guides answered that they had just had 10 days of rain which had spoiled a large part of the crop. About half way out from Rostov two tyres lost their air through a leak in the valve stem. A Chicago Jew told one of the guides that the bus looked as though it had gone 150,000 kilometres yet it had gone only 15,000 and that the two chauffeurs had no business touching a car as they knew nothing about machinery. The guide said he had spoken to the drivers, but they just got mad; that they would have to be given notice three times and the labour union would have to investigate the matter before they could be fired.

While passing what looked like a small town of fine new buildings a guide pointed to it proudly and said it was a State dairy farm. While I was thinking about what an insane place it was to have a specialized dairy farm (on the bald, hot, windswept prairie, not even one bush for shelter, no free water, very little grass and not enough precipitation to ensure even a poor crop of succulent roughage), one of the tourists conceived the bright idea that he wanted a drink of milk. But the guides paid no attention to his remark. He insisted, and wanted to know if we were going to the farm or if we were not. The chauffeur said he did not know the road, but the American said the field was just as good a road as the one we were on so they finally agreed to go. While the tourists were looking for milk, I wandered through several of the barns (there were 22 big barns and a lot of other expensive buildings) and then joined a man watching 189 cows, all of which he said had tuberculosis. He told me they had 8,800 cattle on the farm. In about three quarters of an hour the tourists returned to say they had found the dairy, but were told they could not get a drink of milk because the director was away. Leaving the farm we motored past several large fields of very poor and very weedy maize and sunflowers – much of the maize was not worth cutting. When we arrived at Verblud we were taken to the hotel and given a first class lunch. Everything went well until we were each served a glass of good milk and then all the Americans asked for more and were told by the waiter that there was none left. After lunch they were asked what they wanted to see and just as I had concluded that they were a lot of gullible boobs (because they had said the food was wonderful for a farm, that they liked the atmosphere of the place and that the service was

marvellous – none of them seemed to be aware of the fact that the restaurant was operated by Intourist) a New York advertising agent spoke up and said he would like to see some people working, as he had been in the country three weeks and had not yet seen anybody get down to it. Later he told me that he had come "all sold" on the system, but as soon as he landed in Leningrad and saw the streets teeming with miserable looking people, he realised that all he had been "sold" was propaganda. In every factory he had visited, when he asked why the people were all loafing he was told it was lunch time or a holiday. In Stalingrad only about one out of every 10 press drills seemed to be in use. He had talked to American engineers at every large place they had visited. They all said that they could see what was wrong, but that the Russians would not take their advice; the communists wanted to do things on a bigger, better and grander scale than they were done in the U.S. At two places he and the professor of Slavonic languages at Columbia University had escaped from their guides, and the workers had told them that they and their children were hungry.

The tourists were shown through the library, laboratory, nursery, theatre, club, hospital, dispensary, kindergarten and school, and then driven back to Rostov. At lunch the chief guide told them that the plan for 1932 called for 15 centners of wheat per hectare. I knew from what I had seen of the fields on the way out from Rostov that they would not get one third of the figure he quoted, so I asked him what they got last year. He got out his book and answered 7.22 in 1931, 11.3 in 1930 and 7.7 in 1929. The tourists asked how much it cost to produce wheat. He said 6.5 roubles per centner in 1931, 4.33 in 1930 and 6.72 in 1929. (On the only efficiently operated farm I have visited in Russia, the German Agricultural Concession, the director told me that last year the cost of producing one centner of wheat was 28 roubles, or 6 times as much as the "cost" at Verblud, despite the fact that the Concession had a good deal more than double the yield.) The chief guide said they had 10,000 people on the farm at Verblud, of which 3,300 were permanent workers and 1,200 students. When told that they had 110,000 hectares in the farm, 69,000 of which were in crop and the rest in summer fallow, a theological student from Harvard, in all seriousness, expressed surprise that they could cultivate land with so few people! The guide said the farm had delivered 25,208 centners of grain to the Government in 1929, 182,672 in 1930 and 387,222 in 1931.

In the evening I called to see the director and found him at a conference pouring oil on the troubles of a delegation of 16 students. He said he would see me next morning, but when I turned up at the appointed hour he was not there. I was not sorry because he had all the earmarks of a

malignant fanatic and I knew I could get all the information I wanted elsewhere. I spent the evening with an American-Canadian of whom I had seen a good deal when I visited the farm two years ago. Last year (according to the Russian press) he asked that his contract he changed from a valuta to a rouble basis. His noble example brought him widespread publicity in many Russian papers and he was later granted the Order of Lenin and promoted from the rank of carpenter to a responsible position in the planning department. He is a good loyal communist, has a good deal of practical common sense, and is a very good worker. He told me that he saw so many things that needed to be drastically changed at Verblud that he became a Russian citizen, joined the Party, and became active in the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection Committee. He gave me the following information and then rounded off the evening with a long speech on communism, and what a pity it was that Western Canada did not adopt communistic principles and show these Russians, who used 4 or 5 men to do what one Canadian would do, how to farm. The director frequently gets very drunk on vodka and the students have lost their respect for discipline. They had a very hard frost last November, before the snow fell, which killed 35 to 40 per cent of the winter wheat. They had ploughed up 5,000 hectares in the spring, but should have ploughed up a lot more, but they had no seed. The spring seeding had taken 4 weeks instead of 2. The quality of the winter wheat was very poor but he did not know why, as although they had heavy rains recently, which had bleached the wheat and delayed the harvest, the spring and summer weather had been ideal – he did not know, what I had discovered next day, that it was very badly rusted. Last autumn 50% of the vegetables had been frozen in the cellars. The winter wheat was so full of weeds it should not be touched with a combine, but they were combining it all and losing a large part of it. He thought the spring wheat was good to fair because the weather had been favourable – upon examining the fields next day I discovered it was simply rotten with stem rust and much of it not worth cutting. The corn and sunflowers planted on the ploughed up winter wheat land were very good and had improved greatly by the recent heavy rains. They had had a great deal of trouble with their machinery as they simply could not get one single part and had to make all they needed. They had spent a lot of money and time last winter carrying out the Government's snow preserving campaign, but he thought it was a waste of money as he had seen winds cut enormous drifts of firmly caked snow to pieces so the small ridges made in the fields could not possibly withstand the winds. For a month before the harvest started they had a terrible time due to the shortage of food and although they

swept even the dust out of the granaries they were seriously short of bread.

The next forenoon (July 18th) I spent in the fields. I saw no combines working, but several with a large crowd of men around them trying to make them go. The winter wheat I examined was full of weeds and badly lodged. One or two fields on summer fallow land looked fair but upon rubbing out the heads I found the kernels were badly shrivelled with rust, bleached by the rain, and about two in each head eaten by bugs. I asked the man in charge of one of the combines what the field of winter wheat they were cutting (at least 20 per cent of the grain was not being picked up by the combine) would yield and he said 16 to 17 centners – he must have thought I was a tourist! As stated above, all the spring wheat I saw was simply rotten with rust.

At noon I was taken to the man in charge of the books and given the following information: 110,000 hectares of land under cultivation, ⅔ in crop and ⅓ summer fallow, 33,000 had been sown with winter wheat, (but 5,000 of it had been resown to other crops) 31,325 spring wheat, 2,432 maize, 4,108 sunflowers, 120 oats, 283 soya beans, 1,676 millet, 190 combines (70 American and rest Russian), 77 Caterpillar and 49 Stalingrad tractors, 3,088 permanent farm workers, also 400 preparatory students and 50 student engineers worked, and on the average 1,698 seasonal workers (employed for 3 months), and 1,179 students. He said they expected 8.5 centners of winter wheat, 9 of spring wheat and 14 of maize. I produced a sample of very badly rusted spring wheat which I had pulled at random in the field, and said it would not yield anything! I could not see how they could possibly get 9 centners of spring wheat. He first said he did not know their wheat was rusted, then that it must be only in the field I had seen, and then said he had meant that their spring wheat would yield from 3 to 12 centners per hectare. They worked their tractors 3,600 hours per year and expected them to last 4 years, but he admitted the Russian made tractors would not last so long.

In the afternoon McDowell, the American-Canadian, took me to the train and told me on the way that the Party had the ill-will of more than 50 percent of the people and that the peasants were against them, but that they must build factories to fight the war which was bound to come soon. He also said that the reason for the new decree was because the Party knew perfectly well that they had collected far too much grain last year; that there were a good few idealistic people in the country who worked very hard, but many able people were loafing because the difference in pay between good and poor workers was not nearly as great as it should be; and that he could not get the Russians to realise that

mechanization would not cure their troubles if they insisted on loafing while expensive machinery stood idle.

Between Verblud and the world-famous "Gigant" ("the greatest grain factory in the world") – a distance of about 100 kilometres – I saw a great deal of land lying idle, very thin winter wheat smothered in weeds, much of it not worth the cost of harvesting, extremely poor spring crops mainly weeds, the wheat apparently badly rusted, fine crops of weed seeds on what was meant to be summer fallow, a few fair fields of barley, several fields of uncultivated but good sunflowers, and a little very poor maize.

As I noticed at Verblud, there were a great many more new, large buildings on Gigant than in 1930. The director was out showing the director of Zernotrest (the State Grain Farm Trust) over the farm, so I got a Russian-American, in charge of the machine shop, to show me over the buildings. He said they had to make all their own spare parts and consequently a good deal of machinery had to lie idle waiting for repairs. I noticed, however, that the machine shop was very much better equipped and seemed to be operating more efficiently than when I was there two years ago. I spent the night in a room with two men from Moscow – the chairman and vice-chairman of a Commission sent by the Central Executive Control Commission to make an investigation in the North Caucasus. I gave them plenty of "flit" to kill the bed bugs in their beds, then provided tea, sugar (it was quite impossible to get either on the farm or any other place I visited in the Caucasus; even Torgsin in Rostov had no sugar) and cigarettes, so we soon became friendly and later I had several long and interesting conversations with the chairman – a young Jew who spoke English rather well.

The next morning (July 19) I got the following information from the man in charge of the books. The farm contained 155,000 hectares (it contained 255,000 until last winter when two other farms of 50,000 each were made out of it), 36,900 in winter wheat (sown area) and winter rye, 62,000 spring wheat, 1,435 barley, 5,725 rye, 25,600 summer fallow, over 4,000 permanent workers and 2,200 extra summer workers and 7,000 people – later I was told by the Russian-American who showed me over the farm two years ago that there were between 15 and 16,000 people on all sections of the farm and that this year and last they needed from 60 to 70 per cent as many extra workers during harvest as they had permanent workers. The bookkeeper said they expected only 4 to 5 centners of winter wheat this year (20% had been completely, and the remainder 80% winter killed), 7.9 of spring wheat, 6 of rye, 6 of millet, 12 of maize and 8 of sunflowers. They had 140 Caterpillar, 80 Stalingrad, and a few Fordson and Case tractors, 154 reapers, 194 Combines (160 Oliver,

10 Caterpillar and 20 Russian ones) and 96 trucks, 45 of which belonged to the Transport Union. He said that only about 2,000 hectares of their spring wheat was very badly rusted and that the winter wheat was not rusted! Later I looked up my Russian-American friend who drove me all over the farm two years ago, and got the following information: It was their own fault that they lost so much from winter killing as they summer-fallowed only 4,000 hectares last year. The harvest was delayed last autumn and the winter wheat was not sown until late, some very late, and most of it being put on land which was very poorly or not at all prepared. The winter wheat was so full of weeds that the combines would not handle it, and they were using 300 old fashioned Russian reapers (one man drives the horses or tractor and another pushes the grain off the board with a fork), but needed twice as many more. He knew of a field of 4,000 hectares of spring wheat which was very badly rusted, a large part not being worth cutting. Much of the spring crop was poor and very weedy because it was sown too late. Up until recently he had thought the farm was going back all the time, but considered that as a result of the new decrees, conditions would improve, since the workers could now own a few chickens, a small garden and – if they could afford it – a cow. Moreover, the law preventing the killing of livestock having been abolished, they could now buy meat from the peasants. The average basic wage on the farm was 2 roubles per day plus piece rates, but during the harvest the workers were making 3 to 4 and a few even 5 roubles per day. There was much discontent among the workers. The good ones were dissatisfied because they were not getting nearly as much as they should relative to the poor workers, and the poor ones were grumbling because they were getting less than others, while many departments, despite the decrees to the contrary, were trying to make the wages as uniform as possible regardless of the quantity and quality of work done. The food was so bad in the workers' co-operative restaurant (which by law must not cost more than 1 rouble per day on the central farm and not more than 80 kopeks in the fields) that those who could afford it went to the "co-operative commercial" restaurant (which bought its supplies in the bazaar and could charge what it liked) and those who could not afford it were very unhappy. They had much more summer fallow this year than last because they were beginning to realize that if they wanted a crop they had to cultivate the land. They had no real specialists on the farm, but a lot of youths with a smattering of book knowledge who called themselves specialists and got from 200 to 500 roubles per month (which was far more than they were worth) and had a special store where they could buy goods at reasonable prices. They delivered so much grain to the Government last autumn and winter that they had

to import seed in the spring and could not get enough of it. They had only 80 cows and 125 swine on the farm. The sovhoz was buying food all around from the peasants; when they paid in money the prices were fantastic, but reasonable when they traded other goods. Before the harvest the workers were getting 800 grammes of bread per day (and 400 for members), but after the harvest started they were given all the bread they wanted. The tractors they got from Stalingrad last year were extremely poor, but the ones they got this year were better. Big meetings were held nearly every night and as a Party man he was supposed to go to them all or be considered anti-social, but he was "fair sick of them." Until March the Government supplied all the food for the farm, but then, without warning, they stopped supplying everything but bread. The change caused much suffering at first, but it was a good thing as hitherto people waited for the train to come in with their food, whereas now they were growing or hunting for it themselves. In 1928 he was working in Rostov for 180 roubles per month and could buy everything which he used to get in the States (except bananas) and as prices were very cheap (pork chops 20 kopeks per pound, gallon of milk 20 kopeks, 10 eggs 15 to 20 kopeks) he saved a good deal of money. But conditions started to tighten in 1929, were hard in 1930, very bad in 1931, and terrible in the winter and spring of 1932. However, he was not complaining as he was getting 200 roubles a month, had earned a lot of roubles in premiums and for his invention of a new elevator, and had many privileges as a specialist. The Party would never again make the people suffer as they had done, as they (the Party) had learned a bitter lesson. Before the new decree the peasants could not sell or trade, so they did not work, but now they had an incentive to work and even the individual peasants would do more because they were not to be taxed so heavily. Two months ago butter cost him 7 roubles per pound and now he could get it for 5 – therefore the new decree was a good thing. During the winter and spring many peasants left the collective farms. Last spring he was in Moscow and could hardly believe his eyes when he saw how much better conditions were there than in the country. The Government had sold far too much grain last autumn and their policy was to fulfill their contracts even at the expense of starving the people – which they did. But they would not do it again as the people would not stand for it. He did not save any money because there was no incentive to save, as if he or his wife got sick the Government would pay his hospital and doctor's bill. He did not know what the workers on the farm were going to do for potatoes next winter.

In the afternoon I had a look at the nearby fields and saw what I expected – even much poorer crops than at Verblud. In the evening, I

was taken by my friend, the chairman of the Commission, to a meeting of workers and heard a labour union man from Moscow make a fine oration. When he sat down there was a little spasmodic clapping and then a shower of questions as to why they should have to pay 30 kopeks for a small glass of milk, etc., etc. I was interested to notice that both evenings I spent on the farm the large club house and culture rooms were vacant and that the loud speakers roared forth in the park and yard, but nobody seemed to be listening. Several G.P.U. officials were on the farm and offered me a ride back to Rostov in their big Cadillac car. I stayed up very late with the chairman of the Commission. He said his position corresponded to that of vice-chairman of highway transport, but being a member of the Central Executive Control Commission he often had to make inspection trips such as the one he was on. The day before he had motored all over Gigant and found that practically all the combines were standing still, choked full of green weeds. The transport system all over the Union was in a very critical condition and if they could not greatly improve it soon their industrial undertakings would suffer severely. The A.M.O. truck plant in Moscow was not producing nearly as many trucks as it should. The efficiency of the workers in the Union was greatly impaired by the very bad living conditions, which the Party realised had to be greatly improved in the near future: and they would not, therefore, export so much and might even go so far as to import some consumption goods. The reason for the new decrees was to bring the workers and peasants together, but he would not promise me that freedom to sell would last more than 2 or 3 years as he thought it was only a temporary measure to increase food supplies. It was true that goods were much more plentiful and very much cheaper in 1928, but they had no unemployment now – later he agreed that many of the employed were just loafing and said he could hardly believe his eyes when he saw how efficiently the people in U.S. factories worked. The worst of the pressure to export was over as they would not import much more machinery and if necessary they could pay a part of their bills in gold. The Party fully realised that the local people had been too enthusiastic and had collected too much grain, especially in the Ukraine, but if I would return to Russia in 3 years I would not be able to recognize the country. He talked on in a similar vein for an hour and then became confidential and told me he had been in the U.S. last year on Government business for 7 months and that when he returned he had no idea living conditions would be so extremely bad; he had given up all his dollars at the border, but now he wished he had kept them as his wife was sick and he could not get any proper food for her and would like to buy things at Torgsin and perhaps I might be able to help him. He said he could not live properly in Moscow

on his salary and wished he could get back to his own job as construction engineer.

I left Gigant very early on the morning of July 20th and took the train east to Salsk. I had breakfast in the depot at Salsk, but had to give the brown roll I bought for a rouble (and also 2 very ancient boiled eggs for which I paid a rouble) to several children who were begging for bread, as it had apparently been made out of wheat containing a high percentage of weed seeds. I was anxious to see the industrial goods which, according to the press, have been rushed to the villages to enable the peasants to spend the money they are getting for their harvest, and as Salsk is a typical large village I carefully inspected 5 shops. The first shop contained many empty shelves, many bottles of vodka, and several very poor coats at 50 to 65 roubles – from the low prices I assumed it was a closed shop. The next shop had nothing whatever on the shelves, but had a pile of cucumbers on the floor. The third shop had a very liberal supply of cosmetics of various kinds, and some bread which was being exchanged for tickets. The fourth shop had also a large supply of cosmetics, beads and other very poor jewelry, and 6 coats at 390 roubles each. Finally, the fifth shop had a very large supply of vodka and white wine and a few vegetables. I spent all night waiting for a train in the Salsk depot two years ago, so I remembered it very well. The sights around the depot were bad enough then, but they are much worse now – many men and children begging for bread, a few women sitting in the filth looking at their starving children, and a very large crowd (at least 200) waiting in line to be told there were no tickets left.

I had a very good letter of introduction to the president of the rayon from the vice-chairman of Narkomzem in Rostov, but he was not at home. However, his assistants were very much impressed by my letter, and simply delighted with my cigarettes, so I got a good deal more information from them than I expected. They told me they had 107 artels, 12 communes (65% collectivised) and 5 sovhozes (1 grain, 2 horse, 1 cattle and 1 chicken) in the rayon; 140,000 people, 2 machine tractor stations, 83,000 hectares of winter and 41,000 of spring wheat on the collective and individual farms (and 43,500 spring and 41,000 winter wheat on the State grain farm), 46,839 cattle, 21,590 horses (later they told me they had 54,900 cattle and 35,900 horses last year – a loss of exactly 40% in one year – and a very much larger number before collectivisation started), 6,852 swine, 26,645 sheep, and 40,000 hens. They also had 12,500 hectares of barley, 14,000 maize and 15,000 of rye in the artels and communes. They said all the winter wheat was extremely poor, full of weeds, 30% of it winter killed, 60% of it rusted, and that the very most they could expect was 4 to 5 centners per hectare. They

said the spring wheat was not so badly rusted so they expected 5 to 7 centners per hectare. They hoped to get 10 centners of barley, 9 of oats and 8 to 9 of maize. They could not use combines in the winter wheat because it was too weedy, but they hoped to use them in the spring wheat. They had lost a much higher proportion of their swine and sheep than of their cattle and horses.

I had planned to take a trip out to see the country around Salsk, but as it rained very heavily when I was there I took a train back to Rostov. Three French tourists got on the train at Verblud. One of them, who spoke English very well, had been royally entertained, as the youngest mayor in France, by the Quebec Government during a recent visit to Canada. I asked him what he thought of Russia and he replied, "My answer is that I am a Frenchman." They were thoroughly fed up with being guided about every minute; had been very shocked by the filth, poverty and begging along the Volga; they had been told by an American and also an Austrian engineer in Stalingrad that the tractor factory was in a terrible mess; an Italian had told them that if a man could put in one screw nail he was a skilled worker in Russia and if he could put in three he was an engineer. They had made Intourist very unhappy by speaking Spanish to a Brazilian they met and also by asking them many times why they were obliged to turn their films over to Intourist for development and inspection if this was such a wonderful country.

The conductor on the train told me he got only 80 roubles per month and could not keep his wife and 5 children, as he got only 600 grammes of bread a day (also 300 for each of his children) and only ½ litre of milk every second day for each of the smallest children. He could not buy butter because it cost 7 roubles per pound and meat was simply unobtainable.

I spent the forenoon, July 21st, visiting Selmashstroy, the large agricultural machinery plant at Rostov. My guide told me that the average wage earned by the 17,000 workers was 180 roubles per month (the monthly wage ranged from 77 roubles for sweepers to 800 for engineers) and also 800 grammes of bread per day (600 for wife and 700 for each child), 1½ kilos of sugar per month (and 500 grammes for wife and 500 for each child), meat four times a month, butter once a month, ¼ litre of milk per day for each child under 15, 1½ kilos per month of meal, 1½ litres of sunflower oil per month, 2 to 2½ litres of kerosene per month and sometimes cards to get dry goods. I told her I was very surprised to hear the workers got such a variety of products from the Government at nominal prices as I had been told by workers in many places that they got only bread. She said conditions in the factory were much better than in others, and that the variety and quantity of food

supplied by the Government varied tremendously even within a few miles, depending upon food supplies and the policy of the Party and local management. The workers' bread ration had been reduced in April from 1,000 to 800 grammes, but they were hoping it would soon be increased. When I asked why so few people were working in the combine plant, I was told that they had just finished their plan to produce 1700 combines and that everyone was celebrating the victory and the director was going to give them all a bonus and 5 free days in succession. I asked about the 60 unfinished combines I had counted and was told they belonged to a counter plan. On our way to the cast iron foundry (we could not visit the two steel foundries because all the workers were at lunch at 11 a.m.) I saw literally scores of thousands of moving machine wheels and the lower part of the casting for the frame but (and I looked about carefully later) no other parts. Two of the four furnaces and two of the four conveyor belts in the foundry were idle and obviously had not been used for some considerable time.

When I asked why at least 75% of the press drills, automatic lathes and other expensive American and German machinery in the machine shop were idle, they said a big brigade had been recruited in the shop to work on the combines. The woodwork shop was the only place we visited which seemed to be operating moderately efficiently (75% of the equipment was in use) and it was certainly the only place where there was not an enormous amount of waste.

I tried to see someone in Narkomzem in the afternoon and also several times next day (July 22nd) but was told that the vice-chairman (who was at a Party meeting) had left word that he was anxious to see me. I explained that the agronom, or anyone of a half-dozen other officials, would do as I did not want to take up the vice-chairman's valuable time, but the secretary would not bite and said the vice-chairman would be delighted to give me as much time as I wished as soon as he was finished with the Party meeting.

In the evening my friends (the Commission which had returned from Gigant) took me to see what they said was a famous film – the story was about the complete liquidation of the homeless children in Russia.[14] I thought it was very poorly shown and a crude piece of propaganda from beginning to end. However, I learned that members of commune farms ate fine meals off white linen. When we came out of the theatre three children came up and asked us for money to buy bread. On the way home we were all arrested for crossing the street in the wrong place. The chairman was furious and insisted that he was a big man from Moscow, but the policeman took him off to the G.P.U. I wanted to go too, but they told me not to as the policeman would get into serious trouble

for making such a mistake. In half an hour my friend returned white with rage at the insult – the poor policeman remained at the G.P.U. and was told he must appear before a commission next day and formally apologize.

Next day (July 22) I had nothing to do so I looked up the central bazaar. There must have been at least 20,000 people in the bazaar. There was an abundance of fresh vegetables for sale but all other goods were very scarce. Tomatoes 4½ roubles per kilo, potatoes 2 roubles per kilo, eggs 10 for 5½ roubles, rice 2, millet 1, barley 7/10, sugar 3, all roubles per small glassful, butter 9 roubles per pound, pork fat 14 roubles per pound, coarse sausages 10 roubles per pound, milk 1 6/10 roubles per litre. Near the bazaar I gave an old priest 3 roubles for taking me through a large church and showing me the large group of down-and-outers (half of them under 17 years of age) begging on the steps. Later I saw mens' top boots on sale for 220 roubles and slippers 35 roubles, skirts 35 roubles and 4 live pigs, one month old, 165 roubles each.

At the Intourist hotel I purposely ordered the dishes I saw being served to the American social science delegation (each member is going to contribute a chapter for a book to be published upon their return to the U.S.),[15] but, of course, I could not get them and had to be satisfied with a 20 rouble lunch – salad, tough hen, beer and stewed cherries.

My Jewish friend (the chairman of the Commission) came to me in the morning and asked if I would tell him frankly what I thought of Gigant as he did not know anything about agriculture. I told him my visit had completely confirmed the opinions I had formed when I visited the farm in 1930; that it was an enormous white elephant; that it was the height of stupidity to rely exclusively upon tractors and only heavy machinery on any farm, let alone under conditions such as existed in the North Caucasus; and that the farm would never pay for the capital invested in it even with good management and efficient workers, let alone with the type of management in charge at present. In the evening he told me he had called a meeting and that the president of Zernotrest for the North Caucasus had told him a lot of lies, but he let him talk himself out and then told him what a mess Gigant was in. I am quite sure from what he told me about the recommendations he was going to make to Moscow, that many high officials in the North Caucasus will soon be sacked. He agreed with me that the Party would experience unprecedented difficulties in collecting grain this year, but added that he thought the Government intended to augment the grain collections by exchanging goods for grain, at commercial prices, after December 15th, at which time the peasants were allowed to sell their surplus grain in the bazaar. I asked him why the Government had definitely fixed the amount

of grain to be collected in their decree of May 6th when they could not possibly know then how much grain would be produced. He replied that the final plan for grain collections would not be set until August 1st, but that for the Union as a whole it would not vary much from the provisional plan published on May 6th. He pressed me very hard to come in their car to make an inspection of farms, but I could not go as I had arranged to meet Schiller the following day. When we were saying good-bye I asked him to explain to me how the Party was going to meet the food crisis (which I thought had not yet reached its critical stage) caused by the sharp decline of agricultural producers, and the apathy of those still producing, and the very rapid increase of urban consumers. At first he said it was only a temporary phenomenon and then said the only solution was to try and make their sovhozes a success.

On June [*July*] 23rd I went with a representative of Voks to Narkomzem and had a very long interview with the vice-chairman. He said they had collectivised 80% of their agriculture in the N. Caucasus; they had 343 sovhozes (including 35 grain and 7 combination farms); winter wheat and rye 3,900,000 hectares, spring wheat 2,200,00, barley 800,000, oats 320,000, summer fallow 1,500,000, and all spring grains 3,700,000. They expected 7 centners per hectare of winter wheat this year (I think they will get not more than 3 or 3½ at the very most) as compared with 7½ last year; 6 to 6½ of spring wheat as compared with 3½ to 4 last year when they had a drought and very hot winds in the eastern half of the region; 7½ to 8 centners per hectare of rye on 800,000 hectares whereas last year they did not sow any rye. When I came to the livestock industry he was obviously ill at ease, and although he had all the tables before him he would only give me round numbers (a most unusual practice in Russia) and insisted that they were very rough and approximate. They had from 7½ to 8 million head of all livestock, from 1,100,000 to 1,200,000 cows, and 400,000 pigs. They had been forced to kill a great many sheep to save the cattle, but there would soon be a very rapid increase in sheep as they had 730,000 on the State sheep farms and about 2 million in the kolhozes. He did not think there had been much of a change in the number of all classes of livestock since last year! Later when he was telling me how they were combating Siberian plague, meningitis and distemper, all of which had been prevalent, I asked him how many working horses they had and he said about 800,000 as compared with 1,000,000 last year – I am certain they lost a good deal more than 20% as I was told in Salsk that they had lost 40%, and the veterinary surgeon on the German Agricultural Concession, where the horses were very well fed and properly cared for, told me that they had lost a horse a day on the average during April, May and June. I tried

several times to get the livestock figures for previous years, but was told he did not have them! He said they had lost only 6 to 7% of the winter grains due to winter killing – at Verblud I was told they had lost from 35 to 40%, at Gigant 20% completely, and the remainder 50%, winter killed, and at Salsk 30%. I told him I could not see how they could get from 6 to 6½ centners of spring wheat and 7 of winter wheat in view of the large amount of rust and weeds I had seen. He admitted that they had a great deal of rust and that they could not understand why the winter wheat was so weedy, but he would not lower his estimates. He said they were not going to lose any grain in harvesting this year whereas last year they had a record crop of winter wheat, but lost a great deal of it due to rain and bad harvesting. On the way home my interpreter told me it was terrible the crimes local party people had committed last winter, by taking the cattle away from the peasants and collecting far too much grain, but now that the Central authorities had found them out, things would soon get better. She said prices had come down since the new decree, so I asked her why butter was 9 roubles per pound in the bazaar. She was very surprised that I had been at a bazaar (tourists are not supposed to visit such places, although the Russian people must buy practically all their food there) and said she thought I was mistaken as butter was only 6 roubles per pound last May when she bought some. I told her I had priced 8 lots of it and 7 of them were 9 roubles and one, which was rancid, was 8 roubles per pound. It was true that the peasants had killed and burned many cattle when local Party people were forcing them into the collective farms, but surely 9 roubles for a pound of butter could only be explained by the fact that the peasants were so busy with the harvest they had no time to bring their butter into the market.

In the evening I had supper with a chemical engineer from Montreal who was paying Intourist 20 U.S. dollars per day for his first category trip. He said he had been talking to some of the members of the American social science commission and they said they were fed up being led around by the nose by Voks and Intourist.

I left Rostov on the night of July 23rd and arrived at Kavkazkaya at 3 o'clock next morning. Schiller was supposed to be on the same train, but he did not arrive until the evening. I was met at the train and driven about 50 kilometres to the German Agricultural Concession called "Drusag." Dr. Dittloff (the director) and his wife were up waiting for us. After a fine breakfast of partridge and champagne I was taken to a fine big room with a large balcony facing a beautiful garden. To my surprise Dr. Dittloff and his wife went straight to work at 4.30 a.m. – later I discovered that even the scientific workers on the farm had to be up at 5.15 and at work from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. I shall always remember the

four days I spent on the Concession and the days I spent at the Embassy as the only true treats I had during 4½ months in Russia. The first half-day I spent with Drs. Smitz and Muller visiting the 200 hectares of experimental, selection and seed-raising plots and fields. Their work was very interesting, but, as this letter is already very long, I'll not attempt to describe it except to say that from what I learned from Dr. Muller about soya beans (Schiller tells me that in his opinion she is the leading authority on soya bean breeding, selection and production in the world and judging from the magnificent strains she has bred and gathered on the mountains of Korea, in Manchuria and elsewhere, he is possibly correct) I see no reason why we could not grow them successfully in Western Canada. In the afternoon Dr. Dittloff took me for a drive around the farm. On one side of the first road was an enormous field of very fine soya beans all in perfectly straight rows and not a weed to be seen any place, and on the other side (a State farm) was a field of soya beans in crooked rows and almost invisible due to weeds. On the next road on one side was a magnificent field of wheat (it looked from a distance as if it would yield 20 centners per hectare, but Dr. Dittloff told me he expected only 7 centners per hectare on the whole farm as all the wheat was badly rusted) and on the other (also part of the same State farm) was a very fine field of thistles with about enough wheat to yield 1 to 2 centners. On the third road we saw a similar sight; the field of weeds (with a little wheat underneath) belonged to a kolhoz. I got very good photographs of the contrasts. On the way home Dr. Dittloff told me they had purchased this year 10 Russian combines, but upon trying them out they found they lost 40% of the wheat so they had scrapped the lot. As the wheat on the concession was entirely free from weeds and as nearly all the wheat I saw in the Ukraine and Caucasus contained far more weeds than wheat, you can imagine what the Russians must lose in harvesting with combines. Perhaps their failure to fulfil their combine manufacturing plan is a blessing in disguise! I forgot to mention that on one section of the road on one side I saw a fine field of coal-black fallow and on the other a field of kolhoz "summer fallow" neck-high in weeds. Dr. Smitz told me that as they had sown their wheat early (wheat sown from the 15th to 30th of September gave from 20 to 30% higher yield than wheat sown from 1st to 15th October) they had no winter killing. He said they grew winter wheat exclusively because the spring seeding period lasted only 8 days and they needed every minute of the time for other crops.

On July 25th Schiller and I rode over the farm with Dr. Weimar, the chairman of the fields. Most of the grain was being stacked, partly by the use of tractors and partly by the [*use*] of horses. Dr. Weimar said

the latter method cost just one half as much as the former. During our ride we visited many workers' field houses and tents (mostly made of cane grass) and watched the workers eating the best bread and soup, excepting that in special restaurants, that I have seen in Russia. Schiller said the concession paid the same wages as Russian farms, but it could employ only a small fraction of the people who applied for work – one glance at the food told why. In one hour I went to examine one of the usual type of posters (big Russian guns blowing a skyful of foreign Zeppelins and aeroplanes to bits) that one sees by the million all over Russia, and the workers (mostly Russians) burst out laughing.

In the afternoon we visited the machine shop and yard. The man in charge (since the concession started eight years ago) told us that the Russian-made tractors were not too bad, and were much better than he expected they would be. He said the chief difficulty with Russian-made binders was that they would not bind; they had so much trouble with them that they had had to use 20 binders during the full season to cut only 260 hectares of grain. He fully confirmed what Dr. Dittloff had said about Russian-made combines. We were shown some waggons made in Kharkov. The steel supports had fallen off the hubs, the wheel rims could be pulled off by hand, and all the woodwork was full of enormous cracks – the waggons had been made entirely out of green wood. To our astonishment we were told that they had never been used; a few had merely been ordered to see what they were like. We next examined a Russian-made mowing machine, only one year old, and observed that the principal gears were more than half worn away. They could not use the Russian ploughs as they were not properly built, but they bought some to get spare parts to mend their old ones.

In the late afternoon we passed a sovhoz field and, noticing two old-fashioned Russian reapers in the field, we went over to them. We found them both plugged with heavy green weeds, and one all tied up with ropes. We asked the brigadier how much the wheat on the farm was yielding and he said 12 to 15 centners; we asked how much the field they were cutting would yield and he replied 10 centners. Dr. Dittloff said, surely you mean poods, but he replied in the negative. On our way to the Concession farms Nos. 5 and 6 we passed two kolhozes and noticed that their wheat would not yield more than 1 to 2 centners. Of the many interesting things we saw on the livestock sections of the concession, what interested me most was the crossing of German and Russian merino sheep which in the second generation produced sheep as good as the German merinos – an improvement on the Russian type of at least 200% of both wool and mutton. The farm has 14,000 sheep and makes a great deal of money providing wool to make G.P.U. and Red Army officers'

uniforms. Last year they made sausages with 5,000 sheep. We were taken to three small buildings on the banks of the Kuban river and to my surprise I was told that it was the Concession's leather factory which had tanned 8,000 skins last year and sold (for G.P.U. boots) the leather for 750,000 roubles. Another interesting sight was an apparently successful experimental commune – 7 sows nursing their young in common, each sow giving milk according to her ability, and each young pig receiving according to its needs! When I was in Russia two years ago the members of many collective farms were paid according to the size of their family, but now it is a criminal offence for officials not to pay according to production and by piece-work and the slogan is "the food to those who work and hunger to those who don't." As we passed each group in the fields the foreman would come forward, lift his hat to "Herr Direktor" and receive his instructions. Dr. Dittloff told me that most of his foremen and many of his workers were kulaks (the good farmers in Russia who had all their property taken from them by the Government – not to mention the hundreds of thousands who were sent to the cold wilds of Northern Russia and Siberia, 50% of whom, according to Schiller, have since died, or the very large number who were shot – when the "class warfare" was making progress in the villages) and that they were all splendid people.

On July 26th Schiller and I spent the day riding along the Kuban River and over the farm. We stopped and talked to many of the peasants working on the Concession. They were all working very hard, but I am not exaggerating when I say they are practically the only obviously happy peasants I have seen during my travels in Russia. I could not keep from recalling to mind the expressions of utter misery on the faces of the inhabitants we had seen on the artels and communes of the German colony we visited in Western Siberia. The first man we spoke to was up to his knees in water, mud and straw (a brick pit) driving three horses around in a circle. He said he was an individual peasant and had taken a temporary job on the Concession. Schiller asked him why he had not joined a collective farm and got his reply that it was easier to be hungry individually than collectively. While riding through a big settlement of straw shacks on the outskirts of the Concession (where all the newcomers were tried out before being given regular work on the Concession) we came across a woman who had been in the U.S. twice. She had recently arrived from the Volga where she said she and her husband could not get food for their ten children. She showed me a long affidavit, sworn out by her brother in South Dakota, which she had used without success to try and get out of Russia. She said they would like very much to get away to the States, but they would be happy if they were given regular

work on the Concession because the children got plenty to eat. Another German from the Volga district said he had just come from a grain sovhoz, 60 kilometres away, which according to the papers was supposed to be the best in the N. Caucasus, but its contract with the Government called for the delivery of 2 million centners of grain and its total harvest would not be more than 600,000, so all the workers were leaving. Another man, from the same sovhoz, said he could not see any grain for weeds all the way to the Concession. Another said the kolhozes around the Concession were supposed to deliver from 5 to 7 centners per hectare of grain to the Government and their crops would yield only 2 to 5, and still another said many people were dying of hunger and that a woman had drowned three children in the Kuban because they were starving. Finally, several peasants told us that they had letters from their friends on the right side of the Volga and they said the rye was yielding only 22 poods and the wheat only 6 poods per hectare.

We spent the evening in the home of the chairman of the livestock department. His fine house and farm No. 6 formerly belonged to a landlord who until recently had been a worker on the Concession. He told us that in 1926 the Concession had only 46 animals and now they had 17,000. A few miles from farm No. 6 was a kolhoz with 70 pigs, but a week ago peasants had come in the night and driven them to the Kuban, cut their throats, thrown them in the river, and fished them out further down.

We visited the nearby sovhoz on July 27th. Schiller had met the vice-director on the train a few days before and he had invited us to come and see him, but when we got there Mr. Vice-chairman had been liquidated. Such is the tempo of the Russian managerial turnover! The technical director showed us over the farm. He said the farm had 5,300 hectares, 4,800 cultivated, 600 summer fallow, 300 soya beans, 25 tractors, 130 horses, 58 oxen, 52 cows, 400 pigs. We asked what the average yield of wheat was on the farm and were told 6.72 centners per hectare. No doubt the yield was only taken to the second decimal place because much of it was still unthreshed and a good deal of it still uncut. But I must do the technical director justice, because everything else he told us was very sensible. He said they had only 3 combines, and would not order any more because there was no use trying to use combines until they got rid of the weeds. They had 280 permanent workers and only 250 temporary ones, which was only 35% of what the plan called for. The food and living conditions on the farm, he said, were so bad that the workers would not stay and all the workers did not like the piece-work payments – no wonder in view of the frequent rains and the small percentage of crop to weeds. He said in two years they would be making

as much noise about combination farms as they were now making about specialization. They made a most fortunate mistake in the spring by sowing on one field 40 kilos of sorgum seed instead of only 12; the seed turned out to be very bad so they got a crop where they sowed 40 and nothing where they sowed only 12. The soya beans were to be harvested at the end of August, but Dr. Smitz said they would not be ready until the end of September, when it would be too late to sow winter wheat, the normal crop in the rotation.

The following data about the Concession is very interesting for the purpose of making comparisons with similar data gathered on Russian farms. 11,000 hectares, 8,000 cultivated, 3,200 winter wheat, rye 200, barley 300, oats 150, mohair 820, millet 200, sorgums 500, sunflowers 456, maize 830, potatoes 50, mangolds 14, alfalfa 100 and remainder summer fallow. On July 15th they had 847 horses (334 of which brood mares), 1,028 cattle (760 of which work-oxen – by far the cheapest draught power on the farm), 13,616 sheep (5,200 of which ewes), 1,441 pigs (178 brood sows), 40 goats and 56 hounds. Last year the wheat averaged 17 centners per hectare, rye 13.3, oats 3.5, barley 10.5, millet 16, sunflowers 9.3, soya beans 20, table beans 8.6, maize 26.3, potatoes 81.9. The principal rotation on the farm is winter wheat, millet, winter wheat, soya beans or maize or sunflowers, all with dung, winter wheat, spring grains, and, in the 7th year, summer fallow. In 1927 (their first crop) the land was full of weeds so they got only 5½ centners of winter wheat, in 1928 it was too dry and they got only 10½, in 1929 they got 17, in 1930 15½, 1931 17 (it would have been very much higher but for the very bad harvesting weather and the loss caused by turning the grain 12 times) and this year only 7 centners per hectare, due to rust. On May 1st they had 1,787 seasonal and 1,040 permanent workers – under ordinary conditions they could never afford to keep so many workers, but they were taking advantage of the inflation of the rouble and dirt cheap labour to thoroughly clear the farm of weeds. They had dairy, oil crushing, leather, brick, and potato starch factories, 58 tractors, 12 threshing machines and 10 useless combines. Last year the cost of growing one hectare of winter wheat was 716 paper roubles, rye 404, oats 230, barley 308, sunflowers 380, millet 397, mohair 348, maize 315, table beans 403, potatoes 1,206, and alfalfa 419. The cost per centner of the principal crops: wheat 38, rye 33, oats 30, barley 24, sunflowers 40, millet 23, maize 10, table beans 20, potatoes 14, and mohair 15 roubles. These figures are very enlightening in view of the cost data published by the Russian Government. A large part of the 850,000 Marks invested in the concession had already been transferred to Germany, and their new contract called for the transfer by the Russian Government of

15% of the remainder each year (at 2 Marks to the rouble), and also of 100,000 roubles (200,000 Marks) for salaries, and 40,000 roubles (80,000 Marks) to pay for imported equipment. The present capital investment in the farm was 5,600,000 roubles, the working capital 2,400,000 roubles. Last year the concession made a net profit of over 2 million roubles. I asked Dr. Dittloff when we were leaving what he thought of the outlook for Russian agriculture. He laughed, and said "I'll tell you, if you will tell me when the country will be free of communists and their five year plans!"

We left the Concession at 1 a.m. on July 28th. As soon as we left the farm one of the men in the front seat fired several shots from a big shotgun and I asked Schiller if it was a sort of farewell salute. He said, "No! It is to scare away the people prowling along the road to see whom they can rob," and he handed me a loaded revolver which Dr. Weimar had given him for the trip. I though he was joking until we got close to town when I saw several people running into the corn and sunflowers at the sight of the long barrel of our gun shining in the moonlight. We had to wait three hours for our train, so we had a good look at the 1,500 (approximately) people asleep on the ground in and around the depot. On the train Schiller told me about his visit to the Odessa area. He had visited the German colony out from Odessa and had seen wheat which would yield 15 centners per hectare. Elsewhere where the land had been properly cultivated the crops were also good, but most of the cultivation was very poor and most of the fields were full of weeds. He visited a kolhoz which had 14 centners of cotton per hectare last year and expected 10 this year, and from the appearance of the cotton he would not be surprised if they realised their expectations. I think he must have made a mistake about the figures, because I believe 7 centners is considered a good crop in the States, and we were told by Narkomzem in Kharkov that the average yield of cotton in the Ukraine last year was 2.5 centners per hectare. All the way (north-east) from Odessa to Dniepropetrovsk the crops were extremely poor, full of weeds, and the area of land formerly in crops but now idle was simply astonishing. We slept from Kavkazkaya to Rostov as Schiller had made the trip in the opposite direction during the day and had noticed that the crops were very poor. We saw some fairly good crops just before it got dark, near Kharkov, but all day we noticed poor, very weedy, crops, very little hay or summer fallow and much uncultivated land. At Slavyansk, in the Don Basin, eggs in the depot were 90 kopeks each, butter 30 roubles per kilo, fish 18 roubles per kilo, and small brown rolls 1.25 roubles each.

We called on Narkomzem in Kharkov on July 29th and did our level best to persuade the secretary to let us see the agronom, or someone in

the planning department, as we did not wish to take up the time of the president when he returned in the afternoon; but we were informed that the director would be delighted to see us and give us as much time as we wished. We had lunch with the German Consul (he said only the officials were optimistic about the harvest) and returned to be met by the director of the department of economics and statistics, whom the chairman had asked to act on his behalf. He told us that on the 1st October, 1931, 72% of the peasants in the whole Ukraine were collectivised as compared with 33.7% in 1930, 22.9 in 1929 and only 5% in 1928. At the present time approximately 75% were collectivised, and the completion of the process was guaranteed by the vastly superior productivity of collective as compared with private agricultural economy. At present they had 447 machine tractor stations (406,000 H.P.) as compared with 346 in 1931, and 154 in 1930. About 20% of the land in the Ukraine was worked by tractors and 80% by horses. They had only 5,000 combines at present in the whole of the U.S.S.R., but the number would be rapidly increased. In 1931 they had 28½ million hectares sown to all crops and *about* 27½ in 1932; winter wheat 4½ million hectares last year and 3.8 this year; winter rye 5 million last year and 5.7 this year; all spring grains, including beans, 12.2 million hectares last year and *about* 10 this year; spring wheat 2.2 million last year and 1.8 this year; cotton 203,000 hectares this year, 160,700 last year and only 20,000 in 1930; sugar beets 1,248,000 this year, 1,229,000 in 1931, 869,600 in 1930, 664,000 (or about pre-war average) in 1929; summer grasses 2.2 million last year and 3.0 this year; flax 165,000 this year, 160,000 in 1931 and 80,000 in 1930; 175,000 hemp this year, 180,000 in 1931 and 133,000 in 1930; soya beans 150,000 this year and 190,000 last year; tobacco 10,000 this year and 7,400 in 1931 and 3,700 in 1930; sun flowers 985,000 this year and 1,050,000 last year; maize 1.2 million this year and 1.5 last year. In 1937 they would have at least one half a million acres of cotton, but the enthusiasts hoped to make the plan one million – I suspect a good deal of the so-called "scientific planning" in Russia is accomplished by such a method. Last year the average yield of cotton was 2.8 centners per hectare, but they had as much as 6 centners in the best fields. Incidentally, Schiller says many of the cotton hectares are paper ones, as much of the cotton he saw was invisible due to weeds. The average area of cultivated land in the Ukraine per kolhoz was 763 hectares (1,500 to 2,000 in the typical grain areas) as compared with 400 in 1930, and the average number of households per kolhoz 130 as compared with 63 in 1930. The kolhozes had approximately 19.3 million hectares under cultivation, the sovhozes 4.8 and the individual peasants 5. The kolhozes and sovhozes produced 82% of the wheat

although they had only 75% of the wheat area – 65 and 10% respectively. They expected 8½ centners per hectare of all grains in the Ukraine or about the same as last year and 20 to 30% less than in 1930. They expected 10 to 10½ centners per hectare of winter wheat or about 10% more than last year! The spring sown crops, he said, would yield very much less as, generally speaking, they were all very poor. Spring wheat would yield only 6 centners, but the area had been reduced from its peak of 3.2 million hectares in 1930 to 1.2 this year. In 1928 (a year of heavy winter kill) they had only (all figures for harvested area) 1.5 million hectares of winter wheat, 3.8 in 1930, 4.5 in 1931 and 3.8 this year. In 1928 they had 3.5 million hectares of winter rye, 4.3 in 1929, 5.5 in 1930, 5.0 in 1931 and 5.7 in 1932. They estimated the abandonment of autumn sown grains, due to the winter killing, this year at 12% as compared with the long term average of only 5.6%. He said the winter wheat this year was not affected by rust (most certainly not true of two areas I saw), but he admitted some of it was affected by smut. The oats crop was very badly rusted and very badly damaged by smut – he personally had seen very large areas of oats which were so rotten with smut the crop was not worth cutting. The spring wheat was also adversely affected by both smut and rust. I asked why they did not treat the grain with a little formaldehyde or copper sulphate, either one of which was a sure cure for smut. He said they were both deficit articles.

Schiller asked, with his tongue in his cheek, if the difficulties they had experienced during the past year had not caused a slight decline in the enthusiasm of the peasants for collectivisation (if he had said increase instead of decrease and had meant collectivisation of the communists to be boiled in sunflower oil, there would have been more point to his question). I then asked about the livestock industry and although he had all the tables before him, the way he fumbled through them and the manner in which he emphasized that the figures he was giving were very rough approximations, presented a vivid contrast to the speed with which he answered our questions about the area of crops, etc., not to mention the precision of all the data he gave us. In 1931 they had about 4 ⅓ million working horses and *about* 15% less at present. They had about 9 million cattle in 1928, from 8 to 9 million in 1931 and about 6 million at present – a loss of only 33⅓% since 1928 whereas the Dniepropetrovsk oblast lost 70% during the same period. The loss of livestock was, he said, very much greater during the past year than during the period of compulsory collectivisation in 1929-30. He said the loss of sheep during the past year was very much heavier than the loss of cattle, as they had been killed to provide meat. They had also lost proportionally

far more swine than cattle, but he did not have the figures for either sheep or swine.

I next asked about the grain collections and if they would not experience unprecedented difficulties in gathering in the Government's quota, owing to the enormous disparity between the collection and open market prices. He admitted it was going to be an extremely difficult task, more difficult than in any previous year, but he hoped they would succeed. The Government had much better control over dairy and other products than over wheat, but as their Government had so much power and as, after all, they were only going to collect 30% of the gross harvest in the areas of good crops and only 25% in the areas of poor crops, they should be successful. I asked if it was true, as I had heard, that the Government were going to buy grain at commercial prices after December 15th and January 1st (when the peasants were to be allowed to sell their surplus grain in the bazaar by trading goods for it). He said that was a matter of high Government policy which he could not discuss. When harvesting started, they had increased the bread rations to workers on the sovhozes from 800 to 1,000 grammes per day, but he did not know when, or if, the workers' ration would be similarly increased. They still intended to thoroughly specialize their agriculture, on the kolhozes as well as in the sovhozes, but for the time being they were allowing the collective farms more freedom to grow the crops they wished, and, since the new decree, many of them were growing crops suitable for marketing in the bazaar, which would help to relieve the food shortage. The number of members leaving the collective farms last year was not great, but there was a tendency towards an increase in the spring, especially in the Kiev district where conditions were very bad; that was one of the reasons for the May decree about kolhoz trade. Now that the members of the collective farms were free to market their products at commercial prices, I asked, would they not concentrate on their gardens, chickens and cows, and neglect the collective economy of the kolhoz proper? He did not think so, because the private production of the members was relatively small and it was in the best interests of the members to work collectively and earn wages. I said that that might be true where the differentiation of wages according to the quantity and quality of work done was sufficient, but I had been told that on many farms, especially since the very rapid and spectacular decline in the purchasing power of the rouble, the differentiation of wages was wholly insufficient. The differentiation was, he said, fairly adequate on the best kolhozes and sovhozes and it was the task of the Government to improve the others.

While having a drink of "beer" in the hotel, two American girls at the next table (one a Mrs. Steinbach, the executive secretary of the Phi-

ladelphian section of the American society for good relations with Russia) told us that they were "simply thrilled with this country and its m-a-r-v-e-l-l-o-u-s plans," but having just paid Intourist 80 roubles for one night in a double room, we were not in the mood for such thrills, and still less so a little later when we paid 90 roubles each, over and above the cost of our railroad tickets, for the privilege of riding over night in the international sleeper on the crack new Kharkov-Moscow express. However, the sting was removed by an attendant in a fine uniform with spotlessly clean white gloves, who lifted his cap and bowed to us as we entered the train. As we watched the teeming crowds of rag-clad people in and around the depot, and also a very large group of soldiers boarding a special train, we thought of the Revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and of our aristocratic train with its white-gloved attendant.
Sincerely yours,
(sgd) A. Cairns

Minutes

Another excellent report by Mr. Cairns who is now on his way home. E.M.B. are copying and will circulate as was done with N 3843/235/38[16] [....]
J. D. Greenway
Aug. 25.

Sir L. Oliphant to see on return.

It *is* long, but it is not long winded. On the contrary it is amazingly full of facts, and full of interest on almost every page. Mr. Cairns not only gives a vivid picture of the conditions in the districts he visited, but he constantly furnishes material enabling one to gauge and discount the value of the many contradictory reports we receive from other sources.
G. M. 29.8.32.

11

Mr. Cairns' Investigations in Soviet Union Andrew Cairns (Moscow) to E. M. H. Lloyd, 12 August 1932, and Cable from the Empire Marketing Board to Its Correspondents

Dear Lloyd, Moscow, 12th August, 1932

I had hoped to get away from Moscow about the 7th August, but decided it would be worth while waiting to see Mr. Bernhardt (the General Manager of Control Co. in Russia, which company, as you know, has a monopoly of superintending all shipments of grain from all Russian ports and, in addition, acts as trustee for both sellers and buyers of Russian grain) as he will be in the South when I return to Moscow.

I saw Bernhardt on the 10th (the day he returned from Berlin) and he told me he had seen Kissin, the president of Exportkhleb, in Berlin, but Kissin said very little, which he (Bernhardt) interpreted as a bad sign. However, Kissin admitted that exports of grain from Russia this year would be less than last year. When Bernhardt asked him how much less he would only talk about the difficulties of selling. He said they had not been able to sell any so far to Germany, France or many other countries. They had sold very little to Italy and Greece. Their only good sale so far was 100,000 tons to the United Kingdom for August-September shipment.

Bernhardt spent several hours with the head officials of Exportkhleb yesterday – August 11th. I had dinner with him afterwards and he told me that they were even more pessimistic than Kissin and that he came away with the firm impression that they would export much less than last year. Bernhardt is leaving tomorrow to spend a month visiting his offices in all the Azov and Black Sea ports. He told me he would be accompanied on the trip by a representative of Exportkhleb, the man in charge of the handling and shipping of grain at the ports, and that he would be able to give me much more definite information about exports on his return. Unfortunately I will not be in Russia when he returns, but it is possible I'll be able to make arrangements to get the information from him without seeing him.

After three days waiting Schiller finally managed to get an interview with the head of the agricultural department of the statistical office yesterday. The official was very discreet and explained that it was too early to estimate the probable yield of the harvest. Schiller asked him why it was possible to get such precise figures in Rostov, Kharkov, etc. if the information was not available in Moscow. He said the information had not been sent in from the country! He did not want to give Schiller any information at all, but when Schiller assured him that he wished only general impressions the official supplied the following.

They expected less than last year, and less than average, in the Ukraine and Crimea and a somewhat poorer crop in the Northern Caucasus than in the Ukraine. They hoped to get 8 centners per hectare of winter wheat in the Crimea; 8 of winter wheat and rye in the Ukraine, 7 of all grains in the Ukraine; 6½ of winter and spring wheat in the Caucasus; a very good crop or 10 of all grains in the Central Black Earth area; an excellent crop, or 12 centners of winter wheat and rye and 10 of all grains in the Southern Urals; the crops in both the Middle and Lower Volga varied greatly, on the left side of the Lower Volga it was very poor but on the right side of the Lower Volga and in the Middle Volga they expected about an average crop of 8½ centners of all grains. In Western Siberia and Kazakstan they expected from three to four times as much per hectare as they got last year (later he admitted they would have a little better than average crop or from 8 to 9 centners) but it was necessary to remember that the area sown was a good deal smaller this year. The best crop in the whole Union was in Central Asia, but unfortunately they had a very small acreage there. In Eastern Siberia and in the Far East they expected about an average crop. In the Union as a whole they expected a little larger crop than last year. Schiller then asked him about Ossinsky's statement of July 5th in which he stated that this year's grain crop would exceed last years by more than 500 million poods. The official replied that Ossinsky's forecasts were based upon an accurate and comprehensive survey, but since then they had lost a good deal of grain by adverse weather conditions. In many parts of the Ukraine, the Volga, and Western Siberia excessive heat and hot winds had reduced the yield materially. In a number of regions, especially the Northern Caucasus, White Russia and in several sections of the Ukraine, they had too much rain after which rust developed and greatly reduced the yields. The drought and excessive heat of the past two weeks had materially lowered crop prospects in the northern regions, Moscow and Leningrad, etc., and at present they expected a crop about the same size as last year in these areas.

The figures given to Schiller by the official, although a good deal lower than those issued by Ossinsky, are, of course, far too high. However, they are very interesting in that they indicate the forced reduction in Soviet estimates as hard facts make their early optimistic forecasts look too ridiculous, even for public consumption. The figure which he quotes for all wheat in the Northern Caucasus (6½ centners per hectare) is the same as I was given for winter wheat by the vice-chairman of Narkomzem in Rostov, but his figures for the Ukraine are much lower than the ones we were given in Kharkov.

Please send a copy of this letter to our correspondents. It is extremely important that any information which I get from Bernhardt, such as the enclosed cable, should be treated in the strictest confidence.

I am leaving Moscow to-day and expect to be back about the end of the month.

Sincerely yours,

[*A. Cairns*]

Enclosure in No. 11

Confidential Cable for Empire Marketing Board Correspondents

PRESIDENT EXPORTKHLEB IN BERLIN TRYING SELL TO GERMANY ADMITS RUSSIAN GRAIN EXPORTS WILL BE LESS THAN LAST YEAR BUT WHEN ASKED HOW MUCH COMPLAINS ABOUT SELLING DIFFICULTIES (STOP) THEY SOLD TO AUGUST EIGHTH THOUSAND TONS WHEAT FOR AUGUST SEPTEMBER SHIPMENT TO UNITED KINGDOM VERY LITTLE TO ITALY AND GREECE NONE ELSEWHERE (STOP) MOSCOW OFFICIALS EXPORTKHLEB ADMIT WILL EXPORT MUCH LESS THAN LAST YEAR

EMPMART

12

Situation in Soviet Union
William Strang (Moscow), to Sir John Simon, 14 August 1932

Circulated to the Cabinet by direction of The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs

Sir, Moscow, August 14, 1932

The exhaustive reports by Mr. Cairns to the Empire Marketing Board on his several journeys of investigation into the state of Soviet agriculture, Mr. Bullard's characteristically patient and pungent notes on conditions in the Leningrad district and his summary of Miss Clyman's experiences in the timber-producing areas of the far north will have supplied you with such a wealth of well-authenticated material on the present state of this country that not much remains to be said. I will, however, add the following general observations:-

2. The two most important developments in the Soviet Union in the last year or so have been Stalin's six-point pronouncement of last June and the recent series of decrees embodying a new agricultural policy. By the first, the principle of piece-rate wages and differentiation of remuneration in all branches of the national economy, according to the quantity and quality of work done, was authoritatively sanctioned, and privileged treatment proclaimed for the more highly responsible technical and administrative personnel. By the second, the channels of food supply have been increasingly decentralised; the working peasants, both collectivised and uncollectivised, have been given increased liberty to dispose of their produce in the free market under the so-called system of collective farm trade; and the collectivised peasants are being ensured a more ample and more immediate share in the gross profits of the farms.

3. These developments were neither of them predestined steps in the execution of a triumphant plant. They may or may not have been (as the official apologists assert) fully consistent with the general line of the party and warranted by this or that prophetic passage in the books of

Lenin; but they were indubitably forced upon the authorities by the brutal necessities of the time. The first was, among other things, an attempt to wring from the working agents of a slackening plan, by the bribe of privilege or the prospect of improved conditions of life, services which, by nature and in existing conditions of life, they had neither the physical nor intellectual capacity nor the public spirit to offer freely and willingly of themselves. The second, in essence a bribe to the peasants, was dictated by the fear lest, failing a freer flow of increased supplies of food from the country to the town, the hardships of the coming winter might be even sharper than those which, through some as yet unremedied vice in the system of collectivised farming, the mass of the population have had to endure in the past winter; and lest these privations might come to bear more heavily than hitherto upon the urban workers, who made the revolution and upon whom its permanence in the last resort depends.

4. Both of these new lines of policy are likely to have important reactions on the structure and inner tension of Soviet society. Stalin's six points (or some of them) have already had a remarkable effect in promoting the growth of a new *bourgeois* class, the existence of which was noted in my despatch No. 576 of the 3rd November last. This class has since then noticeably grown in numbers, in well-being and in open display. Recruits to their ranks are even coming from across the Atlantic, generally American Jews of Russian origin. More and better restaurants have been established for their regalement, including a show-boat on the river. They vie with foreigners in the big hotels; and luxurious "Red Arrows" one of them with a library and wireless car, carry them nightly on their business to Leningrad, Nizhni-Novgorod and Kharkov. As the New Economic Policy created the Nepmen, so the Five-Year Plan is in its turn breaking the egalitarian structure of Soviet society and bringing a class of non-proletarians and ex-proletarians into positions of privilege and authority. At the changeover from N.E.P. to planning, the Nepmen were destroyed. The new *bourgeois* are, it would seem, more firmly entrenched than they, for upon their continued existence depends the execution of the plan itself.

5. There are signs that the privileges of these specialists and so-called "responsible workers" are beginning to arouse the resentment of the ordinary factory worker, whose living conditions may vary from the passable to the almost intolerable. In the same factory, for example, the various classes of workers will feed in different restaurants on far different fare. At the Nizhni-Novgorod motor works, again, according to a writer in today's *Pravda*, "not only the new workers, but a part of the workers on the factory establishment are without living accommodation. The workers' town is only half-built. There is nowhere to live." At

Sinelnikovo on the 14th July, a Communist shock-worker told Mr. Vyvyan that in the Donbas, even for the workers, there was hardly anything to eat; most of the food went to the engineers and specialists. It has for some time been common enough to hear of peasants complaining to travelling foreigners of their bitter hardships and openly expressing, in the presence of party members of the G.P.U., their condemnation of the "system." In this respect, Mr. Greenway's impressions of the Ukraine and the Caucasus a year ago are merely confirmed in even greater degree this year by Mr. Vyvyan and Mr. Cairns. But it is, I think, a recent development to find, as we occasionally do in these days, the same kind of complaint from young factory workers, who might have been expected to know better. During the recent labour troubles at Ivanovo-Vosnesensk, over a hundred Communists were, it is said, severely punished for siding with the discontented workers against the authorities. It is also to be noted that the grounds for such resentment may be aggravated by the operation of the new agricultural policy, which, by expanding the free market in food at the expense of the rationing system, will enforce a greater resort than hitherto on the part of all workers to the free market with its inflated prices, and thus increase the differentiation between the recipients of higher and of lower wages, between the new bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

6. One would guess this situation to be one of the major anxieties of the rulers. Another is the prospect of the coming grain collection campaign. The harvest may in actual yield be equal to or perhaps even slightly superior to that of last year, which was a poor year. But the delays in reaping, stacking and threshing (of which the figures in my telegram No. 104 give evidence), the losses through negligence and pilferage, and the chance that the peasants, who are in a resisting mood, may relinquish still less willingly than last year even the reduced quota of grain prescribed for delivery to the State, do not promise well.

7. The Soviet press, nowadays, makes little serious attempt to disguise the fact that the more or less successful strivings, to create a new polity, which are the sum and substance of the so-called plan, are accompanied and conditioned by a desperate struggle on the part of society for bare subsistence, which forms no part of the plan and which it is still believed the plan will one day resolve. The old triumphant note is for the moment drowned. I take as an example the *Pravda* of the 4th August, which devotes two whole pages to articles with the following titles: "Why is the mechanised plant of the Donbas working badly?" "400 trucks of coal lost every day!" "We have not yet learnt how to use mechanised plant." "The coal is ready, but no one moves it." "No proper organisation of grain collection in the Ukraine." "Only two areas in proper

organisation of grain collection in the Ukraine." "Only two areas in N. Caucasus have fulfilled the grain plan." "No attempt to suppress speculators." "Decree on collective farm trade not being put into effect." "State grain fund being illegally sold on the market." "Waste of vegetables through transport failures." "Advice of foreign specialists disregarded."

8. Even prominent officials, on short acquaintance, especially if on their travels and away from their habitual environment, will sometimes make the most surprising confessions to foreigners once they realise that the latter are too well-informed to believe anything they are told. There was, for example, the indiscreet senior G.P.U. officer in Leningrad, himself responsible for the city's food supply, who told His Majesty's Ambassador: "There's no bread, no meat, no fats – nothing"; or the Communist manager of an industrial co-operative, who told Mr. Vyvyan in an aeroplane between Rostov and Moscow that he was revolted at the semi-starvation in the villages, that the big Soviet factories were extremely inefficient, and that any concession to the peasants would be bound to affect adversely the proletariat of the towns, whom the Government could not afford to estrange. The official guides supplied by the Government or Intourist for official travellers or tourists seem also, from what Mr. Cairns says and from what I have heard elsewhere, to tell their tale with somewhat less assurance than in other years and sometimes to admit that there is a Russia, of which they themselves are a part, outside that to which the tourist's attention is directed. Whether the increasing strain of their own environment, or mere staleness, or the advent of a rather more sceptical class of tourist is responsible for this, it is difficult to say, but I have the impression that tourists this year are, on a whole being rather less easily brought by the power of the word and discreet manoeuvering to see the harassed and muddling constructors of Russian socialism as "singing masons building roofs of gold."

9. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.

William Strang

Minutes

The King Cabinet

A most valuable & interesting despatch which shows clearly the difficulties which must now beset the "inner ring" of the Kremlin. It seems likely that even Stalin's position, hitherto regarded as unassailable, may

be seriously affected by recent developments. The most hopeful sign is that the young communists are beginning to be disillusioned.

The clouds are gathering over Muscovy: but the storm may not break – yet [....]

J. D. Greenway

Aug. 23.

A clear and excellent despatch, which bears out in its main lines the two illuminating articles recently published in the *Times* by that astute Italian journalist Scarfoglio.[17]

G. M. 24.8.32

13

Description of a Tour in the Volga Region
Report by Andrew Cairns (Moscow), 22 August 1932

Confidential
Not for Publication

Dear Lloyd, Moscow, 22nd August, 1932

I had two bits of good fortune in getting the information I wanted about the Volga region so I am back in Moscow several days sooner than I expected to be.

I left Moscow in the late afternoon of 12th August. Until dark I watched the crops and saw a good sample of the damage done by the lack of rain and excessive heat which prevailed in the northern districts in the first half of August. The oats and other crops were stunted and had ripened prematurely.

A Russian specialist on the train told me that Stalingrad, where he worked, was a stinking hole, that food was very scarce and very expensive and that he was very apprehensive about the winter. He complained about the big loss to Stalingrad industries caused by the departure of most of the U.S. specialists. He thought the Government's policy of exporting the people's food was a mistake, but a leading citizen of Voronezh did not agree with him. However, they both agreed that the loss of livestock in the Volga and Central Black Earth areas had been very heavy during the past year. They were also in agreement that the workers in the Don Basin and other industrial areas were working very inefficiently, largely due to their hunger; and that kulaks were working in the Baltic area in the summer months on the canal and cutting lumber in the winter.

I arrived in Voronezh at noon on 13th August. All morning and forenoon I saw the usual sight out of the train window – much fine land idle and growing only a magnificent crop of weeds, uncut crops full of weeds, and from the appearance of the stubble and stooks, the cut crops had apparently been full of weeds too. Voronezh, the capital of the Central

Black Earth area, looks even worse than many towns of similar size I have been in. The buildings and streets are all in a frightful state of dilapidation and, as nearly every place else I have been in the past two months, the work was apparently stopped on nearly all of the new buildings going up. I could not get a room at the hotel so I had a look about the town before calling on the Department of Agriculture. Unfortunately, I did not have time to go to the central bazaar, but I saw several street bazaars and went into several shops. The population seemed to be living entirely on a diet of very poor quality green apples, cabbages, and the usual coarse black bread. To my surprise there was very little bread for sale and I actually paid 3½ roubles for a small roll of brown bread in a restaurant – the same rolls were being sold on the street at 2 roubles each. The people in the streets looked even poorer than they do in most towns of similar size, and the number of ragclad, pot-bellied children seemed to be as high, if not higher, than usual.

In the afternoon, I called on the Department of Agriculture and soon discovered that they did not want to take me to any farms around Voronezh. I explained that I was anxious to see the sugar beets as Voronezh was the centre of the industry, but they paid no attention. When they made no effort to help me get a room I knew there was no use waiting in the hope that they would take me out to the country, so I agreed to their suggestion to take a train at midnight to a rayon in the south east corner of the oblast. The vice-president whom I interviewed was an extremely stupid young Jew (every day I am impressed by the very large number of Jews there must be in Russia – there actually seems to be enough to fill nearly all the administrative posts, in the Government agricultural departments at least) and I got little information of value from him. When I asked about the harvest he read out figures which were so absurdly high that I asked if these were not the yields according to the plan and he said, yes. I then argued that there was no sense in giving me planned figures in the middle of August, as a good part of the crops were already cut. But he insisted that it was much too early to estimate the crops and that as the yields varied greatly from rayon to rayon they had not yet calculated the average yields. However, when I asked him how he explained the fact that I had received the estimated yields for the oblast from the Department of Agriculture in Moscow, he said they expected an average yield of 6 centners per hectare of spring wheat, 8 to 8½ of winter wheat, barley 8, rye 9, oats 8.7 to 8.8, sugar beet 150. He said they had no rust in their winter wheat, but they had far too much rain during the harvest and a good deal of it was spoiled, and that their spring wheat was rather badly rusted. The manager of Torgsin acted as my interpreter (appropriately enough every tooth in his

mouth was made of gold). He said he was an Englishman, but as the communists stopped bothering him in 1927 he had not registered his passport since then. He said he knew I would want to see both good and bad farms and I heard him explain at length to the officials that they should show me the bad and very bad collective farms as well as the good ones. Needless to say, his remarks were not heeded. He seemed a very friendly and very talkative chap and I was sorry I had no time and was unable to accept his invitation to visit his store.

When I came to the subject of livestock the vice-chairman again tried to give me planned data, but when I would not accept them and asked for the data based on the census that I knew had been taken in February and March, he insisted that they had not had time to calculate the data! He then supplied the following:

	Average number in summer of	
	1931	1930
Horses	1,700,000	1,940,000
Cattle	2,562,000	2,457,000
Sheep	3,910,000	4,123,000
Swine	420,000	(No data available!)
Chickens	13,700,000	10,212,000

I tried my best to get comparative data for previous years, but he insisted that all the people in the statistical department had gone home and he could not give them to me. I said the data for 1931 and 1930 were of little use without comparable figures for pre-collectivisation days and announced that I would stay over the night and get them next day. He did not like the suggestion a bit and reminded me that I had said I could not find a room. Finally they agreed to fill in the table outlines I left and mail them to me. They said they had had a very bad plague of caterpillars in the sugar beets, but had lost only about 8% of the crop. However, he said that just as they thought they had liquidated the problem, a new bunch of eggs hatched and now they had them again.

As soon as I got through with my questions, my little Jew became very anxious to do everything possible to facilitate my exit from the town, despatched a comrade to get my ticket, and assigned another one to the task of looking after me until my train left. I had not finished my dinner in the restaurant when my attendant called to look after me. I thought he looked hungry, but instead of ordering a dinner for him I stood him several beers. But he would not talk sense; simply repeated

the usual optimistic forecasts about how lovely everything would be soon. However, when I gave him to understand I wanted facts and asked him why I should be charged 3½ roubles for a brown bun, he admitted there was very little bread available just now as the harvest had been delayed by rains, that wheat meal was 100 and rye meal 45 roubles per kilo in the bazaar, and bread was 3½ to 4 roubles and had been 5 before harvest. Outside the hotel I took him to a booth and asked him why ham should be 35 roubles per kilo and he said it because they had very few pigs, but before collectivisation they had very many. On our way to his house we passed a few people peddling black bread and I asked him if the Russian people always ate black bread and, to my surprise, he answered that the peasants still were very much against collectivisation and that before their little strips of land were enclosed in collectives very many peasants in the Central Black Earth and Ukraine had plenty of white bread.

When we got inside his house (one very small room for himself, wife and baby, and another tiny kitchen for a sister and two other girls who worked with her in a textile factory), I hoped he would give me some information, but he merely said that they would make collectivisation a success, that he hated his father because he was always crossing himself and believed in the Pope[18] and could neither read nor wrote, that the sugar beet crop was good, and that he had been brought from a collective three years ago, made a member of the Party and given a post in the Department of Agriculture. But my train did not leave until very late and when his wife came home and I gave her tea and sugar, sweet English biscuits and chocolate for her baby, he opened up and volunteered the following tale of woe: He got 250 roubles per month, but had 1/12 of it deducted as his voluntary contribution to the Plan; he got only 200 grammes of black bread per day (also 200 for his wife) and absolutely nothing else; in the bazaar butter was 10 roubles per pound, meat 7½ per kilo, potatoes 3 roubles per kilo, pork fat 25 roubles per kilo, 10 eggs for 6 roubles, milk 2 roubles per litre, but they could afford to buy only bread and vegetables; that 3, and even 2, years ago before collectivisation was pushed they had always plenty of good food in the house and now they had nothing and could only eat two very poor meals per day. Later his sister and one of her chums came in and told me they got only 120 roubles per month, 400 grammes of bread per day and absolutely nothing else; and that they were charged 60 kopeks for one meal of only soup and potatoes at the factory. I asked my host's sister if she was a komsomol and she said, no, because her mother and father were starving on a kolhoz and hated it. But to my surprise her chum said she had been a komsomol for five years. I asked her why she complained

so bitterly about her meagre salary and starvation bread allowance when as a good komsomol she should be an ardent upholder of the regime; she replied, oh, everybody is complaining because conditions have never been so terrible before. I then questioned my hostess as to why it was that they had many collective and State farms yet, while the nation was building socialism, she said there was not enough milk in her breasts to properly build her baby. She replied: "Ask my husband, he is a communist." I told him that while unemployed people in Britain and Canada had a tough time, as far as I knew they all got food, and certainly they all got white bread. He pointed to a copy of *Izvestiya* on the table and asked if what they read in it was not true and when I answered that it certainly was not he jumped up in a rage, threw the paper on the floor and jumped on it. Before leaving for the train I asked what the people were going to live on during the winter and he said on only black bread and a few potatoes. On the way to the station I was told that the collective farms around Veronesh were too bad for me to visit. In the station buffet I asked my guide to join me in a cup of tea or a mug of beer, but he said, no thanks, he would have a dinner instead. I paid 5.7 roubles for cabbage soup, coarse black bread, potatoes and a small piece of meat which he simply could not even dinge with a knife and fork and was obliged to swallow in chunks unmasticated. While he devoured his dinner, I gave a small girl, who was begging for bread, two fancy English biscuits and she showed them to everyone in the buffet.

Next morning (14th August) I was awakened by three people complaining most bitterly, on the boards on the other side of mine, about their food rations, and to my surprise noticed that one of them was a sailor from the Russian navy and two of them army officers. In this country it is of course an every minute occurrence to hear people complaining and cursing about their food, but to hear soldiers complaining, when they are supposed to live on the fat of the land (there is little or no fat of any kind left), was a new experience for me. The army officer said they got only a piece of pork fat the size of his finger and black bread; the sailor said we hear all about mechanization, specialization, kolhozes, sovhozes, and machine tractor stations, and hear "budyet, budyet, budyet" (will be's), but all we know is that we get less and less and poorer and poorer food.

Of course I suspected that the Government did not want me to see the sugar beets at Veronesh because a large proportion of them had not been thinned and were full of weeds, but why they thought I would not look at them through the train windows all next day and confirm my suspicions, is a mystery to me. All day long I saw seas of fine weeds going to seed; enormous fields of stunted sunflowers choked with weeds and

heads not much bigger than those on wild sunflowers and very many large fields not worth cutting; the uncut grain, thin and badly lodged and every field with a vigorous thick growth of green weeds; the cut crops were on stubble which was quite red (i.e. pig weed) and the stooks were black – partly due to a large proportion of weeds in the sheafs and partly due to heavy rains; a few fields of very late and very poor carrots; unthinned and stunted and very weedy sugar beets; enormous areas of fine black soil lying idle growing only weeds; very little hay made – and it mostly weeds; practically no summer fallow land; a few fields of extremely poor fall ploughing; hundreds of hungry and miserable peasants waiting for tickets at every station; the population living entirely on water melons and a little coarse black bread; practically no bread of any description for sale in the bazaars; but many melons and other vegetables; only one herd of spring pigs; three small herds of cattle, a small group of sheep; two herds of very bony horses and a few goats. The only half decent crops I saw all day were just before I reached the town the Government had sent me to. On the train I gave tea to two women. They had left the capital of Western Siberia (Novosibirsk) two months ago because conditions were very bad. (A few days later I saw hundreds and hundreds of poor devils on their way to Siberia because they had heard that conditions were very much better there than in European Russia.) The women told the usual story. There were very few tractors and many of them would not work; there were no horses or cattle; the peasants hated the collectives and were too hungry and unhappy to work, so the fields were full of weeds and much good land recently in crops was idle; butter was 8 roubles per pound in Kalach, very poor black meal 40 roubles per pood, wheat meal 90 roubles per pood and skin and bones 4½ to 6 roubles per kilo.

I arrived in a very big village called Kalach, in the late afternoon and hired a hungry peasant to drive me to Rispolkom.[19] He thrashed the horse incessantly for nearly an hour, but the poor beast was nearly dead and not once did it move faster than a very slow walk. There was no one in the offices of Rispolkom, so I went to the Communist Party. The Secretary (who to my surprise was not a Jew) was very nice to me and sent his assistant to remove two girls from a room for my benefit. I slept for an hour and then, having had nothing to eat all day, I looked for food. I soon found the chief workers' restaurant in the village and after a long argument got a ticket from the cashier and sat down to a dinner of soup (containing only millet, a few bits of potato, four bits of onion, and no fat, oil, or meat juice of any description), 3 slices of very heavy, soggy black bread, and an extremely small patty of tasteless stale meat – all for 1.9 roubles; a small price for me, but a big one for workers who earn

only 75 to 150 roubles per month. I no sooner got back to the house where my bed was, than who should turn up but the assistant Secretary of the Communist Party. He was unhappy and embarrassed to learn that I had been in such a poor restaurant, as he had come to take me to dinner. He took me to quite a nice park where we heard a tin band playing jazz and watched, to borrow Vyvyan's very apt phrase, the "portfolio class" on parade (the number of people in administrative positions in this country is simply colossal, and for using the maximum number of people to do the minimum amount of work under the greatest imaginable handicaps of endless red tape and innumerable stupid regulations, they would put to shame the most inefficient department of the most inefficient civil service in the world. Later a table was set on a porch overlooking a small river and while we (the young Jewish secretary of Rispolkom, the assistant secretary of the Party and myself) watched nude women bathing, we were served good vegetable soup with fats and tongue, roasted chicken, fine new mashed potatoes soaked in butter, whole wheat bread, milk and fruit juices. The secretary of Rispolkom told me that 97% of the 42,000 people in the rayon were collectivised; that their sovhoz had gathered all its grain in good condition, but the kolhozes had lost a good deal by the recent very heavy rains.

Next morning (August 15th) I was served quite a good steak, potatoes and tomatoes, 3 cucumbers, 2 enormous slices of whole wheat bread, milk and 2 fried eggs; all for only 1.75 roubles. After a long wait I finally got a big grain truck and motored about 25 kilometres to a State grain farm. I saw very little on the way out as most of the grain had been cut. However, I noticed that the sunflowers (very large area) were very poor – short, full of weeds and very small heads. I also saw a large field of very poor wheat (thin, badly lodged and discoloured by recent heavy rains and full of weeds) with 16 big combines standing idle as the ground was saturated with moisture. The sovhoz ("Kolachevski") contained 60,000 hectares, 8,572 hectares of winter wheat, 4,032 Durum spring wheat and 4,474 of other spring wheat, 522 barley, 4,600 sunflowers, 9,350 rye, 6,469 oats and 11,000 summer fallow. The vice-president told me they got 6.7 centners of winter wheat per hectare, 7.8 of spring wheat, 7.9 of oats, 13 of rye, and they expected 7 to 10 of sunflower seed. Last year their very best wheat had yielded only 4 centners, but they had an average yield of 9 centners of rye. The farm had 140 tractors (60% imported), 100 combines (only 7 of which were imported), 8 Massey Harris binders, 68 Russian reapers, 15 trucks (also from 40 to 50, belonging to Soyuztrans, during the harvest), 98 horses, 120 cattle, and 420 pigs. They had 1,099 permanent workers, 600 extra workers during April-June and 1,123 during July-September. The aver-

age monthly wage of the unskilled workers was 65 roubles, but the skilled workers received from 120 to 300, the agronoms 350 and the engineers 400. Some of their tractor drivers were making as much as 6 to 7 roubles a day at piece work. The workers were charged 65 kopeks per day for their hot meals (soup) and given one kilo of black bread and ½ litre of milk per day. They tried to sow all their spring wheat between April 22nd and 28th and all their winter wheat between August 15th and 31st, because wheat not sown between these dates yielded very poorly. They ploughed all their summer fallow land (⅕ of the total) in May and thus got a good deal higher yield than the kolhozes who ploughed all their summer fallow land (⅙ of the total) later. They said the surrounding collective farms had only 9 centners of rye whereas they got from 12 to 14 and the collectives would get 6 centners of all wheat whereas they got 6.7 of winter and 7.8 of spring wheat. They had delivered practically all their quota of grain to the Government elevators in Kalach (242,822 centners out of a total of 310,759 – they were saving 67,937 for seed and the workers' bread) and all of it was earmarked for export. I suggested that they would not get much for the grain as the international price was very low, but they were unanimous that that did not matter as all the money would be valuta.

On the farm I met a French Communist who had come to Russia for the French Communist Party. He travelled from Paris to Moscow on his motor cycle in 6 days and from Moscow to Kalach in 2 days – the Russians were pleased because he said the Polish roads were worse than the Russian ones. Narkomzem, in Moscow, had appointed him controller of the farm and he worked and reported direct to Moscow quite independently of the local management and Party officials. He had just completed a series of articles for *l'Humanité*, the French Communist paper, based on a 5 day study of the nearby collective farms. The collective farms in his opinion were much more economical than the State farm. Last year the grain farm had a 500,000 rouble deficit and the only tractors which were economical were the caterpillar tractors, as all the others used far too much petrol. He also thought the State farm was very badly organised and very inefficiently operated. He was very unhappy about the rate of progress the Communists were making in France, but thought they were making very rapid progress in Germany.

The people on the farm wanted me to stay for 2 days, but as the crop on the farm was nearly all gathered and as the roads were simply impassable and I knew I would not be able to visit collective farms, I got a ride in a truck back to Kalach. As I expected, the information about the trains which the Department of Agriculture on Veronesh had given me was all wrong and I found that instead of getting a train direct to Stalingrad, I

had to travel back as far as Talovaya – a small village where I got a local train to Povarina and from there another train to Stalingrad. I arrived at Talavaya at midnight. As my train did not leave until 1 p.m. next day, I was faced with the prospect of spending 25 hours in the filthy station, where there was not even standing room as the floor was packed with miserable people (with the usual rags and black bread potbellies), sound asleep, despite the millions of flies that crawled over them in and out of their mouths and noses. The prospect was too unpleasant so I got a policeman to take me on a search for a place to sleep. Finally we found a house called "the peasants' home." We got the woman in charge out of bed, but she assured us there was no accomodation available. However, after much protesting on my part that I would sleep in my feather sleeping bag on the floor (the ground outside was soaked with rain, otherwise I would have chosen the fresh air), one of the eleven people in the room insisted on taking the floor and giving me his bunk of straw on three boards. As long as the lights were on it was not too bad, but when the lights went out I was savagely attacked by hundreds of hungry bed-bugs, and while I fought them all night my eleven companions snored away peacefully, quite unconscious of the bugs feeding upon them. Next forenoon, after breakfasting on a tin of sardines and a bitter brown roll (the weed seeds had been milled along with the wheat), for which I paid one rouble in the station buffet, I watched workers being served cabbage soup and an extremely small chunk of black bread (those who could afford it supplemented their meal with a roll), children begging, 30 pot-bellied children with their parents living entirely on black bread and water melons. The policeman stood for 2 hours, waiting for the ticket window to open, at the head of a howling mob of people in a very long queue to get me a ticket and was beside himself with joy when I gave him ten roubles for his trouble. The policeman said the crop in the district was good, but his brother (a member of a nearby kolhoz) would not agree and said their winter wheat was yielding only 8 centners, their spring wheat 7, and their rye 8, and that his village had only 20 cows and 50 horses.

On the train I gave some peasants tea and enjoyed hearing them praise it like grandparents praise their first grandson. We arrived in Povarina in the late afternoon and, of course, had to wait several hours for a train. I camped in a nearby park with several fellow travellers (all workers on their way to Stalingrad, and all agreeing with one another that conditions had never been so bad). I was hungry, but the best I could get after an hour's search through several stores and the bazaar, was a loaf of soggy black bread for 4.50 roubles. Hungry as I was, I could not eat it, but the people in the park to whom I distributed it relished every mouthful.

Just before leaving I spoke to a large German family who had left a grain sovhoz in the Caucasus because the harvest was very bad, and were on their way to Slavgorod, Western Siberia, where they were going to farm on their own account as they hated the kolhoz system.

Next morning (August 17th) I got up very early to watch the crops, but there were very few crops of any kind to see, most of the land being uncultivated. What little grain there was had been cut for some time. Some of it was still in the stook and had been very badly discoloured by rain. However, the country seemed to have a big crop of water melons, cucumbers and other vegetables. I arrived in Stalingrad about 10 a.m. and went straight to the Intourist Hotel. They would not look at my roubles and said the best they could do was to give me good food, a room for one night and show me the tractor plant for 20 U.S. dollars. I told them I had only a few dollars left and needed them to buy food in Torgsin, but that I had a few pounds sterling. They said they would give me a very favourable rate of exchange and charge me only £5.10.0. I had only £5, so they agreed to take it, payment in advance. I soon bumped into a man (a member of a party of 23 English tourists) with whom I had had lunch at the Embassy and decided to join his party. He had told us in Moscow that he had come to Russia an anti-communist, but after visiting the Park of Culture and Rest he had felt communism creeping over him, so I was naturally surprised to hear from him that 21 of their party of 23 were furious because they had not seen a single factory in their 2½ weeks stay, because the factory management at Nizhni-Novgorod said the tourists would reduce the plant's tempo, because ever since they left Moscow their trip had been grossly mismanaged, because their guide had told them at a point they were anxious to see that the boat was remaining only 30 minutes whereas it stayed 3½ hours and later the captain had sworn that he told the guide they would be there for over three hours, because they had arrived at every point of interest along the Volga at mid-night, because the boat was full of cockroaches, because there was no drinking water on the boat and beer was 5 bob a bottle, because their guides were ignorant and told a lot of lies, and a lot of other "becauses." The party were told to assemble at 6.30 for breakfast, but as breakfast was only ready at 10.30, I was in plenty of time to join them. After breakfast we were told that there was no time to see the museums as they were anxious to show us their can-making factory which was equipped throughout with American machinery. We were taken to a street corner where we waited for 1½ hours in the boiling sun for a bus which would "be there immediately." The bus finally arrived and all the Russians were forced to get out. We motored for about three quarters of an hour over terrible roads, past thousands of miserable

wood and mud hovels, nearly knocked over a poor horse with no skin on its back, and finally arrived at the factory. As soon as we arrived the guides announced that we had no time to go in, as we must get back for lunch or we would miss the train to the Stalingrad tractor plant. Twenty-one of the party sneered and jeered and some of them openly ridiculed the guides; the other two sat in silence. I asked who they were and was told that the big fellow was an English sailor who had told them about the wonders of communism on the boat all the way from London to Leningrad; he had boasted that he had been a communist agitator among British sailors for 12 years, and that the wee chap with red hair was a member of the British Communist Party.

While waiting for a train at the depot, a Volga German peasant came up and spoke to me and delivered a terrible tale of grief and a stinging indictment of collectivisation. For the edification of my companions I asked a girl standing nearby what salary she got. She replied 50 roubles a month, 5 of which she had to pay to the Government, but she was going to get 75 roubles later and then would have to pay ten roubles per month as "obligations." She said she got 400 grammes of black bread per day and absolutely nothing else. I asked her if she was a komsomol and she said, yes. When we arrived at the plant we were taken straight to the workers' club. The first place we visited was a kindergarten, but the women in the party said it was "eye-wash," because the place was so spotlessly clean, obviously not a child had ever been in it. An Australian guide who had been especially provided for my benefit, told me, in reply to my questions, there were 15 to 17,000 workers in the plant, and the average monthly wage of the unskilled workers was 120 roubles, although wages ranged from 60 to 200, that the workers got two meals per day in the factory (45 kopeks for breakfast and 65 for dinner), that the factory worked on 3 seven hour shifts, that the factory was then producing 130 to 140 tractors per day, that the workers got 1½ kilos of black and ½ kilo of white bread per day, 1½ kilos of sugar per month, a little butter 3 or 4 times a month, a little millet, rice or barley once a month, no meat and ½ litre of milk a day for children under 15. I wrote down everything he said and then told him he was not telling the truth to the party, as he knew perfectly well that Russian workers never saw white bread and that instead of the 2,000 grammes of bread per day which he said they were getting, he knew as well as I did that the maximum allowance was 800 grammes of black bread. He was very unhappy and asked me how I knew, so I asked him where he worked and when he said Kuzbas, I said, "Oh yes, I know some American specialists there; how much bread do the workers get?" He replied that the rations had been reduced to a maximum of 800 hundred grammes. I made him

still more unhappy by announcing that I would ask the workers in the factory about the sugar and other commodities they received. The first group of women I spoke to said they received 75 roubles per month, 800 grammes of black bread and absolutely nothing else. The next group said the same except they got 120 roubles per month. The third person I asked said he was a foreman and received 320 roubles per month, 800 grammes of black bread, but nothing else. On the way home (a hundred odd Russians were turned out of a street car for our benefit) I asked the Australian guide (he was born in Australia, but his parents were Russian) if he had clung to his British passport and he said, "You bet your life." He then told me that he was an acetelene welder and never made less than 400 roubles per month and frequently made 500 or more, and that as a foreigner he got many privileges such as good food at low prices in a special store. He said he worked for 2 years on the construction of the Stalingrad plant, and that the chief credit for the planning, construction, and equipping of the factory should go to the 300 American engineers who had worked there. Later I was told by the assistant director of Intourist at Stalingrad, who thought my gold flake cigarettes a real present, that while the factory management said they had 80 Americans left, the truth was that only 6 of them were real Americans and the rest were mostly "bohunks," Bulgarians and others who had returned from the States. He had been editor of the English newspaper in the plant for 2½ years, but when all the Americans left he was made assistant director of Intourist. But he was fed up to the teeth with Intourist and soon he was going to work for the *Moscow News*.

Although from 50 to 60 per cent of the expensive American and German machinery was idle, although only one corner of the enormous foundry was working, although the amount of waste was simply terrific, although 30 unfinished tractors stood on the motionless conveyor belt while only two men bolted an engine on to one of them, and although I was told that the production had dropped during the summer to as low as 45 per day, due to a shortage of material, I got a better impression of the plant as a whole than I did of the big agricultural machinery plant in Rostov.

In the evening I went for a walk with three members of the party and then went to our eating park for tea. While we were there a man came in begging for bread and a woman waiter chased him out. When he got to the door he turned on the woman and was about to knock her down when she cried aloud for help and three men rushed to her rescue. A little later we had the good fortune to meet the party of British journalists who are touring the country as the guests of the Government.[20] Lyall, a member of our party, went straight to Martin (the editor of the *New*

Statesman) and told him he had a lot of nerve dining on caviare and other luxuries when a starving man had just been kicked out, but Martin was sure he must have been an ordinary beggar. Martin then introduced himself to me. I met several other members of the party and had a good laugh at their tales. Two of them were eaten alive by bed bugs in their hotel at Nizhni-Novgorod and they had to wait a whole day there as they missed the boat. They had seen thousands of rag-clad miserable people at Nizhni fighting and shouting like wild animals because only some of them were able to squeeze into the boat. They had called at all the points of interest at midnight on the four day trip down the Volga and instead of arriving in Stalingrad according to plan in the morning and having the day to see the tractor plant and the town, they did not arrive until long after dark and had only 1½ hours to eat and then rush off to catch the special train which was waiting to take them to Rostov. But fortunately their special train was late getting away and I had plenty of time to tell them a good few unsavoury truths. McGuire (a London stock broker who was representing the *Financial News*) amused me very much. He had collected a tale of woe a mile long from some Volga German peasants on the boat and wanted me to corroborate every detail. I corroborated a good deal of his story when we were alone, but when he asked me again in front of their chief guide I told him that I thought he ought to discount somewhat what he had heard, as the peasants of German origin were extremely angry and embittered by the compulsory collectivization movement. But he was in no mood for making such discounts, and wanted to know what sort of a gigantic fraud these swine were going to cook up next to try and take the people's minds off their hunger. When we arrived at the station, Menken (of the London School of Economics, who is representing the *Economist*) turned to me and said: "I can't get over the infernal cheek of these people wanting us to adopt their system. Look at these thousands of hungry people sitting in worse than oriental filth and squalor. I wonder where they are all going. Why this is just like a different world compared with that garden where we ate." Menken, McQuire [*sic*], Spencer and others asked me a lot of questions on the platform. My answers made their chief guide unhappy and he tried to turn the conversation by asking me questions, but he was most unfortunate in his choice of questions – what the sugar beet crop was like, etc. They asked me what I thought the purchasing power of the rouble was and when I said about 2 d., McQuire said he thought it was less and that he had been through the inflation in Australia but it was nothing as compared with this, and Menken had been through the inflation in Germany, and said conditions then were so infinitely better than in Russia that there was no comparison. I am afraid the journalists'

visit is going to be one more communist experiment gone wrong due to lack of adequate control. I'll be surprised if at least some of the guests don't fairly roast their hosts when they get home.[21]

Next morning (August 18th) I went to the circus where the tourists had dined the day before, but the cupboard was bare – all the linen was gone, the wheat bread was replaced by wet bran mash (called bread), there was no butter or salads, etc. I paid 5½ roubles for a glass of tea, some black bread and two ancient eggs. I got the assistant director of Intourist and made him translate all I had to say to the chief director. I told him the stink in my room was so bad I could not sleep and that thinking it was from the toilet next door I investigated the matter and bad as the W.C. was, my room was much worse, so I had concluded that there must be dead rats under the floor. I had tried to get a bath at night and was told that there was no water, but they would give me one in the morning at 8 for sure, but at 9 they told me there was no water. That I had paid 5½ roubles for a miserable breakfast, that their guide had told me a lot of lies, and I wanted my £5 back. The director asked me where I came from and when I told him the British Embassy in Moscow he not only handed me back my £5 but asked me to excuse them as, when they took my money, they meant to give me a car to myself, a good guide, etc., etc., but they had two large parties the day before and could not carry out the plans they had made for me. I gave them ten dollars and later was driven in state (with a guide, a chauffeur and a porter) to my boat where a guide had waited all night to get me a ticket, and had only succeeded in getting it at all because the captain of the ship was a brother-in-law of the director of Intourist. I was introduced to the captain and Intourist left with him a big parcel of food to be served to me en route to Saratov. When we passed the thousands struggling to get aboard, the assistant director of Intourist said everybody in Russia was crazy because they were all travelling to look for better conditions, but there were no such conditions as they they were terrible everywhere.

The upper deck of the boat was fairly clean and comfortable, every inch of the available space was occupied by the new Russian plutocrats – I was the only foreigner on board. But the lower decks were a sight which I am sure can be seen nowhere else in the world except perhaps on the rivers in China – thousands of miserable people packed like sardines on a wet filthy floor, on top of barrels of fish, and in every other inconceivable place. I spent several hours with them and was well rewarded for my ability to bear the stench. A boy of 18 who was on his way with his wife to Nizhni-Novgorod to work in an electric station told me that he had just come from Astrakhan, in the North Caucasus, and that the wheat was yielding only two poods per hectare (½ a bushel per

acre) and that the peasants were flocking out of the collective farms and the workers leaving the State farms, as they knew they would starve if they stayed during the winter. He said he would get 180 roubles a month and 800 grammes of black bread per day, but his wife would also work and they would be much better off than in the Caucasus. His father was on the wet floor beside them and played in turn several musical instruments. But no one could hear him and he threatened to whip a woman who was thrashing her three small children because they cried when she handed them dry black crusts out of a dirty bag. He gave each of the children an egg and they were soon wreathed in smiles. I spoke to several peasants in various parts of the boat and all of them told me that the rye on the left side of the Volga was good, but that the wheat was extremely poor, that most of it was a complete failure and that it would not average more than 1 centner per hectare. I asked a man who looked like a communist, if what the peasants said about the harvest was true and he said, yes, but it was all due to bad organisation and because the peasants would not do what the Party told them. I asked him if he was a Party man and he said, no, but he was a candidate for membership. I was then very indiscreet and asked him in a loud voice why it was that they had a lot of communists, kolhozes, machine tractor stations and factories, yet very many people told me they were hungry and got very little bread, whereas in my country we had neither communists, collective nor State farms, but we had more wheat than we knew what to do with, and in England people ate only white bread, and that bread, butter, and meat cost only so and so per kilo. As soon as the crowd heard what I said, they shouted with anger and many repeated in great astonishment the prices I had quoted and said "see, the papers tell only lies." I never heard such an uproar in my life and I was mighty glad there were no guides about. An enormous man with a voice like a fog-horn, got up on a barrel of fish and roared out "Comrades, comrades." He had no sooner got started with his stereotyped speech when the crowd wanted to know if he was a communist and when he said, yes, they howled him down. Later he managed to finish his set speech, but when question after question (why did they get only so many roubles, why did they get only 400 grammes of black bread per day and nothing else, and why could they not afford to buy what little was in the bazaars) was fired at him by a group of 30 young fellows, he had no reply. Later I spoke to the wife of the candidate and she told me he got only 155 roubles per month and 800 grammes of bread per day and occasionally a little fish and that up to April they got 7 kilos of sugar per month, but since then they got none. However, she said, they managed not too badly, because she worked in a culture institute in Moscow. On my way to the stairs a young fellow about 24

came up and asked me if I thought he could get out of the country. He said that he was now working in Baku, as conditions on his kolhoz were very bad and he and 200 others had left during the present year. He was sure things were going to be much worse, as, though the rye in their district of the Volga was very good (80 to 100 poods per hectare), they had a small acreage and all the wheat was not worth harvesting. Last year their village had 600 horses, but now they had only 40 and there were no tractors to take their place. Another fellow joined us and he said his village had 550 cattle last year and now they had only 80. A man came forward and said he hated the collective farms, that he was an individual peasant, that butter was 8 roubles per pound in the bazaars at Saratov and black bread, although the rye was all harvested, was 3.8 roubles per kilo. I went up stairs and sat down to my Intourist fare – special Russian dish of raw fish, a fine white fish fried in butter, fresh tomatoes and cucumbers, ½ pound of butter, ¼ pound of cheese, white bread, tea, sugar, and a big bunch of grapes. I was sorely tempted to make a hero of myself and take what I could not eat down stairs, but I was afraid of the commotion it would cause, so I left it on the table. A little later the head waiter came and wanted to know if I meant that he should have all the food I had left.

The boat reached Saratov late on the night of August 19th. I found two cars waiting to take to the hotel two professors who arrived from Nizhni-Novgorod. Fortunately for me the professors decided to go on to Stalingrad, so I was taken to the hotel in one of the cars. After an hour's wait (during which time I heard the two hotel porters say they had no bread and smoked to keep from feeling the pangs of hunger) the management decided to give me the room which had been reserved for the two Americans. The walls had been newly painted, the floor had been scrubbed, the sheets were clean, and of course, I congratulated myself on my good fortune. But later I wished the Americans had stayed, because I killed 20 bugs in one bed and three in the other. Next morning I went to the portfolio class club and saw the people gaining admission by passport. To my great surprise I found many of the people not eating the regulation ticket breakfast, but buying nice white rolls, sweet biscuits and a sort of French pastry instead. Whether it was a common occurrence or not I don't know, but they had three very large boxes of such food on the floor and they were certainly doing a fine business. I paid only 2 roubles for ½ kilo of apples and 4 sweet biscuits.

After breakfast I went to look for the department of agriculture and to my astonishment I learned that all the Lower Volga government offices and staff had been moved to Stalingrad two weeks previously. I got a car from the Communist Party headquarters and went out to the grain

institute to see Professor Tulikov. You will recall my very favourable report of him and his work given in my letter of May 10th. Incidentally, I noticed that the secretary and several other officials of the Party whom I met in early May had all been replaced. Professor Tulikov was very glad to see me, but to my astonishment he did not ask me a single question about the impression I had formed since I saw him nearly 4 months before. He had just returned from Moscow and had reported to the Government that the crops in the Lower Volga region were very bad, that on the Experimental Station their wheat averaged 15 centners per hectare, yet the very best grain sovhoz in the whole Lower Volga region had produced only 6 centners. He was anxious to tell me all about his work on the special Volga Irrigation Commission. They would complete the preliminary survey on December 1st and finish all the survey and planning work by December 1st, 1933. Work was to commence in the spring of 1934. They planned to irrigate 4⅓ million hectares (3½ in the Lower Volga and the rest in the Middle Volga) and 2½ million hectares would be for wheat. I told him I did not think they could make wheat growing under irrigation pay and he half agreed with me, but said Stalin had asked for 300,000,000 poods of wheat in 1937 to be produced by irrigation and that they needed 2½ million hectares to fulfil Stalin's request. They had planned a 7 years' rotation – 2 of wheat, 2 of alfalfa, 2 of wheat, and one of cultivated crops. When I questioned him further about the expense he admitted that the cost would be simply colossal as a good deal of the land was hilly and that in addition to the dam across the Volga they would need several large interior reservoirs.

When I questioned him about this year's harvest he answered every question in a frank and straightforward manner and, to my amazement, confirmed the worst stories I had heard from the peasants. He had been in the upper half of the left side of the Volga in early June and the crops looked fine, but he motored over the whole country in mid July and found that the drought and hot winds of late June and early July had practically ruined the crop. In the lower half of the left hand side of the Volga drought and hot winds had ruined the wheat. On the right side of the Volga they had fairly good prospects but there, and on the whole of the left hand side as well, incessant rains during the harvesting season had caused a heavy loss in both quantity and quality. To make matters worse in the areas (lower part of the right hand side) where they had the best prospects, for the first time within his knowledge, they had had an extremely heavy infection of stem rust, and a good deal of the wheat was not worth harvesting. I asked him what he thought the wheat would yield in the Lower Volga as a whole and he said only 3 centners on the left hand side and perhaps 6 on the right. But I really believe he thinks

the crop is even poorer because, when I suggested they would have a better crop than last year, he said: only a little better. He confirmed what the peasants had told me about the rye and thought it would average about the same as last year – 7 to 8 centners. The Middle Volga region had, in his opinion, a better crop than the Lower Volga, but there too the late June and early July drought and hot winds had played havoc with the wheat, especially on the left side of the river. I knew he had been on a tour of inspection of Western Siberia, so I asked him about conditions there. I was told that when he left on about June 25th, the crops looked promising, they had had good rains and all the people he met were optimistic about the harvest prospects. However, he agreed with me that the lack of rain and the high temperature since he left must have materially reduced prospects. I next asked him about the late-sown spring crops in the Volga areas and to my surprise he admitted that all the grain sown after May 15th (which he thought constituted 25 to 30 per cent of the total) was a complete failure. I was agreeably surprised to find him so frank, so I asked him if the stories the peasants had told me about the appalling loss of livestock during the past winter and spring were true. He thought the figures of the decreases were too high, but said they now had on the average only one horse to 11 hectares of cultivated land (and in some regions only one horse to 17 or 18 hectares of cultivated land) whereas 3 years ago they had had one horse to not more than 4 hectares of land. In other words he admitted that they had lost two thirds of their horses. The fact that all the crops were full of weeds and that much of the grain was sown far too late he attributed largely to the loss of livestock. I next asked him if he knew anything about the rubber which the Russians were supposed to be producing from weeds, about which I had read a good deal in the papers. He said he understood that the experiments with the Kazakstan weed were promising, but all the plants Professor Vavilov had collected in 1930 in South America had been winter killed in the past winter. I asked him about the glowing reports I had heard about their successes with cotton in the Ukraine, but he knew only what he had read. He said, however, that they had tried cotton several times on their station, but it was a complete failure. I told him about the very poor crops I had seen in the North Caucasus and he agreed and said, he was afraid they would be worse now, because one of his men had arrived from Verblud that morning and had said they got 193 millimeters of rain in July and 75 during the first ten days of August. Our interview ended on a more optimistic note as he said they had 2.4 million hectares of winter rye and wheat in the Lower Volga and as 95% of all their wheat was spring they would have a good deal of rye.

In Saratov I had the good fortune to meet a member of the Central Control Commission (an Armenian Jew who spoke English extremely well) and travelled with him to Moscow. He explained that the two most important bodies in Russia were the Central Committee of the Party (120 members) and the Central Control Commission (200 members) both of which were elected by the Party Conference and held office between Party conventions.

Before I tell you about the very frank discussion I had with him, I should tell you about my visit to the bazaar where, despite the fact that I paid 4.50 roubles for four rolls of whole wheat bread, milk was 1.80 roubles per litre, a loaf of black bread 7 roubles, and a gallon of coal 1.30 roubles, I got the impression that thanks to the vegetables and the warm sun the people were not nearly so miserable as when I visited Saratov during the first few days of May.

But to return to my Armenian. In answer to my questions he supplied the following information: He was just returning to Moscow after a five weeks inspection tour of the villages in the Lower Volga. The rye crop was good and was yielding from 6 to 9 centners per hectare, but the wheat and spring sown crops all over the Russian prairies (and in other districts too) were extremely poor. He thought the stories the peasants had told me were true because he had been in many places where the wheat would yield a bare one centner per hectare, and he had actually visited villages which had only 10 horses. He had also been in the German Republic of the Volga and there the crops were especially bad. He thought the Volga district as a whole would yield only 5 centners per hectare, but he also said the crop was very little better than last year which if true means that his figure of 5 centners is considerably too high (see my previous letters for comparable data). Many villages which had had a very bad crop last year, and had lost a large part of their livestock by starvation during the winter and an appalling number of horses in the spring due to meningitis, had a very poor crop again this year. Much of the loss of horses must be attributed to a gross exaggeration of the possibilities of mechanization. He had been on farms where their tractors were so badly used they averaged only 2 hours of work per day. Much of the grain was so short that the combines could not be lowered to catch it without bumping into the ground and causing damage to the machines. The grain problem in Russia was admittedly acute as they would not be able to export much, which would seriously handicap their import programme. He as much as told me what another member of the Central Control Commission had told me in the Caucasus, that the Government planned to import certain food stuffs, especially fats. The really serious problem facing the country was one which the Government were at their

wits end to tackle, and that was, what would they do without meat, as they had practically no vegetables in the winter months. (If he had not been such an honest chap I would have suggested that the Government had already taken measures to make the bread easier to swallow by leaving the maximum amount of moisture in it, which also had the incidental advantage of greatly reducing the grain content of 800 grammes). From all their reports the conditions in the Ukraine were very bad and the loss of livestock there had also been very heavy during the past year. One of the most difficult problems in Russia to-day was the lack of transport; the very heavy loss of horses and the great shortage of machinery meant that much of the grain crop must lie for weeks in the fields and be spoiled by rains. The individual peasants on the Volga had practically given up growing grain and were spending all their efforts on vegetables; but as many of them lived as far as 40 kilometers from a railroad, a large part of the vegetables were spoiled. (I wanted to suggest that perhaps the fact that the Government stole their grain from them had something to do with this shift to vegetables.) The success of Torgsin was greatly exaggerated and it made only a few million gold dollars per year as the Russians had only a very limited amount of jewellery. However, in the Caucasus, where the women had always worn a lot of jewellery, Torgsin had been a very great success. It was true that their tempo of industrialization was very expensive, but the trend of economic events was pushing them. The teachings of Marx and Lenin were presented to their students just as the science of mathematics, but they also taught their students bourgeois economics – from a communist point of view. Last year he was a member of a special commission which was sent to Central Kazakstan to investigate the rubber problem. The weed (discovered long ago by the natives, who used its roots for chewing gum) which grew only 6 to 8 inches high on the hills of Kazakstan, could be grown anywhere, even in Moscow. Last year they had produced experimentally 25 tons of pure rubber. They now had about 2½ million plants and preliminary experiments indicated that they could get 25 centners of pure rubber per hectare. There were, of course, difficulties to solve, such as cultivation which would not damage the roots, but they hoped to overcome them by mechanization.

When I got to Moscow an izvoshchik wanted 25 roubles to drive me about 1½ miles to the Embassy. As I had paid only 20 roubles for a first class cabin for two days and one night on the Volga boat, I thought the figure excessive so offered him 15, but he would not look at it. Finally when he saw me heading for a tram he agreed to take 20. On the way home he said he had to pay 50 roubles for 36 pounds of very poor oats

for his horse and proportionate prices for hay and things for himself and I wondered about the consistencies of Soviet economics.

As this will be my last letter from Russia, I had hoped to give you a sort of summary of my four months observations in the form of a few suggestions which I would make about Russian agriculture if the Government were to pay me the compliment of asking me to advise them on some things to be included in a manifesto to be issued by a Fourth International. But I have no time and will only state that they should offer many concessions to foreign countries in place of the money they owe them as the people are hungry and have lost all interest in propaganda as a substitute for something to put in their bellies; that they should issue a general moratorium on statistics; state that while the poor peasants were happy a few years ago to receive livestock and other capital stolen from the best farmers (called kulaks) that now the poor peasants were not only poorer but hungry, and it was necessary to invite the good farmers back to do some work and raise livestock and other sorely needed foods; that they had reluctantly found it necessary to fire all the Jews and other town birds managing white elephants called State grain and cattle factories, communes and many of the collectives, as despite their admirable qualifications to accept and expound the teachings of Marx and Lenin, unfortunately they knew little or nothing about farming; and finally to tell the U.S. that while politically it would be nice to be recognised, what was really needed was the reorganisation of the American Relief Association and other bodies who would distribute food and old clothes to very many million hungry Russians.

Sincerely yours,

A. Cairns

14

Efforts to Stamp Out Speculation in Connexion with Collective Farm Trade

William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon,
25 August 1932

Sir, Moscow, August 25, 1932

A few days ago, as reported in my despatch No. 433 of the 10th August, a decree was issued imposing the death penalty, or some lesser punishment, for the pilferage of State property, or the property of co-operatives or collective farms, including crops in the fields. On the 22nd August, a further draconian measure was enacted by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars, a translation of which is enclosed,[22] charging the G.P.U., the State Procurator's Department and the local authorities to extirpate speculation in connexion with collective farm trade, and authorising them to impose upon speculators and middlemen sentences of from five to ten years' imprisonment in concentration camps.

2. The first of these decrees is directed ostensibly against "class-enemies, chiefly kulaks," the second against speculators. In actual fact, the chief object of the first decree is to put an end to the practice of peasants, whether collectivised or not, who, because they are hungry or afraid for the future, or both, are taking grain produced either by themselves or others and consuming or hiding it. The main purpose of the second, though it speaks specifically of speculators and of consumption goods rather than of peasants and of grain, is to prevent the collective farms and individual peasants from selling their grain on the open market before the 15th January next, the date laid down in the decree on collective farm trade. This is clear enough from reports in the press of illegal sales of grain by named collective farms. Both decrees are dictated by anxiety for the success of the coming grain-collection campaign, which is threatened on the one hand by the consuming hunger of the peasants (of which Mr. Cairns's reports of his travels about the country between Western Siberia and the Ukraine bear constant witness), and their determination not to go hungry again next winter if they can help it, and on

the other hand by their temptation to anticipate the liberties of collective farm trade.

3. "Kulak" and "speculator" are elastic terms. A kulak, in the pristine interpretation of the word, is a peasant who has enriched himself by the employment of other men's labour. At other times, especially in the days of mass collectivisation, a kulak has been a peasant possessing certain machines or more than a certain number of cows or other livestock, the number varying from district to district according to the needs of the new-born collectives for animals to stock them. Of late, he has been a man who steals grain or spare parts, or disapproves of collectivisation, or, by an almost incredible extension, a man who disapproves of the prevailing theory of payment by results, and preaches that all collective farm workers should receive equal wages. A new intermediate species of the breed has recently crept into the press – the "podkulachnik," or sub-kulak – apparently a man who has entered a collective farm but does not like it. There are a good many of these.

4. So, also, what is a speculator? And will even the most honourable collective farm worker or individual peasant feel safe in taking his butter, or fruit or vegetables to the open market if he knows that the G.P.U. have special instructions to look out for speculators? There is an anecdote, hackneyed now in Moscow, which tells how one day the Polish rabbits saw hordes of Soviet rabbits streaming across the frontier. Asked why their flight, the Soviet rabbits replied that by a new decree all camels in the Soviet Union were to lose their tails. "But you are not camels, are you?" "No, indeed, but how can we prove it to the G.P.U."

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.
William Strang

Minutes

Please see also N.5094/38/38.[23]

Further evidence of Soviet anxiety about the next grain collection.

The various definitions of the word "kulak" contained in the last part of this despatch are interesting.

C. H. Bateman
8/9

It is clear that the grain-collecting campaign is seriously threatened.

L. Collier
September 6th.

15

Soviet Decrees against Pilferage and Speculation
Memorandum by E. A. Walker (Moscow), 30 August 1932

Memorandum

I.

The terms of the decree against pilferage (see Moscow despatch No. 433 of the 10th August) indicate that it is directed against pilferage and petty theft in general, i.e., whether the objects likely to be stolen or otherwise damaged are located on collective farms, in co-operative stores, or are in process of conveyance by rail or by water. Nevertheless, the impression one receives from a perusal of the Soviet press is that pilferage is for the most part confined to the places in the Soviet Union where one is likely to discover something worth possessing or stealing, namely in the country where the harvest is now entering its final stages. At all events few allusions are made except to thefts of foodstuffs and these, to judge by the press accounts, would appear to take place for the most part in the country where the grain is already stored or is standing in the fields in the shock. To what extent the thefts are caused by actual hunger, or fear of hunger during the coming winter as the result of a bad harvest and large requisitions of the Government, is difficult to determine. The fact remains that the pilferage appears, on the showing of the Soviet press itself, to be going on all over the Union.

For instance, the *Izvestiya* of the 27th published a number of communications from their correspondents in the provinces all telling the same story – pilferage by "kulaks" and "sub-kulaks" (for definition see Moscow despatch No. 463 of the 25th August)[24] which in many cases appears to take place without any preventive measures being taken by the police and the judicial authorities. For example, it was reported from Zaporozhie that the class enemy was pillaging public property. Kulaks had destroyed more than two hectares of wheat while the police authorities, sunk apparently in "Liberalism or opportunist shortsightedness"

were inactive. So inactive were they that the daughter of a kulak, whose name appropriately enough would appear to mean in Russian "a waster," was in the habit of creeping into the collective and to use her own words, "placing before herself the definite purpose of destroying the collective farm." The lady in question was sentenced to two years imprisonment, whereas according to the *Izvestiya* she should have been shot. At Uryupinsk much pilferage was going on and in one particular locality the thieves secreted grain in specially made poachers' pockets in their smocks. The brigadier in charge of the farm stated that he had noticed nothing unusual! At Sinelnikovo the collective farm workers were doing their best to protect the crops they had raised, but neither the police nor the local authorities would do anything to "offend the kulak." Elsewhere it was reported that in some localities the very guards placed over the crops by the collective farms were themselves kulaks and abstracted quantities of grain during the night, while many cases apparently occurred of the thieves, after having been arrested, being at once released.

Death sentences, compared with the number of cases of pilferage, would appear to be small, and the press (and if we may believe it), the workers, are irritated by the leniency shown to the class enemy. One person, however, was reported sentenced to death in the neighbourhood of Vinnitsa (a district in the Ukraine where the conditions of agriculture are unusually unsatisfactory even for the Soviet Union) for having organised a gang which had succeeded in stealing the not inconsiderable amount of 250 centners of corn. Another case is reported from Simferopol – that of a kulak who placed an iron hook in the corn which put the threshing machine out of commission for 15 days.

II.

Another abuse "unmasked" by the press is the perversion of the "advance" system. From Moscow despatch No. 385 of the 18th July it will be seen from a summary of a decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Party of the 5th July that advances were to be made both in kind and in cash to the collective farm workers, those in kind varying in accordance with the number of working days. It appears, however, that in practice this system, which looks equitable enough on paper, has been found to be very liable to abuse. A short time ago the *Izvestiya* in a leading article complained that advances were being made in some cases on the principle of "take as much as you want," with the result that grain available for other purposes than actual consumption on the farms themselves was much diminished and a number of actual instances of perversions of the "advance" system have

recently been reported in the press.

As already stated the decree of the 5th July above referred to lays down that the advances in kind shall be made in accordance with the number of working days which can be shown by the farm worker to whom the advance is to be made. According, however, to the *Izvestiya*, advances are being made in several districts of White Russia on the principle of "need and seniority." That is to say the peasants received advances of wheat or hay in accordance with the number of mouths they might have to feed in their family, or in accordance with the length of time they had served in the collective farm. Thus it came about in several instances that certain peasants received much more than they were entitled to under the new decree and as, in many cases, there was nothing left for the other workers, the latter deserted *en masse* and went to work on other farms. On another farm over 14,000 kilogrammes of wheat were produced. Of this amount over 10,000 were handed over to the collective farm workers themselves, while only 1,600 kilogrammes were set aside for deliveries to the State. According to the *Izvestiya*, the erroneous policy of making advances in kind to the peasant in accordance with the number of mouths to be fed in his family is due to the old socialist principle of equality of payment irrespective of quantity or quality of work performed. The slogan so beloved of Marxian theorists, "from each man according to his ability, to each man according to his needs" is thus apparently no longer in odour of sanctity!

III.

What is the remedy for the present condition of things? The non-communist economist would presumably say that so soon as the peasant is allowed greater freedom in the production and the disposal of agricultural produce of all kinds and receives a fair price in goods and other services for such produce, conditions will improve. The communist with his belief in the efficacy of formulae and word magic (though during the current summer he has indirectly admitted the correctness of the non-communist economist's contentions in so far as he has recognised the bad effects of the shortage of goods of "wide consumption" in rural districts) prefers to attribute the present discontent to class enemies, kulaks, sub-kulaks, middlemen, speculators and so forth. The *Izvestiya* in a leading article entitled, "Let us pitilessly extirpate speculators," endeavours to prove this thesis. After referring to the "Growth of socialist property, the increase in productive labour, the victory of socialist economy, the prohibition of compulsory nationalisation of cattle, the organisational-economic strengthening of the collective farms, the fight against speculation, the increase of the well-being of the toilers," etc.,

the writer points out that despite the priceless benefits conferred upon the Soviet Union by Communism, speculation is still rife. The decree of the Central Executive Committee and of the Central Committee of the Party of the 20th May laid down that no shops or stalls were to be opened by private traders, but there was a great difference between private traders and exploiters on the one hand and the collective farm worker or individual toilers or handicraftsmen on the other who had received the right to sell their goods on the open market and participate directly in the exchange of goods.

Thus the *Izvestiya*, but one is tempted to enquire where or what is the dividing line which separates justifiable private trading from speculation and social parasitism? The *Izvestiya* very wisely does not attempt to define it otherwise than by saying that it does indeed exist.

It is at all events certain that private trade, both for money and by means of barter, has assumed considerable proportions at the present time. I heard recently of an instructive case where a pace-making worker, who by reason of his rather superior status, was enabled to obtain 3 metres of cotton print with which he initiated the following series of barter operations:-He sold the cloth and bought bread with the proceeds. He then travelled by train into the country to a place about 15 miles from Moscow. He exchanged the bread for apples. He brought the apples back to Moscow and sold them for 50 roubles, making apparently a considerable profit on the initial transaction. "*Ab uno disce omnes*" or in any case "*multa*."*

However, to endeavour to alleviate the present situation merely by branding as speculators persons who buy and sell is clearly inadequate as a method and on a par with witch-hunting. To Lenin, who had the demagogue's capacity for expressing misleading half-truths in a clear and convenient form, is attributed the following statement: "For the real communist society it is always true that a bushel of wheat, or a hundredweight of fuel, is something holy, far more so than the things with which the priests confuse the wits of fools." So far as present day Russia is concerned, Lenin has probably diagnozed [*sic*] the situation correctly, for where the need and distress is as great as it is in the U.S.S.R. at the present time, a bushel of wheat is indeed precious and doubtless for that reason the unfortunate population will risk imprisonment or even the death penalty and go to any lengths to get something which can make its life a little less unpleasant, or indeed for that matter physically possible.

30th August, 1932 A. W.

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*The endings of the words "omnes" and "multa" were underlined, and a question was placed in the margin.

16

Soviet Grain Collection Plan
British Embassy, Moscow, to the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, 1 October 1932

Dear Department, Moscow, 1st October, 1932

We have had from Bullard the following information which may be of interest.

A large commission, including Kodatski, the president of the Leningrad Regional Executive Committee, and Kirov, and said to be supported by troops, has been sent out into the country districts to prosecute the grain collection campaign. Kulagin, a G.P.U. friend of Miss Daunt's at Leningrad, was to accompany the commission but escaped going on the grounds of ill health only to be put on a similar commission to the Caucasus. Kulagin has apparently shown openly his distaste for a job which involves dragooning a whole district with which he is on intimate terms.

We have gathered the impression from Bullard that this individual, Kulagin, is remarkably indiscreet to his foreign acquaintances, and may not lost long.

Yours ever
Chancery

Minutes

I should have thought the Soviet Govt. were taking rather a risk in using the Red Army (which is largely composed of peasants) to enforce the grain collection. However, desperate diseases require drastic remedies [....]

R. G. Howe
17.10.32

17

Agricultural Situation in the Soviet Union
Conversation by William Strang (Moscow) with Walter Duranty, 31 October 1932

Record by Mr. Strang of a Conversation with Mr. Duranty

Mr. Duranty came to-day to exchange views.

He has at last awakened to the agricultural situation. He has been talking to Maurice Hindus and others who have been travelling about the country, and he says that the true position is only just being realised. His description of conditions was not very different from what we have ourselves been reporting for the last six to nine months.

The root cause of the present breakdown in agriculture in his view is the shortage of labour and of draught-power.

As to man-power, there has been a constant drain of population from the countryside since about 1929. This is partly due to a stirring in the peasants to see and take part in the new industrial life of the country. It is also partly due to a movement of peasants from country to town, or from one district to another, in search of better living conditions. It is a bitter experience for country workers to find their good produce despatched they know not where, and to be left with not even enough to feed themselves and to receive only a meagre supply of manufactured and consumption goods in return. Large areas are almost depopulated and are going out of cultivation or are at the best undercultivated and choked with weeds. In addition to all this, the deportation of the kulaks has swept the countryside of the most enterprising, skilled and industrious part of its population.

As to live-stock, there has been great slaughter, first at the time of the initial collectivisation campaign in 1930, and since then by fits and starts, either for food or for lack of fodder. There is a slaughter going on at the present time to meet demands for delivery to the State, which now take the form of a graduated tax, and in anticipation of an imminent shortage of fodder. The live-stock population of the country is now, he under-

stands, only about 40 per cent of the population in 1929. This means not only a shortage of meat and diary produce, but a shortage of power for cultivation.

Tractor-power has not made up for the loss of horses. Those tractors which are in use have a short life. Combines cannot be used if, as often happens, the grain crop is weedy.

There are undoubtedly on the other hand factors making for improvement. The technique of large-scale agriculture is being acquired and scientific methods are being introduced. Many collective farms, under good management, become productive enterprises. But the downward tendencies are much stronger than the upward tendencies.

The collection of grain for centralised distribution (towns, consuming areas, army, export, reserves) is going badly. The total planned quota for this year is much lower than it was last year, as a result of the new policy of collective farm trade, but even this reduced plan has, to date, only been fulfilled to an extent much less than at the same date last year. The food situation is bad enough even now, when fruit and vegetables are still to be had, but what of the late winter and early spring? Until the middle of January, when the peasants (if they have delivered their quota to the State) will be free to throw their grain on the open market, the authorities must rely on the dwindling grain collection to feed the town and consuming areas. After that, will the peasants have any grain to spare for the market, and if so, will they market it? If not, how are the towns to live?

What, he asks himself, are the authorities to do? There are several possible issues.

There might be a return to Nep, modified to suit the conditions of 1932. This has been strongly urged upon them within the party itself. They considered it, hesitated, and rejected it, as the Central Committee resolutions and the recent expulsions from the party show.

Then, again, grain may be obtained by importation, or by the use of the army reserve established against the possibility of war with Japan. To buy grain from abroad will mean less money for industrial equipment, but a reduction of purchases abroad has already been decided upon and there are already stories that the coming year is to be a "year of conservation," a breathing space between the first and second Five-Year Plan. As to the use of the army reserve, Mr. Duranty thinks that the present rapprochement with Japan may have this in view. The Russians want to be on good terms with Japan so that they can be free to call on their grain reserve and bring the troops back from the Far East. The Japanese want to be on good terms with Russia in order to prevent the

latter from striking an anti-Japanese bargain with the United States in return for recognition.

It might be argued, he agreed, that the quantities available from the army reserve, or even from importation, would be a mere drop in the bucket of the people's need. But the point is, he says, that the drop would not be thrown into the bucket, but would be directed to the danger points. There are millions of people in Russia, peasants, whom it is fairly safe to leave in want. But the industrial proletariat, about 10 per cent. of the population, must at all costs be fed if the revolution is to be safeguarded. This does not present an insuperable problem of distribution, if the extra grain can be got, for it would be all under the hand of the Government.

But failing either of these two measures, what then? Is there any other issue but a break? Is there no limit to the people's endurance? And yet there is, he thinks, no sign of any actively subversive or insurrectionary movement. Nor can he conceive, in terms of practical politics, by what process any such revolt or insurrection could arise or have any chance of success, unless it were to come not from among the people, but in the form of a "palace revolution" within the party itself. Yet, the discipline of the party is still strong and its agents very wide awake, with eyes on even the great ones themselves.

There is, of course, a still further alternative solution of the whole complex of Soviet difficulties, which he did not mention but which he naturally has in his mind, namely, recognition and a loan from America in return for a strong anti-Japanese policy, heavy orders in the United States, and the handing over to United States interests for reconditioning or exploitation on a technical aid basis of part of the railway system, of the gold-producing industry, or even some of the Soviet giant industrial enterprises.

W. S.
October 31, 1932

Minutes

When even Mr. Duranty recognizes it the situation must be bad indeed [....]
J. D. Greenway
Dec. 5

Mr. Duranty is a somewhat shady individual, who has been accused (though not on convincing evidence, as far as I can tell) of being in the pay of the Soviet Govt. But he is an able journalist, and (– what is not always the same thing –) a man of general intelligence. Maurice Hindus

is an even abler man, whose book, *Humanity Uprooted*, gave one of the first accurate accounts of everyday life under the Soviet régime.[25] Both Mr. Duranty and Mr. Hindus are of pro-Soviet views, the latter, at least, from genuine conviction.

L. Collier

December 6th.

18

Soviet Grain Collection Plan
Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 19 November 1932

Sir, Moscow, November 19, 1932

In my telegram No. 190 of the 6th November I had the honour to report the statistics published in regard to the collection of grain by the State during the month of October for centralised distribution. These figures showed that the plan for the month of October had been fulfilled to the extent of only 57 per cent., and that by the 31st October the plan for the year had been fulfilled to the extent of only 56 per cent. The areas which show the worst results are the primary grain-producing regions such as the Ukraine and the North Caucasus; while the State farms, the so-called "grain factories," fall far behind the collective farms and the individual producers.

2. These grain collection figures, which used to be published every five days, have now ceased to appear, though the press continues to be full of lamentations about the failure of the country to supply its due quota of grain for the towns. As an example, I will take the leading article in the *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* of the 18th November.

3. Only four areas, the Tatar Republic, Middle Volga, Kazakstan and Western Siberia, are, it says, fulfilling the plan. The Ukraine and North Caucasus are the worst of all. The reasons for this are the prevalence of pilfering and of the illegal sale of grain, and the slackness of the local party and Government authorities in the face of a campaign of sabotage by kulak elements. The local authorities do not seem to realise that the grain collection campaign has become an operation carried on under conditions of the bitterest class warfare. The kulaks, in their frantic opposition to the Government, are bringing influence to bear upon the unsteadier sections of collective farm workers, for the mere fact of entering an artel is very far from turning a collective farm worker into a fully conscious participator in the construction of a socialised economy, and, indeed, many of them still retain the mentality of small property owners.

The kulaks have been liquidated as a class with some success, but their influence still persists.

4. The article then deals with the situation in the North Caucasus, where, in spite of full collectivisation, technical reconstruction of agriculture and a good harvest, the grain collection results are lamentable, winter sowing is disgracefully backward and theft and peculation are rife. This can only be because the "class positions" have been surrendered by the party and Government organs. In hundreds of collective farms the crops are rotting in the fields. In one of them, for example, 97 hectares of wheat, 34 of beans, 24 of castor and 30 of sunflowers have been lost in this way. In some places collective farm managers and party officials have abetted the kulaks in concealing grain and in selling it illegally. One kulak, who swore he was unable to deliver 5 centners of grain, was found with 60 centners on his premises. A purge of the party organisations in the North Caucasus must, it declares, rid the party of all accomplices of the class enemy and confirm the faithful in their task of Socialist construction.

5. "We are," the article concludes, "entering upon the most critical period of the battle for bread.... The artel is one of the forms of socialised economy. The land which is in the use of the collective farms and of the individual peasants is the property of the State. Vast quantities of manufactured goods are being sent to the villages. The working class, which made the October revolution, has rescued the poor and middle peasant from the bonds of the landlord and kulak, has set the countryside on the path of modern large-scale agriculture, on the path of socialism, has invested milliards of roubles in the reconstruction of agriculture and has ensured its rapid development. If, therefore, certain groups have taken to the path of kulak sabotage, and do not use the land provided for them or fulfil their obligations towards the State, then the necessary measures of the proletarian dictatorship must be taken against such remnants of kulakdom and their mouthpieces." With this singular travesty of the facts and with this threat the article ends.

6. In the programme of the All-Union Communist party adopted at the Eighth Party Congress it is stated that the industrial proletariat played a leading role during the revolution and throughout the whole course of the evolution of the Soviets into organs of power. The programme then goes on to say: "Our Soviet Constitution reflects this circumstance by preserving certain privileges for the industrial proletariat as compared with the more scattered petty-*bourgeois* masses in the villages" – that is to say, for at most 20 million persons as compared with the 140 millions of the peasantry. The exploitation of the peasants for the benefit of the urban proletariat, which has since the revolution been one of the

foundations of the Soviet régime, is still as ever meeting with sullen opposition from the peasants in the form of passive resistance, the more determined at the present time in that it is now inspired by hatred of collectivisation and confirmed by disillusion. The article summarised above may be read as a confession of what is no more than the simple truth that every peasant is a potential kulak, and that the countryside has been little influenced by the Soviet attempts to achieve that transformation of the mind of man upon which the successful construction of a Socialist society depends. Russia is resisting socialism, and the issue is still in doubt.
I have, &c.
Esmond Ovey

Minutes

The situation is well summed up in the last two sentences of this despatch [....]
J. D. Greenway
Nov. 30

The "socialisation of agriculture" has failed; and with it, the main feature of Stalin's policy. It remains to be seen whether Stalin and the Party can adapt themselves to the consequences of this failure. Mr. Strang thinks that they can so long as the Party has got Stalin to lead and hold it together.
F. Gwatkin
3/12

For further evidence of the chaos in the countryside, please see N 6494/1179/38.[26]
L. Collier
December 6th.

19

Situation in Soviet Union: Soviet Attitude towards Foreign Press

William Strang (Moscow) to Laurence Collier, 6 December 1932

Confidential

My dear Collier, Moscow, 6th December, 1932

I learn from Cairns that the Soviet Ambassador – whether Sokolnikov or Maiski he does not say – recently had Sir Walter Layton and Jules Menken on the mat for some articles in the *Economist* on the Soviet Union written by the latter after his visit here last summer, on the ground that they were not up to the *Economist's* usual "objective" standard and painted too black a picture.[27]

I see also from the *Izvestiya* that the Soviet Embassy recently had to reproach another of its friends, this time the *Manchester Guardian*, for an unfriendly reference to Bessarabia.

But the crowning example is Walter Duranty. Duranty has been waking up to the truth for some time (see for example our despatch No. 614 of the 1st November)[28] but he has not hitherto let the great American public into the secret. A few days ago, however, he sent an article out by safe hand to Paris and had it telegraphed to New York, describing the position pretty much as he put it to me, as recorded in the above-mentioned despatch. The *New York Times* made a great feature of it.[29] Shortly afterwards Duranty was visited by emissaries from governing circles here (not from the Censorship Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs but from higher spheres) who reproached him with unfaithfulness. How could he, who had been so fair for ten years, choose this moment to stab them in the back, when critical negotiations were taking place and when the prospects of recognition by the U.S.A. was brightening? What did he mean by it, and did he not realise that the consequences for himself might be serious. Let him take this warning.

Duranty, who was to have left for a short visit to Paris that day, put off his departure to wait further developments. Nothing happened and he has now gone. He affects to think it possible that, like Paul Sheffer, he may not be allowed to return.[30] I am sure he knows that any such fate is almost out of the question, but he says the authorities here are in such a state of nerves that there is no knowing what they may do.

He told me the above in confidence.

Yours ever
W. Strang

Minutes

[....]

Interesting, as evidence of the way in which the Soviet Govt. attempt to control the foreign as well as the home press.

L. Collier
December 15th.

20

Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 14 January 1933

Sir, Moscow, January 14, 1933

With reference to my despatch No. 11 of the 3rd January, I have the honour to report that the terrorisation applied in the later stages of the grain-collection campaign appears to have increased in severity. It is no longer merely a question of expelling collective and State farm managers, although these expulsions continue apace. The contemporary incarnation of the class enemy has been definitely located in Soviet agriculture, and exhortations to exterminate him, backed by no less authority than Stalin's speech at the party meeting which has just concluded, form the chief slogans of the daily press. On the 3rd January the *Izvestiya* reported a trial at which three former members of the local Government of a rayon in the Ukraine had been condemned to the "supreme measure of social defence" and nine others to long terms of penal servitude for their "malicious sabotage of the grain-collection" campaign. Since then the Soviet press has recorded that other culprits in widely-separated districts have been shot. One of the main forms which the persecution has taken has been the typical one of revealing the counter-revolutionary antecedents of agricultural workers; and the exposure of former kulaks and "white guards," alleged to have concealed grain or burnt crops or organised resistance to the grain collections, are reported with unction almost daily. Such cases are mentioned with considerable detail, the areas and actual farms concerned being recorded.

2. The gradual party purge is being more and more definitely associated with the agricultural persecution on which I reported in my despatch under reference, and the *Pravda* has pointed out that the hostile elements which the party must eliminate consist not only of "slackers" who are indifferent to the party's injunctions, but also of "wreckers"

who definitely endeavour to organise opposition. An instance of the rigour with which the purge is being applied is provided by the case of seventeen areas in the North Caucasus, where of over 1,000 Communists, some party members and some candidates, who were examined by the party commissions charged with an inquisition, 30 per cent. were condemned to expulsion.

3. Evidence of the arbitrary nature of the agricultural persecution has reached this Embassy from other sources than the Soviet press. A former British subject, now married to a Soviet citizen, who lives in extreme poverty in an agricultural district, stated recently in a letter regarding her desire to return to England, that she had lately bought some flour on the open market, but that representatives of the local agricultural authorities had entered the house and confiscated it without explanation. It is, however, probable that tradė in grain was not permitted in the area in which she resided and the authorities may well have been within their rights. Another case in which the intervention of the Embassy has been sought concerns the holder of a British passport, resident in Odessa, who bought several pounds of flour, butter and sausage on the open market for which she must have paid some hundreds of roubles at current prices. On her way home with her purchases she was accosted, so she states, by a party of men, describing themselves as representatives of a local village soviet, who confiscated her property, accusing her of speculation and gave her a document recording the confiscation. She adds, however, that they began forthwith to eat the sausage in her presence. The Embassy's assistance has also been invoked in a telegram from three peasants in the North Caucasus with Russo-Oriental names, whose identity has not yet been established, who state that all their grain has been confiscated and that they are starving. In none of these cases do the persons concerned appear to have sought a remedy in the Soviet courts, but I hesitate to recommend them to do so.

4. The Soviet press does not claim that the methods of persecution employed have brought any material success in the grain-collection campaign. The collections were to be concluded by the 1st January, but by the 25th December the plan had only been carried out to the extent of 85 per cent., amounting to about 17.4 million tons. Of this total the State farms had delivered 2 million tons, or 76 per cent. of their quota. The Ukraine has been the most backward of all the chief grain areas, and the rate of its deliveries has steadily declined, only 50 per cent. of the month's plan having been carried out in December. In one area the crop from nearly 400,000 hectares was recently reported to be still unthreshed. During the present month the campaign has been continued, but by the 5th January only the Nizhni Novgorod and Lower Volga regions and

Crimea and Bashkiria, of the important grain-producing areas, had fulfilled their plan, although the Middle Volga and the Central Black Earth districts were not far in arrears. The *Pravda* of the 10th January observes, however, that, while the above-mentioned districts have either nearly or altogether fulfilled their plan as regards all crops, deliveries of some crops have been overfulfilled, and the most important grain crop, wheat, is proportionately in arrears. Grain plans for individual crops, therefore, remain in many cases, to be fulfilled in detail.

5. The propaganda devoted to the conclusion of the grain-collection plan may be expected to react unfavourably on preparations for the spring sowings. The Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R. has, however, decided that this question must not be sacrificed, and has issued a decree, of which I have the honour to transmit a translation herewith,[31] laying down the principles which are to be observed in what may be considered the next act of the Soviet agricultural drama.

6. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.

Esmond Ovey

21

Sir Esmond Ovey to Sir John Simon, 27 February 1933

Sir, Moscow, February 27, 1933

In a decree of the 23rd September last, reported in paragraph 4 of Mr. Strang's despatch No. 533 of 24th September, it was stated that all requests for seed loans would henceforward be refused and that neither State nor collective farms would receive seed loans for either the autumn or the spring sowings.

2. I have the honour to report that an exception has now been made in the execution of this decision. In a decree of the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars dated the 25th February it is now stated that in view of the loss of a part of the harvest in the steppe zone of the Ukraine and in the Kuban region of the North Caucasus owing to unfavourable climatic conditions, it has been found necessary to provide seed for those areas from the State grain reserve, to the amount of about 20 million poods for the Ukraine and about 15 million poods for the North Caucasus. These are, of course, the regions where the food situation is worst and where the most violent measures have been taken to secure the execution of the grain-collection plan. In spite of what the decree says, it would not appear to be the climatic conditions which played the decisive rôle in bringing these regions to their present sorry pass.

3. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.

Esmond Ovey

22

Situation in Soviet Union
Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to the Foreign Office, 5 March 1933

No. 27

My immediately preceding telegram.

Meanwhile internal situation is not promising. Conditions in Kuban have been described to me by recent English visitor as appalling and as resembling an armed camp in a desert – no work no grain no cattle no draught horses, only idle peasants or soldiers. Another correspondent who had visited Kuban was strongly dissuaded from visiting the Ukraine where conditions are apparently as bad although apathy is greater. In fact all correspondents have now been "advised" by the press department of Commissariat for Foreign Affairs to remain in Moscow. Expulsions and arrests are the order of the day and this morning names of forty officials arrested for agricultural sabotage have been published in the press.

While the government is still reported strong, acute observers feel present dictatorship has out-run general views of the party (see my despatch No. 69) and the country under Stalin is now almost exclusively (? group omitted) by army and secret police regardless of any counsels of moderation.

23

Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 7 March 1933

Sir, Moscow, March 7, 1933

With reference to my telegram No. 27 of the 5th March,[32] I have the honour to report that the press of the 5th March published an official statement of the Ogpu giving the names of forty officials who have been arrested for "sabotage" in agriculture.

2. The Ogpu have, the statement asserts, recently brought to light and broken up a counter-revolutionary wrecking organisation in certain branches of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the People's Commissariat of State Farms, chiefly in the agricultural areas of the Ukraine, North Caucasus and White Russia. The members of this organisation were mostly State employées, the great majority of them being of *bourgeois* or landlord origin. Most of those arrested have, it is stated, admitted their guilt. Among the charges to which they have confessed are:–

(1) Wilful damage to and destruction of tractors and agricultural machinery.
(2) Deliberate propagation of weeds in the fields and lowering of crop yields.
(3) Incendiarism in machine-tractor stations and flax mills.
(4) Looting of grain reserves of collective farms.
(5) Disorganisation of sowing and harvest.
(6) Destruction of draught and dairy live-stock.

3. The documents in the case and the statements of the arrested wreckers are alleged to prove that they had as their object the disruption of the peasant economy and the creation of a famine in the country. More than seventy persons in all have been arrested, though the names of only forty of them have been published.

I have, &c.
Esmond Ovey

24

Conditions in Soviet Union
Sir Esmond Ovey (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 13 March 1933

Sir, Moscow, March 13, 1933

I have the honour the transmit herewith, as illustrating the semi-famine conditions existing over wide areas of the Soviet Union, a translation of a letter received by a Volga-German servant in one of the foreign missions in Moscow from a friend in the Volga-German Republic. The writer's husband was a Red partisan, and has apparently always been a supporter of the Soviet régime. She asks that her letter should be sent to Stalin, in the conviction that he cannot know the conditions that exist on the Volga, otherwise he would not allow them to continue. We have heard from other Volga-German servants in the service of this and other Embassies that there are frequent cases of suicides and sometimes even of cannibalism.

2. I also enclose a translation of an anonymous letter received by His Majesty's consul in Moscow from a factory worker at Saratov on the Volga, who says that conditions there are worse than in the famine year 1921.

3. Mr. Muggeridge of the *Manchester Guardian*, the correspondent referred to in my telegram No. 27 of the 5th March as having recently returned from a trip in the Ukraine and the Kuban,[33] tells me that the conditions, especially in the Kuban, would have been incredible to him if he had not seen them with his own eyes. That part of the country is becoming a desert, inhabited by starving peasants and occupied by well-fed troops. An interesting side-light is thrown on this situation by a chance remark of M. Umanski, head of the Press Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. He protested to M. Duranty that there was no famine in South Russia. "But why," said the latter, "you are sending corn down there?" "Ah! yes," was the reply; "but it is not for the peasants."

4. Other foreign press correspondents tell similar stories, and the authorities are apparently so alarmed at the reports which are reaching the foreign press that they have not only "strongly advised" all foreign press correspondents in Moscow not to leave the city for the next month or two, but in certain cases have had too curious visitors removed in motors and private trains from cities where conditions are particularly bad.

5. From a good source I hear that in the month of November alone the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union confirmed the death sentences in the cases of 2,000 peasants convicted under the law for the preservation of Government property. Every one of the appeals was dismissed. These cases include, of course, only those tried by the ordinary judicial procedure, and do not include those, probably more numerous, dealt with by the summary jurisdiction of the Ogpu.

6. The Ogpu are in full cry against the alleged enemies of the régime, as shown by the execution of thirty-five State officials for agricultural sabotage, reported in my telegram No. 33 of the 12th March. So proud are the authorities of this new act of ferocity that the Press Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs telephoned to a prominent foreign press correspondent at 3.30 A.M. to announce it to him. While Stalin's new supervisors of the peasants are being tolerably fed, their lot is not without its concomitant disadvantages. Many are reported to have fallen victims to the peasants' hatred, while many have been summarily shot by their own superiors "for cowardice in the field."

7. M. Litvinov in our conversations rarely touches on internal affairs, of which he has frequently shown himself to be singularly ignorant. He did, however, a few days ago volunteer to me that the food situation was better, and that certain steps had been taken to that end. I gathered that he must be referring to the so-called "commercial shops" which are being opened, or rather revived, in Moscow. These are shops where bread, and sometimes meat, may be bought in unrationed quantities at prices lying somewhere between the controlled price and the price on the now almost denuded open market. I therefore replied that I gathered this was not the case in the country. He at once admitted that the present was a difficult time. Incidentally, bread was at first sold in these very shops at between 1½ to 2 roubles a kilog.; the price is now between 5 and 6 roubles a kilog.

8. It is probable that the real purpose of these shops is to supply those persons who have been or are to be deprived of their bread cards, without, however, being obliged to quit Moscow. I understand that the "control figure" for the reduction in the number of bread cards in Moscow alone is no less than 300,000. Some source of supply for these unfor-

tunates, other than the open market, is obviously required. Estimates of the "control figure" for the reduction in the population of Moscow vary considerably. A well-known Communist gave the figure the other day as about 700,000, it being proposed to lower the population of Moscow from 3,400,000 to 2,700,000 by expulsions from the city and surrounding area.

9. A minor sign of the times is the discontinuance of the issue of newspapers in Moscow on the day succeeding every rest day, that is, on one day in every six. Only the *Pravda* will continue to appear uninterruptedly every day. The reason for this change is said to be shortage of paper.

I have, &c.
Esmond Ovey

Enclosure 1 in No. 24

Letter from the Volga-German Republic, November 23, 1932
(From E. A.)
(Translation)

Dear Friend, Markstadt

We send you heartiest greetings and wish you the best of health and happiness; that is, all that is necessary in life and which we have not now for the most part got. With us hunger has grown so great that it cannot more be borne. Cats and dogs are eaten, and putrid meat. The people are swelling up and collapsing at work from hunger. I myself am a bit swollen up. Everything is taken away from the villages – everything in the way of food. (? the norm in the towns has got too small.) Since the 20th January children get no provisions. The schools might close down if 50 grammes of bread is not given to each child. Things are getting miserable, so miserable that it is impossible to describe how miserable things have become in the Volga Republic. When people cannot get any bread, there can be no seed. I can hardly believe there can. You know, dear friend, I am no kulak, haven't any notion of it. But it is often not understood what is meant by kulak. We poor proletarians are allowed to go hungry. I would tell you, if you can give this letter to Comrade Stalin, I wish it; I would be answerable for my letter. Let them tell this comrade, if he has any children, let him feed them on putrid horseflesh like we have to here in the republic. What he would say, let us assume. My husband is a Red partisan and for eight years a tobacco factory worker. He has been a pensioner four years. Thanks to the Leninist works he gets a pension and at present is employed as a watchman

in the Karl Marx Tobacco Factory. The money would be sufficient, but nothing can be got for it. The Capitalist Rothschild would starve in his treasure chamber if he went in one day to count the money and the door closed behind him and he could not get out. You see you can't eat money. I am sure if there is no help soon my husband is bound to die. So I would ask you, dear friend, to send this letter to Comrade Stalin. I answer for what I have written. It is all so true and so much more terrible when one sees it all oneself. I am my children's mother and have a mother's heart. And I must watch them go hungry, and I and my husband and most of the folk with us. I think that Comrade Stalin does not know all that and does not want it so. If I merely had to suffer alone I should already have strung a rope round my neck – done to myself what they did to Khalturin (?). But there are thousands like me.
E. A.

Enclosure 2 in No. 24

Hunger Stalks the Volga
Letter to the British Consulate from a Worker of the Klimov Factory, Saratov, dated March 6, 1933
(Translation)

Listen, Comrades, and hear how they live in the land of intensive collectivisation, to wit, Saratov!

You are told by word of mouth and in the press of the achievements of the U.S.S.R., but you must see realities, not as they are shown to you, but as they actually are, in order to value at their true worth the achievements of Comrade Stalin. You cannot buy bread on the market; it is forbidden; and the other food-stuffs are so dear that a worker's or an employee's wage for a month are only sufficient for five days. The other twenty-five days the worker must go hungry or sell his chattels, for the communal eating-houses feed you on any filth. People are dying of starvation at the rate of 150 to 200 a day. There is no room left in the cemeteries. We Russians have never been in such a position, not even in the famine year of 1921, which was better, if anything. Our authorities pay no heed to our requests, so we have to turn to you. To follow up this letter, a personal communication will be made to you. Pay heed.
(A worker of the Klimov Factory)

Minutes

The King, Cabinet, Dominions
[....]
Ghastly conditions
R March 27

25

Conditions in Soviet Union
British Embassy, Moscow, to the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, 27 March 1933

Dear Northern Department, Moscow, 27th March, 1933

The following extracts from two letters received by the Consul may interest you in their revelation of local colour.

The first is from a Russian now in the Ukraine who lived for many years in Canada and writes as follows:

"After my father's death my mother wrote and asked me to come back and in 1922 I returned to Russia. In 1926 my mother died. I buried her and then lived neither rich nor poor. We were four 'souls,' four hectares of land, one horse and one cow, and so I lived until 1932 when I was 'dekulakised,' my house taken and I and my family put under the open sky...."

The second is from a British subject living in the Urals:-

"Every day the hunger here gets worse. Grain has gone up to 100 roubles the pood. Dozens of starving people every day beg bread below our windows. Notwithstanding the severe penalties awaiting grain thieves (two have already been shot for stealing two poods of grain) someone crept into our half ruined storehouse and stole ten poods of grain, which we were keeping by us for the autumn sowing.... In the kolhozes too there have been thefts of grain. What terrible times we are all compelled to live through."

There is no doubt that both the Embassy and the Consulate receive considerably more of these letters than at any time since the present Mission was established. They become more and more frequent, and it is only a small proportion of the more sane and succinct that we report to you.

Yours ever,
Chancery

26

Conditions among Population of Soviet Union
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 9 April 1933

Sir, Moscow, April 9, 1933

With reference to Sir Esmond Ovey's despatch No. 145 of the 13th March,[35] I have the honour to report that an increasing number of stories, of varying reliability, are now reaching the Embassy regarding the sufferings of the population in the Soviet Union. The following is a selection from them:-

2. A week or so ago a Russian friend of a member of the Embassy, having received some time previously an invitation to a birthday party, arrived on the appointed day and found the family in a state of distress. The families inhabiting two of the rooms in the same flat, although they had lived in Moscow all their lives, had been refused passports and were under orders to leave within ten days. The police were frequently calling to see whether the rooms had been vacated. The husband of the lady whose birthday it was had been arrested a week previously, and her stepfather, an official in the Commissariat of Agriculture, had been arrested on an unspecified charge only the previous day. Her brother had just served a sentence of ten years, and on returning to Moscow had learnt that he would not be given a passport, and was thus denied the right to live in any of the thirteen towns of the Soviet Union, namely, Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Tiflis, Minsk, Rostov, Magnitogorsk, Vladivostok, Kuznetsk, Stalingrad, Baku, Gorki and Sormovo. Another member of the family was undergoing a sentence of ten years in a northern timber camp, and had sent a request for food.

3. Reports from all sides leave no doubt that the number of suicides is increasing. A carpenter who works for His Majesty's consulate relates that a man whom he knew, living in Moscow, lost his employment, was then deprived of his bread card and a little later was refused a passport and told that he and his family must leave Moscow within ten days. The House Committee wanted his room quickly and were worrying him. He

went out, borrowed a revolver, returned and shot his wife and two children, wrote a note and left it on the table saying "This room is now free," and shot himself. The carpenter says that he saw the four bodies on the floor.

4. Letters have been addressed to the Embassy begging for England's help against the present régime. One of these, from the Ukraine, states that the Communist administration has ruined the working people and has reduced them to starvation, barbarity and even cannibalism. After the words "England, save us who are dying of hunger; help us to get rid of the Bolsheviks," the letter is signed by "The Committee of One Hundred," and a postscript adds: "Oh, Mr. Ambassador! We cannot express in a letter all our misery; we are being forced to cannibalism by our 'Workers' Government of Desperates'; save us!"

5. The commercial counsellor has received the enclosed specimens of the so-called human food on which the peasants are existing in some part of the country. One of these was cattle cake, which was being sold, it is said, for human consumption at 8 roubles for a piece about 8 inches by 6 inches, and another was a dark-brown substance which was said to be made for human consumption with the aid of the oil pressed from cattle cake. It seems clear that in most parts of the country the euphemism "bread" has lost its meaning and is being used to cover these varied forms of doubtful provender.

6. A British subject named Richter, already known to His Majesty's consul-general as of a good type, told the following story when on a recent visit to Leningrad. He broke down while telling it and for some time could not continue: At Armavir in the Kuban, where he has been living, the worker's ration in the factory is 400 grammes of bread a day and nothing else. All the people have swollen faces and bodies and limbs from having too little or injurious food to eat; the corpses of people who have died of hunger can often be seen about the streets; and it is quite certain that human flesh is sometimes eaten. The omens for the next crop are all unpropitious. Mice – sure signs of famine – are to be seen in swarms. Public security is shaken to such an extent that nothing is safe if left out at night; people who have cows or swine bring them into their living-room at night.

7. A Canadian engineer, who speaks Russian and who has been employed for the past year on the copper concentration plant at Metstroi in the Urals, called recently on His Majesty's consul and painted a gloomy picture of several industrial plants in the Urals which he had visited. Up-to-date American machinery was introduced, assembled by the Russians incorrectly, worked without oil and then blamed when it failed. Production is therefore falling in the copper industry, and is likely

to continue to fall, since the advice of the foreign engineers is ignored and the Russian managers are frequently changed and have little authority. Food is insufficient, the workers receiving only black bread with sometimes a little sugar. Rubbish heaps are searched for potato peelings, bones, &c. Overcrowding is acute, four persons being put into 10 square metres of space.

8. It is noteworthy that stories similar to the above are now arriving from all parts of the Soviet Union. A journalist learned that in Kazakstan the population was gradually dying out from starvation, and that the railway station at Tashkent had become a place where the peasants congregated in search of food and, finding none, died. At Kharkov the ration for workmen is said to be 300 grammes of black bread a day, purchasable in the open market at 30 roubles a kilog. Reports indicate that nowhere is the situation worse than in the Ukraine, where the only hope of the desperate population seems to lie in the rumour of a contemplated annexationist *coup* on the part of Poland.

I have, &c.
William Strang

Minutes

The King. Cabinet. Dominions.

Comment is unnecessary, except perhaps to observe that the U.S.S.R. is the one country where there is no overproduction [....]
A. Walker
22. April

Comment is indeed needless!
L. Collier
April 24th.

Quite appalling.
G. M. 25.4.33.

27

Situation in Soviet Union
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 8 May 1933

Sir, Moscow, May 8, 1933

The prominence given to Anglo-Soviet relations in the press during the last few weeks has lately begun to colour those letters which this Embassy received from its unsolicited Russian correspondents, of the kind quoted in Sir Esmond Ovey's despatch No. 145 and my despatch No. 186.[36] I have the honour to draw your attention to some recent examples which are not without interest.

2. One correspondent writes to tell His Majesty's Ambassador: "When Litvinov spoke to you about 'public opinion' here, he was talking lies and nonsense. There is no public opinion; there is merely the opinion of the Communist party maintained by our rulers." Another correspondent assures Sir E. Ovey that "you were not mistaken, Mr. Ambassador, when you said that torture and the third degree are applied by the Bolsheviks. All that is quite true, but of course they only apply these methods to Russians and to those who prefer to die rather than to make a bargain with their consciences and to play the role of a remorseful spy and wrecker, &c., in court." At the end of four closely written pages, this correspondent excuses himself for cutting his letter short on the grounds that "there is no paper on sale here, because our industry is so large."

3. A sardonic letter which has been received by His Majesty's consul is, I feel, worth quotation in full:-

Dear British Consul,

Give to your Government the warm thanks of the All-Workers E.P.O. of the Kolguginski District, because your British Government has published a decree prohibiting the import of food-stuffs from the U.S.S.R. into England, for the reason that our Government of the U.S.S.R. sends the very best food-stuffs abroad to you, while we, workers and peasants, because of that are *starving*.

Do not forget to communicate this message.
April 21, 1933
By Authority ... (four signatures).

4. Letters in which no allusion is made to Anglo-Soviet relations, but which merely describe social and living conditions, are still increasing regularly. The motives of their authors are obscure, but it is significant that the number of letters increases as the economic crisis in this country becomes more acute. In the last week an anonymous letter has been received which opens as follows: "We request you, Mr. Representative, to approach your Government for our protection and with the object of saving the starving people of the U.S.S.R., who are living on all kinds of rotten stuff, carrion, marmots and cannibalism," and concludes by declaring that, "we are perishing and you are being appealed to by thousands of hungry peasants and workers in the U.S.S.R." According to this letter, "if collective farmers take one or two pounds of grain to make kasha they are sentenced to ten years, and already 60 per cent. of collective farmers have been prosecuted and are serving compulsory labour in some camp or other."

5. Some light on the conditions in these camps, which are steadily deteriorating as the camps become more overcrowded, is shed by the contents of a letter to which His Majesty's consul-general at Leningrad has drawn my attention. The letter was written to his mother by a youth belonging to a middle-class family, who had been sentenced to three years in a timber camp for hooliganism as a result, it is said, of trying to settle a quarrel at a railway station. "We are eaten alive by lice," he wrote, "our food is kasha morning and evening, and half a pound of bread at noon. Our stint of work is 3 cubic feet of timber a day; this is far beyond our powers, especially with the tools we are provided with." In his next letter he said that his sentence had been increased to ten years, no reason being given. A case of forced labour, otherwise than as a penal measure, has also been reported to me by Mr. Bullard – that of a servant girl employed by a family with whom he is acquainted in Leningrad, who says that she left her village, near Novgorod, to escape forced unpaid labour in the forests.

6. It is, of course, natural that people to whom it would occur to address a foreign mission on the subject of their plight should show some interest in foreign affairs and the international aspect of the Soviet régime. Several examples of letters from such people have reached the Embassy lately; and I have the honour to transmit a translation of one of these letters herewith. It is interesting that the author of this letter makes so many of the points familiar in foreign anti-Soviet propaganda. "The hate of the peasants," he says, "is awful," but "the Russian peas-

ant is biding his time." He accuses the Soviet Government, in spite of its advertised horror of war, of having made war against its own peasantry, and he "protests against the reasonless destruction of life." He accuses "the ruling clique of Bolsheviks" of "robbing the people, pulling down churches, setting up slave colonies of prisoners while they themselves can live in the Kremlin and datchas and watering places and enjoy themselves." He then suggests that the Soviet Government conceals its preparations for war by bribing the foreign press; and Mr. Bernard Shaw is mentioned by him as one of the instruments of this propaganda. The interest of such a man (who describes himself as living in a collective farm) in politics, over and above the matters which personally affect him, is not, in fact, surprising. It is well known that the average Russian's reading of the daily press is first of all devoted to foreign news. The contents of the Soviet newspapers are so unattractive that the only excitement which it can offer is the reports on foreign affairs, although the tone of the comment on these reports is unsympathetic to him. The names of international celebrities are therefore as familiar to him as those of film actresses or footballers would be if he lived in Western Europe.

7. Considering the number of letters from the Soviet citizens which this Embassy receives, one is compelled to wonder whether no such letters are sent abroad to foreign newspapers, and if so why they are not translated and published. They would provide a not unfair antidote to the only information regarding living conditions which is sent directly from the Soviet Union, in the form of news from foreign journalists who are compelled to be discreet, or contained in such an organ as the *Moscow Daily News*. That this paper has an extensive public in England seems undoubted, and it must have a considerable indirect influence on educated opinion. Its weekly edition for the 1st May (apparently a special number) contained congratulations, for instance, from Mr. Fenner Brockway, from Lord and Lady Passfield, from an Oxford University Club, from the New York *Nation*, from Miss Ruth Fry (in spite of her association with the Quaker Organisation which the Soviet Government has expelled), and from a professor at London University. So assured is the *Moscow Daily News*, like other Soviet publications, of its mastery over its sympathisers abroad, that its propaganda is often reckless. This particular edition devoted, for instance, one article to an interview with a woman in a collective farm. She described how, two years, ago, she had given her cottage, her barn and her fruit garden to the collective farm, and of her satisfaction with the income in kind which she now received in return. In reckoning up the value of the commodities which she quoted, *i.e.*, flour, potatoes, &c., her total income for the whole of

last year is seen to have amounted to under £5 15s., together with a pittance of 25 roubles in cash. The apologists of the Soviet Union in England would scarecely congratulate the English recipients of such an annual income as their sole means of support.
I have, &c.
William Strang

Enclosure in No. 27

Translation of Letter Received by British Embassy
Dear Sir,

Please do not be surprised if you won't find my signature at the end of this letter. The reason is so obvious that it needs no explanation. I would like to discuss a number of questions on a very small piece of paper, and I don't quite know whether I shall succeed. I leave it, however, to you to judge.

Question 1. – Does enthusiasm for Socialist construction exist among the masses of Soviet Russia?

No, those who state that it does, *i.e.*, the Bolsheviks, are lying. There is no enthusiasm. There is only a flight of the peasants from the villages; moreover of the best type of peasants. There is nothing other than passive resistance, protests against the socialisation of the villages, against collective farms, State farms, &c., and also against requisitions, the abolition of private property and the so-called dekulakisation.

Question 2. – What does the peasant, flying from the collective farm, think?

Here in the collective farm I am living the life of a badly fed animal. I have been robbed. I and my family have been robbed of my grain and all my reserves. My cattle have also been taken. But the peasant can only live out of his cattle. Therefore, life here is impossible. I go into the town, get a job as a workman and there I will be fed. There I will receive white bread and sugar, which are no longer seen in the villages; and so the good peasants in numbers of tens of millions leave, or have already left, the village and gone to the town or to some construction work. This "desire for building" is the so-called Socialist enthusiasm. But according to us Russians this is called passive resistance to the socialisation of the village. The hate of these peasants is awful, but the Russian moujik has been and always will be dissimulating, and he is concealing his hate even now, but he is biding his time.

Question 3. – What is socialism?

From the point of view of a Russian, socialism is war. If the Bolsheviks hope that bolshevism will destroy war we Russians, after fifteen

years' experience, know that this hope can never be fulfilled. We in this letter protest against the Russian so-called socialism and protest against the reasonless destruction of life. We know that socialism not only does not put a stop to war, but even sanctions it in time of peace. Socialism is not a guarantee against war, it is war itself. Socialism has produced the death of tens of millions of citizens and peasants in Russia (this is not an exaggeration); read the article of Pitirim Sorokin in the *Economist*, No. 1 for 1922 (the journal for the Russian technical society in Leningrad). For this article Sorokin was expelled from Soviet Russia for ever. The war produced 11 to 12 million casualties, and the civil war 22 million lives, or in other words a total from the beginning of the war of 33 millions of the best of the Russian population. The ruling clique of the Bolsheviks very well understood that they will not succeed in building socialism. However, they also very well know that with the aid of Socialist theories they will be able to hoodwink the people, and can rob them, pull down churches, set up slave colonies of prisoners, whilst they themselves can live in the Kremlin and in datchas and watering places, and enjoy themselves. There is only one thing that they are really afraid of, and this is war. They are feverishly preparing for war: this is well known. The expenditure for propaganda bribed on to the foreign press is immense. You may not know, but last year and the year before last, the French Deputy Cachin received 20,000 fr. from the Bolsheviks for each of his speeches. What are you doing to counteract this? Can you permit such propaganda? What is your expenditure to counteract it? Do not Gorki, Barbusse and Bernard Shaw receive, and have they not already received payment? If you do not know this it is your own fault. At the present moment only fascism has the right outlook on bolshevism. Hasten to unite with the German Fascists; that is the only remedy for Marxism.
Pr. Int. Office

Minutes

[....]

News Dept. (who will no doubt make use of this if asked about con ditions in Russia).

Shown to the *Times*.
RAL
28/6

Worth reading (with the enclosure).

As regards the last paragraph, I have been told by journalists that letters of this sort are often sent (usually indirectly, through recipients here) to newspaper offices, but that editors seldom publish them (though I have seen some in the press), partly because it is difficult to convince sceptics of their authenticity, but mainly because it is thought that public opinion is already convinced that appalling conditions exist in Russia, except for that section of the public which is so pro-Soviet that nothing will convince it.

L. Collier

May 16th

[....]

News Dept. to make use of this material.

R May 19

28

Situation in Soviet Union
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 1 June 1933

Sir, Moscow, June 1, 1933

With reference to my despatch No. 247 of the 8th May,[37] reporting on the contents of the letters which the Embassy continues to receive from Soviet citizens regarding conditions in this country, I have the honour to inform you that two cases have recently occurred in which individuals have called at the Embassy and proffered information of the same type, apparently without any ulterior motive.

2. In one of these cases the caller, a young man of the post-war generation, began by asking for the address of the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, or his name, since he claimed to have read in the Soviet press that this correspondent was unfavourable to the Soviet régime, and said he wished to give him information which would counteract the "lies in the Soviet press." He was told that he could not be given the correspondent's address, since he would realise that a visit by him to the correspondent would only embarrass the latter. This, he said, he understood, and then began to recount his personal grievance. He was a student, but had been employed during a vacation in laying the rails of a permanent way. This apparently entailed pulling up one lot of rails to lay another, and when he complained that his task was "mere wrecking," he was told: "Our Socialist industry is so great that it is necessary for us to have victims." At this somewhat humorous stage in his narrative he was told that he could not have a further hearing, and left complaining of the "cowardice" of foreign missions.

3. Another caller, who appeared at the Embassy a week or two ago, with a large portfolio full of documents, which he wished to deliver, began abruptly by saying that the information he had to offer would be interesting to the Embassy in view of the deterioration of Anglo-Soviet relations. His materials related to the widespread famine which affected certain districts from which he had just returned, and regarding which

the world was in utter ignorance. He was then told that the Embassy was not in want of further information, and left with reluctance.

4. In both these cases the callers were discouraged, since their visits were not concerned with the legitimate business of the Embassy. Soviet citizens, however, occasionally unburden themselves when they visit His Majesty's consulates on account of services or information which they require, and in this connexion I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of a memorandum by Mr. Vice-Consul Pott, which has been communicated to me by His Majesty's consul-general at Leningrad, regarding an interview he had recently with two young Russians, who came ostensibly to enquire whether and how they could obtain British nationality.

I have, &c.
William Strang

Enclosure in No. 28

A quoi rêve la jeunesse

Two decent-looking Soviet youths called the other day – a most unusual occurrence. They said they were students at a Workers' Faculty, being employed during the day as carpenters at a salary of 45 roubles a month, and attending classes in the evening. The object of their visit, they said, in an anxious whisper (fearing to be overheard by any Russian employee that there might be in the next room or through some Ogpu microphone), was to enquire what prospects they had of acquiring British nationality. It was true, they admitted, that they knew no English and had no relatives or connexions in England; and they realised at the same time that their chances of ever being allowed to leave the U.S.S.R. were very remote. They were not of the kind, they said, who get sent abroad on Government business. But conditions and the future outlook were so depressing that all they thought of was to escape – anywhere. To go on living with nothing to live for, with no scope for initiative or keenness; the thought was too awful. Outsiders might suggest to them that perhaps the outlook was not so hopeless as they imagined, and quote claptrap from the Soviet press about the "victorious completion" of the First Five-Year Plan and of the "future victories" of the Second Five-Year Plan; but it was they, wretched Soviet citizens that they were, who had to live in this paradise. What was the plan, anyhow? Nobody seemed to know. But they had all heard of the Second Five-Year Plan loan. With an ironical laugh they explained how they knew that the workers, carried away by enthusiasm, had just demanded the issue of this loan. "And what happens if you don't subscribe at least one month's pay?" asked

one. Your passport is in danger and with it your permission to reside in one of the larger towns, where there is less starvation. Soon you may see yourself turned out at forty-eight hours' notice and wandering in the country in search of food and quarters. Did we foreigners believe that Russians believed what they read in their newspapers? After all, they had nothing else to read. They were told how appalling conditions were in capitalist countries, when in their own country they could hardly be worse, and had never been so bad even in the worst Tsarist times. The Soviet workman knew full well that he did not enjoy the comfort and freedom of the workman of Western Europe. As for the Metro-Vickers case: Russians looked upon the arrest and trial of foreign scapegoats as being a sure sign that things are going really badly in the Soviet Union. There was no hope, they thought, of any change or improvement. Wages had been reduced by 30 per cent.; a month's or a month-and-a-half's wages had to go to the new loan; and now, this morning, tram-fares had suddenly gone up by 50 per cent. People complained, even loudly; but what remedy was there in this reign of terror? They pawned their winter clothing or tried to sell Soviet bonds at a fifth of their nominal value.

The youths went away, disappointed at the thought that neither we nor any foreign country could remove them from Soviet tutelage and adopt them as their own, but at the same time rather thrilled to think that they had done so daring a thing as to visit a consulate, and a British consulate, on such an errand and at such a time.
L. P.
Leningrad, May 23, 1933

Minutes

Interesting – particularly the remark of the two students, whose conversation is reported in the enclosure, that Russians looked upon the arrest & trial of the Metro-Vickers engineers as a sure sign that things are going really badly in the U.S.S.R.
T. A. Shone
June 13.

Signs of the times.
L. Collier
June 13th

If interesting, a document sd. be printed.
L. O. 14 June

Sir R. Vansittart

No instructions have ever been given, as far as I know, to the Embassy at Moscow to discourage callers desirous of giving information. On the contrary, it will be seen from N 4694 that we asked the Chancery to send up copies of any interesting letters they recd.

I will write to the Chancery & give them your criticism, on N 4378.

R. G. Howe

26 Aug.

Thank you. Please do as you suggest. I am most puzzled to imagine what is in the Embassy's mind. If we were to pursue their line logically our information at the end of any given year would be very little. Surely we should all learn what we can. Is this an example of la-peur-des-qu'en-dira-t-on?

R Aug 26

29

Comment by Soviet Citizens on Situation in Soviet Union

British Embassy, Moscow, to the Northern Department of the Foreign Office, 19 June 1933

Dear Department, Moscow, 19th June, 1933

With reference to our despatch No. 247 of the 8th May and to other despatches enclosing letters from anonymous disaffected Soviet citizens, we transmit herewith a miscellaneous selection of some more of the same material.

We do not think there is any useful comment to be offered on these letters, two of which are from an old correspondent who calls himself "P(rivate) Int(elligence)." Another from a Dutch subject to the Consul, which required and received an answer, is included on account of the interesting references to G.P.U. practices which it contains.

We can, if desired, send translations of further batches of these letters as and when they arrive, and we should be glad to hear whether you have any use for them.

Yours ever,
Chancery

British Consulate, Moscow

H.M. Embassy.

We have received a letter from someone signing himself "A Poor Russian Peasant" and emanating from the Kiev district which, translated, reads as follows:

Is it really possible that the representatives of the civilised powers do not know that hunger stalks our land, that the people curse life and do not expect release from the yoke of the Bolsheviks, for they themselves are incapable of achieving it through physical weakness caused by need, hunger, and moral torments.

Can it really be that the civilised powers do not know that with us everything is built to deceive, and that the real object is the abolition of capitalist society. That is why they build factories and workshops.

Are the civilised powers really incapable of un-masking the Jewish-Soviet machinations: to sell at a loss to undermine the competition of goods produced by capitalists?

Do they know that to buy our goods is to aggravate the famine and want amongst our people who are dying therefrom. To buy our goods is to strengthen the Bolshevik party and to increase its vehemence in annihilating the purchasers.

Will not the Economic Conference understand the deceits of Litvinov, who with his lips will preach world peace, but who is the first to be ready to shoot the inhabitants of the capitalist world. He preaches the abolition of the economic blockade, while all foreign commerce is conducted with a view to destroying the trade of capitalists.

Will not the learned world understand that with us everything in the scientific sphere is built up for the purposes of Bolshevik propaganda?

Surely it is known that tractors have appeared in the fields while horses and cattle die of hunger. They have provided machines but the country has no shoes. They build up kolhozes but the peasants die of hunger.

It is a shame that the people of Europe should eat Russian bread while hunger mercilessly mows down the human beings and animals of our country.

It is a disgrace to different foreign delegations that they should sell their conscience for a mess of pottage. It is not the towns and factories that should be seen but the life of the country – a life of hunger and privations.

"We have no out-of-works." Lie. the towns are full of them.

"We have no hunger." Jewish deceit. Go to the Ukraine. There they eat dogs and like things.

It is a shameful thing for the Soviet delegation to pour forth lies and deceit in soft words before all the world. Liars, murderers of the torture chamber. In London they will be like the Moscow shops with the sign-boards: "Here is sold "tea, sugar, meat" and so on, while in reality there is only adulterated drink.

It will be a disgrace if the governments of the world believe this political charlatanism. It is a disgrace to the liberals and intelligentsia....

If you buy our wheat and foodstuffs, you intensify the hunger and the suffering of the people. You strengthen the development of Bolshevism, which like a wild beast will eat your children.

Only Hitler knows the truth, what they really represent, these friends who with lies proclaim world peace. Cease buying our corn and food-

stuffs. Let them stay with us to feed our people. Remember that our corn will be poison for the whole of the capitalist world. Our trade – the worm for your nation.
Poor Russian Peasant
Ivanenko
30/5/33
T. C. R. 13/6/1933

Translation

Monsieur l'Ambassadeur,

Our whole Soviet press comments at all times very truthfully, and in great detail, upon all circumstances of current Soviet life, but probably owing to lack of space has not mentioned certain small details of everyday life. For example it has not mentioned that in the Ukraine millions of the population have died from hunger. The population would be glad to eat carrion but there is none to be found. People are eating frogs. They are digging up horses that have died from glanders, and are also eating them and finally they have not only invented the method of killing and eating each other but also dig up dead bodies and eat them. These are all of course details, but in so far as history has not know such details they are worthy of some attention on the part of the decaying west, and of humanity in general.

The above mentioned details can be verified by anybody in the Zlatopolsk area.[38] Taking advantages of Soviet liberty, you or your correspondent can be told about this by anybody and you will see tens of dead bodies in any village.
(Unsigned)

Continuation of my previous letter if you have received it

Peasants and workers do not all enjoy a piece of bread, to say nothing of "employees." These are the pariahs who are suffered by the Bolsheviks as a necessary evil. Even in the Army, such as the motor detachments, they never receive any meat, only fish skilly and kasha without fat or butter and a kilo of stale black bread, and even then everybody envies them. All thoughts are directed to food.

Communists do not all receive the same rations. They are divided into workers of the Centre, district, etc. and in conformity with this receive rations in accordance with their deserts. It is only in Moscow that workers receive 800 grammes of bread and employees 400 grammes. However, this does not apply to everybody as there are some who work who

do not receive any bread as a punishment for leaving their jobs to look for other work, and not having found any have returned back to their jobs, or those who have for a long time been unemployed. The unemployed receive nothing and although the labour exchanges are full of unemployed, especially office workers and intelligentsia, nobody can receive any bread, as officially there is no unemployment. The non-working population does not receive any bread and cannot buy any as it is sold at a very high price, 3 roubles a kilo for black bread – and where can a person who is not working get such money? And even if you have the money it is practically impossible to get as you have to stand in a queue of 5,000 people. Even then the bread is partly made of a substitute, because the only food that is issued to the population is the food which cannot be exported owing to its bad quality. The same applies to kerosene which is being exported abroad and only he who has the Mark of the Beast (ration cards) can have bread, kerosene, etc. The events are following the course of the Bible ... the Bolshevik emblem is the sickle and the hammer, this is death and famine....
A Russian Sufferer
7th May, 1933

Minutes

There is nothing specially new or interesting in these letters, which confirm the reports of appalling famine conditions.

I think we might ask the Embassy to let us have extracts from a few typical & particularly interesting letters under cover of a p[*rinted*] l[*etter*] despatch, about once a month (cf. N 3644/113/38).[39]
T. A. Shone
June 26.

Personally I find these letters very interesting not so much for their contents as the atmosphere they create. It is easier for the Chancery to send them in copy like this rather than to have to make them up into a despatch & I should like to see the supply continued.
R. G. Howe
26.6.

I agree.

Mr. Richards told me today that a Mr. Pollitt, who had been working for Metro-Vickers in South Russia, had just returned, and had given him a detailed account of conditions in the South, which was worse than anything he had heard before. Mr. Richards has arranged for Mr. Pollitt

to write a memorandum of his experiences, for private circulation; and he will send me a copy.

In this connexion, please see also N.4701/113/38.

L. Collier
June 26th.

Certainly let us continue to receive these from time to time. Let them come in a "p.l." (except when the Chancery wish to offer comments). But tell the Chancery that when sending letters or translations to be sure to give the English meaning of words [....] We may wish to print some letter one day & nothing is more annoying than to see untranslated Russian phrases.
L. O. 27 June.

Foreign Office, S.W. 1
29th June, 1933

The Chancery
British Embassy,
Moscow

Dear Chancery,

In reply to your letter 2/50/33 of June 19th, we should be glad if you would continue to supply us from time to time with translations of any interesting letters you may receive from Soviet citizens about conditions in the Union. Quite apart from their actual contents, they give a useful idea of atmosphere.

We suggest that you might send them under cover of a printed letter despatch, except when you wish to offer comments on them. But please be sure to give the English meaning of any Russian words occurring in them [...], as we may sometimes wish to print a letter and nothing is more annoying than to see untranslated Russian phrases in the sections.
Yours ever,
[*R. G. Howe*]

30

Conditions in Soviet Union
Conversation by C. C. Farrer, Department of Overseas Trade, with Leslie Pott, British Vice-Consul in Leningrad, 22 June 1933

Record of Conversation

Mr. Leslie Pott, vice-consul at Leningrad, called to see me yesterday while Mr. Bagge was engaged. Mr. Pott said that conditions in the Soviet Union were becoming almost incredibly bad. He said that His Majesty's consul-general in Leningrad was under constant and rather obvious surveillance, and that while conditions were bad enough in that city he had heard from his German colleagues who had several posts in South Russia that conditions in the Ukraine and South Russia were even worse. He spontaneously mentioned to me his opinion that he did not think that Mr. Macdonald would ever be released: — he thought that an "accident" would happen.

2. In order to draw him out I asked him whether it was not possible that stories of starvation and famine in South Russia were not* exaggerated. I said one had even heard guarded allusions to the practice of cannibalism. He said that this was by no means an exaggeration, and though he had not seen it with his own eyes he had heard from residents in South Russia that such practices were occurring sporadically. He said that all the signs seemed to point towards a famine, "only this time" he added "there will be no American Relief Mission to save life."[40] Even then he doubted whether the effect of a few hundred thousand lives being lost would sensibly affect the régime at present in power.

C. C. Farrer
22 June, 1933

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*The word "not" was placed in parentheses, and a question mark was written in the margin.

Minutes

Mr. Pott's remarks as regards conditions in Russia tally with the reports we have had from other sources; and I expect the opinion expressed in the last sentence is correct.

As regards Mr. Macdonald's release, we know that he & Thornton were suspicious of the food they got, a while ago.
T. A. Shone
June 26.

We shall know what interpretation to put on any "accident" which might befall Mr. Macdonald.
R. G. Howe
26.6

News Dept.
L. Collier
June 26th.

I have long held this view about Mr. Macdonald & only hope that it may be proved wrong.
L. O. 27 June

I mentioned this possibility as regards the unfortunate Mr. Macdonald to the S[*ecretary*] of S[*tate*] the other day, and I think he shares the apprehension.

To guard against it, I think the S[*ecretary*] of S[*tate*] should make it clear to M. Litvinoff at his next interview that our offer to lift the embargo only applies if *both* prisoners are put across the frontier. We shall not be satisfied with only one or with any story to account for the non-appearance of the other.

Also I think the News Dept. should at once begin preparing the press for such an eventuality. Mr. Macdonald's life will be considerably safer if such a development is anticipated here, so as to rob it of any element of plausibility.
R June 27

These minutes are now superceded by the release and, I think, safe return of Thornton & Macdonald.
[*illeg.*] July 1st

31

Establishment of Soviet Procurator's Department
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 26 June 1933

Sir, Moscow, June 26, 1933

I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation of a decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., dated the 20th June, establishing a Procurator's Department of the U.S.S.R.[41] Hitherto there have only been separate Procurator's Departments of the constituent republics of the Soviet Union, but no central organisation. By subsequent decrees of the 21st June, Ivan Alexeivich Akulov has been appointed to the new post of Procurator of the Soviet Union, and Andrei Yanuarovich Vyshinski has been appointed his deputy, surrendering his appointment as Procurator of the R.S.F.S.R.

2. The ostensible purpose of this new creation is, as stated in the decree itself, the "strengthening of Socialist legality and the safeguarding of public property from anti-social elements." This theme is developed at some length in an article in the *Izvestia* of the 22nd June. This article explains that, in spite of the success of the existing judicial organs in giving effect to the class struggle as instruments of the proletarian dictatorship, there are still widespread violations of revolutionary legality, especially in the countryside, more particularly as regards the security of public property. As a result of the successes of socialism in the villages, which have broken the power of the class enemies, a new situation has arisen which has to be met by new methods. The class enemies, instead of offering direct resistance, are now driven in desperation to work by indirect means, such as sabotage or pilfering of State property. The writer reminds his readers, in conclusion, that the growing success of socialism does not connote the weakening of the class struggle, as, indeed, Lenin pointed out; on the contrary, the weaker the enemy the more viciously does he fight.

3. From this point of view, the new decree is merely the latest of a long series of recent enactments designed to strengthen the hold of the

ruling Communist class upon the countryside, an object to which the major energies of the party are at present devoted, much as, in the more passionate periods of the Five-Year Plan, they were directed towards the creation of means of production in industry. It also has the more immediate object of ensuring, if possible, that the harvesting and threshing of this year's crop and the delivery of due quotas to the State shall not be accompanied by the losses which, added to the inadequacy of the crop, made it necessary last year to denude large areas of the country of food to the point of semi-famine in order to provide what is little more than a pittance for the bulk of the population of the towns.

4. The decree has, however, a wider interest, in that by article 2 (d) the new Procurator of the Union is given power to exercise supervision over the acts, not merely of the police and of the criminal investigation department, but of the Ogpu itself. It is commonly believed in Moscow that this provision is a result of the Metropolitan-Vickers case, which is now (there can be little doubt) recognised by the ruling authorities to have been a blunder. Gossip has it that Vyshinski was summoned to the Kremlin to explain his handling of the case in court, and that he asked in reply how they expected him to do any better with the flimsy evidence served up to him by the Ogpu. From this point of view the appointment of Akulov is of some significance, and the designation of Vyshinski as his deputy would imply that the latter has not lost the confidence of the authorities. Akulov, who is a staunch party man of honourable reputation, was, as reported in my despatch No. 393 of the 3rd August, 1931, brought into the Ogpu in July 1931 as first vice-chairman over the head of the notorious Yagoda to put an end to the corruption then rife in the Department. His tenure of office was marked by a somewhat milder activity on the part of the Ogpu, but he was too ill-versed in the intrigues of the secret police to maintain his position and was ultimately ousted, apparently much to his relief, by Yagoda and his friends, and sent to the Donbas in September 1931 to supervise the application of measures for the increase of coal production (my despatch No. 543 of the 27th September, 1932). Yagoda's new lease of power culminated in the Metropolitan-Vickers scandal, and once more he finds Akulov set over him to watch him, but this time not from within that nest of intrigues, the Lubianka, but from a new office of greater dignity and of all-Union scope, in which he will have the astute and supple Vyshinski to help him. The results remain to be seen.

I have, &c.

William Strang

32

Rumoured Staged Trial of Ukrainian Intellectuals
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 29 June 1933

Sir, Moscow, 29th June, 1933

I have the honour to report that the rumour of a staged trial of Ukrainian intellectuals, mentioned in a letter (N 4317/21/38) of the 14th June from the Northern Department to the Chancery of this Embassy, is probably based on recent press attacks upon the All-Ukrainian Academy of Science on account of its alleged bourgeois and nationalist tendencies.

2. The *Pravda* of the 27th April published an article comparing the activities of the philological section of the Academy with the former crimes of bourgeois and anti-Soviet elements in the Ukrainian Scientific Language Institute, which were exposed and liquidated three years ago. The Academy of Science is accused of being imbued with the spirit of counter revolution and nationalism and of being seduced by a "group of Petliurist intelligentsia," who have followed the theory that the Ukrainian language is of Western-Slavonic origin and should not be influenced by the Great Russian language. As an instance of the length to which the heresies embraced by members of this group could lead them, the *Pravda* reports that in "the solitude of their studies" they have managed to expel from the Ukrainian language the Russian word "zavod" (factory) and to substitute for it "virobnya." The Ukrainian Academy is accused of the further crime, in which counter-revolutionary tendencies are also discerned, of having issued a glossary of words used by Donetz miners, which contain not proletarian words of Russian origin but the jargon of Moscow thieves.

3. The *Pravda* points out that the Party cell in the Academy has been working very indifferently and has paid no attention to such manifestations of counter-revolutionary activity, but I have seen no report in the Soviet press to the effect that the philological heretics are to be brought to trial.

I have, &c.
William Strang

33

Soviet Agriculture
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 4 July 1933

Sir, Moscow, July 4, 1933

The approach of the harvest in the chief grain-growing districts of the Soviet Union has been signalled by a further batch of agricultural decrees, one of which deals with the "compulsory supply of grain to the State by collective farms and individual holdings," another with "the delivery of grain to the State by State farms," and a third with the payments in kind to be exacted by machine-tractor stations from collective farms served by them. I have the honour to transmit to you herewith translations of these three decrees[42]; a fourth enclosure[43] in this despatch is a translation of a set of instructions issued by the Commissariat of Agriculture regarding the "safeguarding of the harvest," which repeats and supplements the concluding part of the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the 24th May, upon which I reported in my despatch No. 317 of the 6th June.

2. It will be observed that the three decrees thus severally cover the three different sources of grain deliveries to the State – State farms, collective and individual holdings, and collectives served by machine-tractor stations, which are, in addition, required to surrender 20 per cent. of their harvest to the latter as payment in kind for their services. It is in keeping with the characteristics of this year's grain campaign that those responsible for completing the quota of each of these three sources are reminded of the pressure of their obligations, and are not conciliated, as they were by the agricultural legislation which preceded last year's harvest, by promised concessions.

3. Thus the burden of the decree dealing with deliveries by collective and individual holdings is "the special character of the grain deliveries for 1933," which, instead of being founded on "ill-defined contractual agreements with the peasantry," is now "based on a firm and incontestable law." This law is, of course, the decree of the 19th January

reported in Sir Esmond Ovey's despatch No. 64 of the 30th January, which fixed the quotas of compulsory grain deliveries this season as a direct function of the planned spring sowings, irrespective of whether the planned area was, in fact, sown or not. The new decree also required the concentration of deliveries this year in the first three months of the harvest season, whereas last year these months "were wasted on so-called preparations, and in the following months attempts were made to regain lost time by applying measures of repression."

4. The most important of the concrete provisions of the decree is, however, the stoppage of all collective farm and individual peasants' trade in grain, and of the open market operations of State grain-purchasing organisations as from the first days of the harvest, a date which varies from the 25th June to the 1st August according to the district. This provision is, of course, intended to ensure that none of the grain due to be delivered in the first few months of the harvest shall be otherwise disposed of; a similar measure was introduced before the harvest last year. Other articles of the decree place responsibility for the organisation of deliveries upon particular party and Soviet organisations, while the final article reaffirms the stipulation of the decree of the 19th January that any "persons guilty of issuing counter-plans (*i.e.*, revisions of the established State delivery quotas) will be prosecuted under the Criminal Code."

5. The decree regarding the delivery of grain by State farms contains a schedule of the amounts due from the various groups of State farms, and the dates at which these deliveries must take place. The decree further apportions responsibility among the various agricultural and party authorities for ensuring that the delivery plans are fulfilled.

6. The object of the decree "regarding the payment in kind by collective farms to machine-tractor stations" is to advertise the fact that the "model agreement for machine-tractor stations with collective farms," published by the Commissariat of Agriculture, of which a translation was enclosed in Sir Esmond Ovey's despatch No. 94 of the 13th February, is to be regarded as having the force of law. The decree explains that the payments in kind which collectives are obliged to make to machine-tractor stations in virtue of this contract are the repayment to the State for "all this new powerful technical aid rendered by the State to collective farms," which is represented by the services of the machine-tractor stations, and has cost the State some 2 milliard roubles in capital investment. The deduction of up to 20 per cent. of their harvest on this account from collectives served by machine-tractor stations thus represents the tax paid by the peasantry for the mechanisation of Soviet agriculture. The most important provisions of the decree appear to be articles

3 and 5, the first of which grants the right to machine-tractor stations to requisition produce in collective farms which are behindhand in their payments in kind, while article 5 instructs the managers and political departments of machine-tractor stations to deliver all but 5 per cent. of the grain received by them from collective farms forthwith to the wharves of the State grain-collecting organisation. The remaining 5 per cent. they are allowed to retain for the supply of their employees and for bonuses.

7. The instructions issued by the People's Commissariat of Agriculture regarding "the safeguarding of the harvest" are in two sections. The first section provides for the organisation of mounted patrols who are to be responsible for the organisation of day and night guards over each field of standing grain for two weeks before the ripening of the crop until it has been harvested. While grain is being threshed, two sentries are to be posted on each threshing floor by day and by night. The second section of the instructions provides for a complicated system of recording the harvest in each stage from the standing crop to the grain when finally stored in barns. The instructions merely supplement the provisions of the decree of the 24th May on the same subject, and provide for a fantastically complex organisation which is unlikely to be systematically observed in practice and must be unparalleled in history.

8. I have already commented on the contrast between this year's "harvest legislation," as typified in the enactments discussed in this despatch, and that of last year. The index to the agricultural measures of 1932 was collective farm trade; this year it is the political department of the State farm or machine-traction station. As reported in despatches from this Embassy on the progress of the grain deliveries last autumn, the so-called encouragement offered to producers was found in the first two or three months of the grain deliveries to be unsuccessful and gave way to persecution and the "exposure" of "wreckers" and "class enemies" among local authorities and managers of agricultural undertakings. Stalin gave the cue to official interpreters of the agricultural crisis in his speech at the session of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission in January last; the crisis, he said, was due to the strong resistance of class enemies and wreckers, which was in turn due to the backwardness of official propaganda. Hence the creation of the political departments, which are to conquer the appalling material decay of Soviet agriculture by the sheer power of the Communist word. At the same time the founding of the system of grain deliveries upon a fixed tax assessed on the figure of planned production provides a handle for persecution to take the place of last year's boasted methods of conciliation.

9. An interesting commentary on the present tendency to stake the fate of the harvest on the success of the party's mission in the sphere of agriculture is provided by a speech of Postyshev at a session of the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Ukraine on the 10th June. Postyshev, who is supposed to be a close adherent of Stalin, was transferred from Moscow to the Ukraine last year, apparently to carry out reforms or reorganisation on the lines desired by the "Centre." His long speech of the 10th June is a review of his conclusions after a year's activity, moulded into an appropriately optimistic ideological form. Partly, perhaps, in a spirit of "self-criticism," he attributes the reverses suffered in the class war in the Ukraine during the last year to lack of alertness in the party, but it is probable that he adopts this line for the further reason that deficiencies in the party are held to be remediable, and it is by remedying them that eventual agricultural triumphs are presumed to be finally assured. Postyshev stated that it was the failings of the Ukrainian Communist party which had enabled "wrecking and counter-revolutionary elements to find the widest base for their activities in the Ukraine." He represented the whole Ukraine as having been honeycombed with wrecking organisations during the last year, and made numerous references to spies, "Petliurists," and "agents of foreign counter-intelligence services," whose "*bourgeois* nationalist activities" were most noticeable on the cultural front (clearly an illusion to the lapses of the Academy of Science reported in my despatch No. 363 of the 29th June),[44] but were equally pernicious elsewhere. He alleged that separatist organisations existed in league with foreign capitalist circles, and stated that "the absence of Bolshevik watchfulness had led to the party organisation in the Ukraine showing themselves to be fouled with Petliurist, White Guard, spying and anti-Soviet elements." Several columns of such abuse in the published text of Postyshev's speech were merely a prelude to a more lengthy catalogue of the failings of the party in its agricultural mission. Postyshev gave a series of examples of deviations in the party line in guiding the course of last year's grain deliveries and in interpreting the Government's agricultural policy, which were, he implied, as responsible for the failures of the grain delivery plans as the wrecking which had jeopardised the success of the sowings. Some of the instances quoted by Postyshev showed "Left" tendencies – such as the instructions given in one area that the whole year's delivery plan should be completed in one month; other examples showed evidence of encouraging "the consumer tendencies of collective farmers, which are used by the class enemy in his struggle against the interests of the proletarian State." Postyshev's speech concluded with an enumeration of the chief differences between this year's grain campaign and the cam-

paigns which have preceded it. In the first place there was the system of a fixed tax instead of contractual obligations; secondly, there was the influence of the newly-created political departments; thirdly, there was the increase of mechanisation in Ukrainian agriculture; fourthly, there was the increased interest of the collective farmer in concluding the agricultural year as soon as possible, since in accordance with the new system of grain deliveries he would then be free to dispose of his produce. The fifth peculiarity of this year's grain campaign was, according to Postyshev, the fact that a decisive blow had now been dealt to the class enemy owing to the exposure of "a number of counter-revolutionary wrecking organisations."

10. It is, of course, still doubtful whether the political departments, as the instrument of the Communist drive in the countryside, will prove any more effective as an expedient for improving Soviet agricultural production than any of the other measures which have been tried. According to the Soviet press an incorrect attitude to this year's grain deliveries, in spite of what has been called "the agitation of the political departments," still persists in many quarters, and the decree which states that the deliveries are defined by a "firm and incontestable law" has been explained in the *Izvestiya* in a leading article as a necessary admonition. Considerable publicity has also been given lately to the delinquencies of various State grain-producing and grain-collecting organisations, in particular to the Odessa branch of the Grain Trust. As a result of telegraphic instructions to the local authorities, signed by Stalin and Molotov themselves, enquiries are reported to have shown that several officials in the latter trust have been deliberately "under-estimating" the yields in their district. The responsible officials have been removed from their posts and are being prosecuted. Similar cases of "attempts to sabotage the grain delivery plans" have also been reported from Western Siberia and the Caucasus.

11. Evidence of the difficulty which the political departments are having in leading the Communist mission in agriculture is forthcoming from the numerous reports from political departments published in the press of friction between them and the local territorial Communist organisations. In my despatch No. 339 of the 19th June I reported upon a recently-issued decree delimiting the spheres of authority which the two opposed groups are to wield, but further reports in the press suggest that the bickering between local Communists, who in course of time have to some extent settled down in their environment, and the new "comrades from the Centre" is by no means allayed. This conflict is an interesting development and may have the far-reaching effect of driving the local Communist organisation still further to the Right.

12. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.
I have, &c.
William Strang

Minutes

An interesting review of agricultural conditions. Mr. Strang is doubtful whether the Communist "hot-gospellers" who are being despatched to State farms & tractor stations will effect much improvement [....]
T. A. Shone
July 14

34

William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon on the Suicide of Mykola Skrypnyk, 10 July 1933

Sir, Moscow, July 10, 1933

I have the honour to report that the Soviet press of the 8th July announced the death by suicide of Nikolai Alexeivich Skrypnik, an old Bolshevik, a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party, a member of the Politburo of the Ukrainian Communist party and Commissar for Education of the Ukrainian Republic.

2. The Central Committee, in announcing Skrypnik's death, stated that as suicide is an act of cowardice unworthy of a member of the Central Committee, the committee considered it necessary to inform members of the party that Skrypnik had fallen a prey to certain *bourgeois* nationalist elements which, hiding themselves behind a formal adherence to the party, had used his name for their anti-Soviet nationalist ends. Skrypnik, led astray by his connexion with such elements, had been guilty of a number of political errors and, although he had recognised his errors, had not had the courage to overcome them in the true Bolshevik manner and had committed suicide.

3. "How is it possible," asked the *Pravda*, "that a man with such a long history of faithful Communist activity, dating from Tsarist times, could have fallen so low?" The answer is, the *Pravda* says, that he relaxed his party watchfulness and manifested a corrupt liberalism in his relations with people who, under cover of formal membership of the party, carried out counter-revolutionary work. He trusted them without fully realising their aims. The Badans, the Yavorskis, the Erstenyuks and other fierce enemies of the party wormed their way into his confidence and placed their men in the educational organisation of the Ukraine. Under the banner of a struggle for Ukrainian culture, the *bourgeois* nationalist Petlurist elements, well supplied with money by foreign secret services, worked for the separation of the Ukraine from the Soviet Union and for the delivery of the Ukrainian workers and peasants into

bondage in order to please the Deterdings, the German Fascists and the Polish pans. Skrypnik's ideological mistakes took a practical form in his literary work on nationalist and cultural questions and in his administration of the Commissariat of Education. Having discovered the true state of affairs, he committed suicide. His experience should, the *Pravda* concludes, be a warning to Communists, for there is no greater danger for a Communist than the loss of Communist watchfulness and a weakening of the proletarian class sense.

4. It is interesting to recall that in his address to the Central Committee of the Ukraine on the 10th June, upon which I had the honour to report in paragraph 9 of my despatch No. 371 of the 4th July,[45] Postyshev made a violent attack on Skrypnik as the person most responsible for allowing the Ukraine to become honeycombed with wrecking, counter-revolutionary and separatist organisations working in the interest of foreign capitalist circles.

I have, &c.
William Strang

35

Conditions in Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 17 July 1933

Sir, Moscow, July 17, 1933

It is hardly necessary to confirm the notorious fact that on the eve of the harvest conditions of semi-famine still continue to obtain over large areas of the Soviet Union. Unauthorised estimates of the number of people who have died, either directly or indirectly, from malnutrition in the past year vary up to as much as the fantastic figure of 10 million. It is, I think, quite impossible to guess what the figure may be. I am told by a member of the German Embassy that in the German Agricultural Concession in the North Caucasus, five men have been employed in gathering and burying the corpses of peasants who have come in from outside this oasis of plenty in search of food and have died. One of the erectors employed by Metropolitan-Vickers in the Ukraine says that people died of starvation in the block of apartments in which he lived, one of them outside his door. He says that he refused to believe the stories he heard of conditions in the villages outside and walked out to see for himself; he found, as he had been told, that some villages were completely deserted, the population having died or fled, and that corpses were lying about the houses and streets. His Majesty's consul in Moscow is occasionally visited by Canadians of Russian origin settled in the Ukraine who tell him the same dreary, if less lurid, story of want, hopelessness and desolation.

2. Great indignation has been expressed in the Soviet press at the establishment of a fund in Germany for the assistance of starving Germans in the Soviet Union, and the columns of the Moscow newspapers are full of resolutions from collective farms and other organisations in the Volga and other regions inhabited by colonists of German race, protesting against these stories of starvation as "Fascist lies" and inviting unemployed Germans from the Reich to come and see for themselves or to send their children to the Volga collective farms to be fed and

educated. It is, of course, true that there are prosperous and productive collective farms in the Volga German Republic and that a part of the population has enough to eat, but it is also true, as we know from Volga German servants of the Embassy, that the conditions prevalent in the Ukraine also obtain, to a milder degree and less widely perhaps, in the Volga German Republic.

3. In Moscow itself signs of malnutrition are not widespread. The population, especially in the centre of the town where the privileged classes congregate, looks healthy and fairly to adequately nourished. The children and women generally look better than the men, and of the men it is the unskilled manual labourers who make the worst showing. These often look definitely under-nourished. In the outer fringes of the town, where the workers live, and especially round the railway stations, the picture is more depressing, for here the poorer classes are seen in the mass and here the destitute peasants from the country are wont to congregate. Even in Moscow itself, which is favoured above all places in the union in the matter of food, there are deaths from starvation. An English lady, who is studying Soviet hospitality [*sic ? hospital*] and welfare work, has herself come upon two corpses in the street of persons who had just died as a direct result of lack of food.

4. His Majesty's consular officers at Leningrad and Moscow have from time to time reported on the typhus epidemic which has for several months been present in their districts – an epidemic the existence of which is still officially denied by the authorities. According to latest information, there is a falling off in the incidence of the disease in Leningrad, but in Moscow, notwithstanding the arrival of the hot weather, which usually stays the spread of the disease, the epidemic still maintains itself. A foreign press correspondent recently applied to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs for the official statistics of typhus in Moscow. He was given a return for the months of April and May showing under twenty cases in each month. He at once remarked that although he was acquainted with very few Russians, he himself personally knew of more cases than that. Closer examination then revealed that the returns were for April and May of last year and that, according to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, no others were available. Another foreign correspondent, with greater determination, addressed himself to the health authorities, and after much argument obtained an admission that the hospitals were unable to cope with the typhus cases in Moscow, that most of the patients had to be treated at home, and that the authorities therefore had no idea how many cases there were. It is supposed that the disease has been brought by peasants from the country. It is spread

by lice, and flourishes in conditions of under-nourishment and overcrowding.

5. Plague is also reported from the Urals and Western Siberia. An engineer who has returned from that region reports that near Sverdlovsk armed guards entered the train clothed in anti-gas uniform and respirators, sacking soaked in disinfectant was placed over the doors and windows, and no one was allowed to leave the train, which then passed through several stations without stopping. Two large infected villages are said to have been destroyed by fire. The disease is reported to be of the pneumonic and septicaemic types, to be associated with diphtheria, and to be of swift attack and high mortality. It is said to be spread by fleas from marmots, which latter are apparently more commonly found in times of food shortage than usual. One channel of infection is stated to be the digging of marmot earths by peasants in search of the grain stored therein by the animals. Marmot hunters in Siberia have always had to run the risk of plague.

6. Such is the condition of the country in the first year of the second Five-Year Plan, on the eve of the fourth collectivised harvest. It is one which causes the authorities some preoccupation, but little apprehension or alarm. The suffering and death inflicted upon the population are regarded as the normal casualties of a nation-wide operation in class warfare (a class war to end classes) in which the authorities are confident that victory will be theirs. Whether or not their confidence is well founded, time alone can show, and possibly not within the space of half a generation. There is little prospect that the privations of the people can offer any immediate threat to the stability of the régime, failing a shock from outside such as a foreign war, or even that they will impose any substantial change in the policy of the party. A bad harvest in 1933 might have brought about the modification of the present agricultural policy, but the prospects for this year's harvest are said to be fairly good, as will appear from my immediately following despatch.[46]

7. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and to the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.

William Strang

Minutes

This despatch gives a gloomy picture of living conditions in the U.S.S.R.; it is clear that real famine exists in many country districts, and that the Soviet Govt. are not particularly concerned about it [....]

R. L. Speaight

27/7.

36

Conditions in Northern Caucasus in Spring of 1933 Report by Otto Schiller, German Agricultural Attaché in Moscow, 23 May 1933, Forwarded to Anthony Eden by the Duchess of Atholl, July 1933

The Northern Caucasus in the Spring of 1933

In the spring of 1933 I visited the following districts of the Northern Caucasus: The Kuban Province (Kubanskaya Oblast) from Kropotkino to Krasnodar; the Districts of Stavropol and Armavir; and the Povolye territories up to Salska-Bieloglina – a stretch, altogether of 1,200 kilometres by car.

The chief problem of North Caucasian agriculture is the famine, which since the late Autumn of 1932 has reached appalling dimensions. This time, in contrast to the preceeding year, it is not only a matter of semi-starvation which then caused a fall in the productivity of labour, and of morale. It has reached the point of actual death from starvation, thanks to which, in whole districts, the population is rapidly disappearing, and agricultural activity, therefore, at an almost complete standstill.

There are two factors which are simultaneously causing the diminution in the population of the Northern Caucasus, now so clearly apparent. Firstly, the measures for the deportation and transplanting of large masses of the population, carried out on a large scale since last Autumn in connection with the State grain collection, and the fight against Kulak sabotage (a fight which is still proceeding), and secondly the extinction of the population through famine, now in full swing.

The policy of expulsion and deportation was put into force principally against the Cossacks of the Kuban Territory. The Kuban Cossacks by tradition and mentality were the most resolute antagonists of agricultural collectivism, and from the first they treated the situation with full appreciation of its meaning. During last Autumn they exercised passive, and also, in some cases active, resistance to the measures of the Government, and with such effect that the Government recognised in it a serious danger and suppressed it by the most rigorous measures. The greater party

of that particular Cossack population was forcibly uprooted from their villages and deported to the Ural territories, thus practically annihilated. The Cossack population remaining in their native districts was considerably thinned through famine. Large Cossack settlements (stanitza) in the Kuban Province are, at present, almost uninhabited. The last living remnants will be finally demolished before the end of the year through famine. Thus, from a political point of view the Cossack danger may already be considered to have been eradicated.

Populations have diminished, not only in those villages against which measures of expulsion and other punitive measures have been applied, but in almost all the villages visited by me during my journey. In the Stavropol Province, for instance, from which, according to quite reliable information no considerable deportation has taken place, the decrease in the population has reached the greatest proportions. There were rumours that, in the town of Stavropol and its surrounding districts cases of plague have occurred but I was not able to obtain reliable information of this from the local inhabitants. But as to the widely-spread stories of cannibalism, I received complete confirmation of these, with names and details in the towns Krasnodar and Stavropol.

The famine is not so much the result of last year's failure of crops as of the brutal campaign of State Grain Collection. Therefore even such localities as the Northern districts of North Caucasia in which the crops were quite satisfactory, did not escape. The situation, in general, varies very much according to locality. The territory along the Northern Caucasian railway, for instance, produces a more favourable impression thanks to the existence of the German concession, Drusak [*sic*], in that neighbourhood, which affords the populations of the surrounding villages some possibilities of occasional small earnings. The same may be said of the territories adjoining the Rostov-Salsk railway, near which are situated large State domains which use hired labour.

Apart from localities in the Kuban districts and to the West of Stavropol the diminution of the population is especially noticeable in the Eastern district, to the East of Stavropol as far as Vinodyelnaya. Famine is especially acute also in the Southern Steppe districts. But the mountainous tribes of the Caucasian Autonomous republics have, so far, escaped the scourge.

One can judge of the extent of mortality from famine by approximate figures given by the local population. For instance, in Timishbok the population, since the beginning of last winter has declined from 15,000 to 7,000; in the Ust-Labinskaya Stanitza it has dropped from 24,000 to 10,000; in Dimitrievka from 6,000 to 2,000; in Ilinskaya from 3,000 to 1,500. The two first named were peopled by Cossacks, and they were

submitted to forcible deportation. The two last, however, consist of Russian villages, where the fall in population can be explained exclusively by famine.

Isobilnaya, Kaminogradskaya, Lazavskaya, Srednayegorlitzka and others almost produce the impression of deserted villages. So far there have not been infectious illnesses or dangerous epidemics on a large scale in those particular villages.

In larger towns also a considerable reduction is noticed in the numbers of the population, in spite of more favourable conditions, a considerable part of the town populations having the right to food-tickets. I was told that in Krasnodar about 40,000 out of the total population of 230,000 had died off. In Stavropol 50,000 out of the population of 140,000 have succumbed, and the town produces a lifeless impression.

In my report of last year on the famine in Siberia, I pointed out that the rate of increase in population given in official statistics no longer holds good. The stated increase of 3½ millions was doubtless erroneous last year already; while in 1933 the population is in reality diminishing instead of increasing.

In the villages I visited the number of deaths varied between 20–30 a day. Those still alive are enfeebled in the extreme through semi-starvation, and also by the eating of such unnatural food as grass, roots, charred bones, dead horses etc. And the majority will doubtless die from malaria with the on-come of the warm weather, this disorder having prevailed to an unprecedented extent since last Autumn. The typhus which now appears sporadically will probably become an epidemic. It is feared that, with the new crop a new wave of mortality will devastate the country, when the famished people for the first time will eat their full of the new bread and fresh vegetables.

The villages stricken by famine give an impression of utter hopelessness. The abandoned homes are rapidly falling to ruin. When I visited Siberia last year I saw the deserted dwellings most carefully boarded up, their abandonment being evidently only temporary. But here, in Northern Caucasus the houses are evidently abandoned for ever, and no steps are taken for their preservation. In the forsaken courtyards the present inventory is seen lying, perishing in disorder. It is noticeable that even in those dwellings which are not yet abandoned the kitchen-gardens are, for the most part, unworked. In some villages it is difficult to find one single person from whom to ask directions as to the road. Some villages are only partially deserted and still show some signs of life. That is evidently explained by the fact that, in the collective farms which are separated from the individual peasants the Collectivist peasants are in a better condition because they receive some help from the State. It is they

who survive in the half-emptied villages, while the helpless individual peasant-owners are left to their fate. A dog or cat is extremely rarely met with – most of them have been eaten. One may occasionally see a pig, sheep or fowl. The only cattle still surviving are cows belonging to the Collectivist farms. Thanks to the healthy growth of grass this year most of them are actually in good condition. In the Eastern districts, with the coming of Spring, the marmots are very valuable as food to the population. But the burrows which are near ponds and rivers are mostly used up, and the peasants have neither means nor strength for transporting the necessary water to flood the burrows lying at a distance, to cause the animal to emerge.

Bread, as a rule, has completely disappeared from the dietary of the individual peasant-owner. As regards the collectivist peasants a few of them still have a small reserve of their share in the last crop, and in a few collectivist farms some assistance in food is given. A member of the Kolkhosy (Collectivist Farm) having executed a certain amount of work may have a small quantity of maize-flour, usually up to 300 grammes advanced to him on account of his share of the new crop. Some little help is given too, to Collectivist peasants by public soup-kitchens where only actually working members of the kolkhosy may be served. The soup given there is, however of very little food-value, being made with the minimum admixture of food products. The bread which is distributed in the towns to the workmen and Government employees is, also, as far as I could see, not made of pure flour but contains a considerable amount of various mixtures such as maize, beans etc. People not used to this bread can only eat it with *the greatest difficulty*. It is possible to obtain some food-stuffs in the markets, but almost always of a very inferior quality and at a very high price etc. The markets never provide pure bread or flour. Even in most of the shops of Torgsin (State shops) one cannot find flour, and yet for many people Torgsin is the only means of salvation. In Krasnodar there were cases of bandit-attacks on passers-by, in which teeth containing gold fillings were broken out of the victim's mouth.

The fact that, in spite of the immense mortality from famine no attack of any importance is made upon the State apparatus is proof on the one hand of the strength of that apparatus, and on the other of the complete helplessness of the population. One can traverse the famine-stricken provinces almost without risk, in spite of the growth of banditry, and of the countless homeless tramps adults and children who wander far and wide. Resigned despair and complete apathy characterise the people rather than wrath and bitterness. During last year's famine in Siberia many sought salvation by moving into more favoured localities or into

the towns to seek work in the industries. Now the situation is quite different. The engagement of new workmen in industries and State Farms is carried on by special contract between Kolkhosy and village councils on the one part and the members of the Kolkhosy seeking for outside work. The village council has the right to issue permits of leave for outside work only on the basis of these contracts. At the railways station tickets are issued only to those showing the permit of the village. Under such conditions the starving peasant is practically a prisoner in his village, as he has no horse to travel by, and is not strong enough for long distance walking. Thus he has no other way but to remain in his village and await the gradual approach of the end.

The present situation in Northern Caucasus may be summed up as follows:

In some of the villages the population is almost extinct. In others about half the population have died out. And there are still villages in which death from famine is not so frequent.

But famine reigns everywhere, at least in those regions which I have visited.

A distinctive feature of this famine is that the authorities have not acknowledged and do not now acknowledge that famine exists. They even officially deny it. So that no assistance, either from the State or from benevolent institutions, is afforded. Last Spring the State sent seeds to the kolkhosy, but the Administration kept strict observation that the seeds were used only for "State purposes." On the 23rd of September 1932 the Soviet Government by special decree forbade the rendering of any assistance by local authorities. Therefore the assistance rendered by the Government itself by the distribution of seeds in the following Spring cannot be taken as other than a confession of the existence of unforeseen and extraordinary privations. This year's famine is, without a doubt, more acute than that of 1921. During the latter hundreds of thousands of human beings were saved thanks to the help of the American Relief Association, while at present no foreign help is possible. And the Soviet Government itself does nothing. I was told of many cases when sufferers, swollen from famine, implored help from the village soviets, only to be told that they should eat the bread which they had got hidden away, and that no famine at all existed. In fact the authorities explain the present situation by insisting that there is no lack of grain, that the peasants hide it and it is only a matter of finding it, and various posters are exhibited in the villages bearing that explanation.

There is no doubt that last Spring grain was concealed in many cases. *The Government at that time formed special permanent committees of Komsomoltsy* (young Communists, male and female) *who, carrying iron*

rods, went prodding the soil in the peasant courtyards, thus revealing large quantities of grain. These Committees still continue to visit the villages in many places seeking freshly dug spots which might prove to be hiding places for grain. I was told of one case in which hidden grain was revealed in a courtyard the owner of which had died of starvation, together with his entire family, so frightened had they apparently been of being detected in removing grain from its place of concealment.

Semi-starvation and extreme privation have, during the last few years reduced the demands of the population to such a low ebb, so used have they become to scanty diet, that lives might be saved at very small expense. The distribution of 500 grammes (about a pound) of bread daily, per head would prevent death from starvation. This means that a man can be kept alive for a month on only 12 kilogrammes (about one quarter) of grain. Consequently a million people could be fed, though poorly, upon 100,000 tons of [*grain*] from the beginning of the year until the end of July – a million saved from death by starvation. The Soviet Government *exported one-millions-and-a-half tons of grain from last years crop.**

It is true that stocks of grain reserved by the Government for military purposes have lately been diminished, as the 600,000 tons of seeds distributed last year in the Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus were taken from those stocks. One might think, however, that the State could still find it possible to provide those few hundred-thousand tons necessary to afford a modest pittance to the starving. Since, nevertheless, the Soviet Government so openly refrains from saving the famished population from death, we may assume firstly that the Government grossly miscalculates last year's crop and the amount of grain left in the villages, and, secondly that it feels its position sufficiently strong to allow it to ignore the present calamitous condition of the country. It may very well be that the extermination of the Cossack population was advantageous and desirable to the Soviet Government. In a word the edict of the representatives of the Government to the ruling party runs as follows: "the peasants who failed to supply the Government with a sufficient quantity of grain must be considered as enemies of the State. There is no lack of grain. It is hidden."

As famine is officially denied by the authorities it follows that there exists no organisation whatsoever, either for dealing with the bodies of those dead from famine, or for succouring those who are awaiting death. People have become callous and indifferent to the fate of those near to

*Footnote in original: "I. e. five million Russian lives were sold for a few million pounds. (Note of translator.)"

them. One meets people with legs swollen from starvation who move with difficulty. Others have already become so weak that they lie about in the road waiting for death. Several days usually elapse before a chance passer-by endeavours to assist them.

One can therefore see bodies of those dead from famine not only on the high-roads, but even in the streets of the towns. It is usually a long time before the bodies are carried away. In Ekaterinadar I saw a corpse lying in the street, which according to my local guide, had been there for the last three days. The truth of his statement was demonstrated by the decomposed condition of the corpse. Grave dangers of epidemics are, without doubt, created in this manner.

The burial of the victims of famine is conducted in the most primitive fashion. No trouble is taken to identify those found lying in the road, and the bodies are buried on the spot on which they are found. Even in the villages, very often no trouble is taken to convey the dead to the graveyard. They are buried in the courtyards where they have lain.

Only in the North Eastern provinces did I observe the dead being carried to the graveyard in wooden boxes. One is struck in all the cemeteries by the great number of newly-made graves, and the grave-diggers seem to be always at work. The interments are performed carelessly and unhygienically. In the village of Novopokrovskaya I saw groups of workmen occupied in exhuming the dead who had been buried at a very shallow depth and partly protruded above the surface. The bodies were to be buried now in a deeper, collective grave. In Krasnodar a German living there told me that bodies from which pieces had been cut off to serve as human food had been found. Personally, however, I cannot vouch for this.

What strikes one in all the villages is the small percentage of men. They have evidently less power of resistance, and more easily fall victims to the famine. The women who have children die sooner than others, therefore single women predominate in the villages which have suffered most severely. In Kaminogradska the Kolkhosy consist almost exclusively of women. The children's Refuges produce an especially painful impression. Mothers unable to feed their children take them to these refuges, but as they have little food the children, already crippled by famine are, little by little, succumbing to death by starvation.

The statements spread abroad by propaganda contrasting so strikingly with reality, the Government has ceased to deluge the members of the Kolkhosy with the exhortations with which it was so prolific in former years. Its endeavours to warm up Bolshevist enthusiasm have been replaced by measures of brutal coercion. Anybody leaving work without permission is arrested. Parties of people arrested, being led to forced

labour by armed men is a common sight in the villages. A special system has been established now by which compulsory labour is imposed when, through physical weakness or unwillingness, members of the Kolkhosy do not make satisfactory progress with their allotted tasks. But the food shortage reflects even upon those in charge of the work. I know cases in which agronomists sent from Rostov to direct the Spring agricultural work in the villages were given nothing but a pound of bread a day. As a result some of the Communist agronomists deserted.

Agricultural work in North Caucasia is naturally strongly influenced by the Famine. In the thinned populations of the villages there are not enough men to carry it out. Considerable areas of arable land remain untilled. In the districts between Kropotkino and Krasnodar, the most fertile parts of the Kuban province, only twenty-five per cent of the arable lands were sown by the beginning of May. The sowing, however, was still continuing. In other places the situation was more or less the same, sometimes a little better, sometimes a little worse. The stretches of land adjoining the Caucasian railway-line were almost completely sown. It is probable that special efforts were applied to these two stretches of land, visible as they are to tourists travelling to the Caucasian watering places. During last Autumn's agricultural work the population was not yet so scanty. Therefore the percentage of Winter crops in the total area of tilled lands is unusually high. Last Winter, besides, was especially favourable for Winter crops. The Autumn sowing undertaken in good time was maintained satisfactorily during the winter, and even those lands, the sowing of which was carried out belatedly and unsatisfactorily, and which in normal times would have yielded no crops this time gave some results. The Spring sowing occupies a small area in comparison with the total area sown, being carried out only by the Kolkhosy which generally received from the State a loan of seeds – mostly oats. The individual peasants, in so far as they worked at all, usually sowed small quantities of maize and sun-flower, and that very late on account of lack of live-stock. Though only a part of the total area was sown even that was not finished towards the middle of May. The weather up till then had been quite favourable for the Summer crops, frequent rains helping the growth even on badly-tilled lands. But weeds are already appearing on lands indifferently worked, and will soon overpower the seed; the more so because of lack of workers with strength for the weeding.

The Soukhosy (State Farms) alone were in a position to fulfill to a certain extent the State programme of sowing. However, even in such show-farms as Gigant (the Giant) and Verbliud (the Camel), the state of the sown fields is unsatisfactory on account of the growth of weeds already to be perceived. The Soukhosy, too, are wondering how to get

harvesters this year owing to the shrinkage of the neighbouring populations. They will probably be obliged to bring men in from distant provinces.

The problem of horse-power is also formidable. Tractors, in-as-much as they can be effectively used, are sufficient only for a small part of the field-work. The number of horses dwindled during last Winter and the ensuing Spring to such an extent that there now remains nothing but a miserable remnant of the former number. In Tishbeck, from the 1st of March to the 15th of May this year, 50 percent of the horses perished. Those that remain are in such a deplorable state owing to lack of fodder, and such extreme efforts are demanded of them during the field-work, that a further decrease in their numbers is inevitable. In view of this fact cows are now used as draft-animals, a thing hitherto entirely unknown in the Northern Caucasus. The Kolkhosy gather in even cows not yet collectivised for purposes of fieldwork. Of course their physical condition and milk-yielding capacities rapidly deteriorate. I have heard, too, that in some localities even human-beings are being harnessed to the ploughs. A large percentage of fields will remain untilled this year. A larger number still have been worked casually and unsatisfactorily during the last two years, and as a result weeds are rampant in them, especially the vicious kind. They form large groups of prickly plants as high as hedges, which can be eliminated only by very intensive and regular weeding for which men are no long available.

As mortality from famine is bound to continue and as the quantity of livestock will also be further and further reduced, the problem will arise of who will gather the harvests. In those villages where the land was tilled and sown last autumn, but where the inhabitants have since died out, the land is already now without a master. It may be that a greater number of soldiers will be sent there by the Government. Already last year, in many places soldiers were sent to assist in the field-work, to the Soukhosy of the Northern places among others. This experiment evidently gave good results. Voroshilov, the War Minister, reported the success to the Congress of the Kolkhosy last February. In spite of that, however, the gathering of crops will be attended with great difficulties on account of the lack of horses and machines.

In order to restore agriculture in those localities now decimated by famine, it will be necessary to populate them anew. There are reports of a plan of re-population already in existence. It is proposed, for instance, to transfer peasants from the Voronesh Province to that of Kuban. But such a process would take years before agriculture could be brought to a normal state. The destruction of huts, outbuildings, and agricultural implements, the wild state of the fields, have reached such

proportions that great agricultural values have perished. A new population of peasants void of all resources would require such enormous expenditure on the part of the State for the supply of the necessities for production that the process could only proceed extremely slowly.

It is possible that, during the present year, the reduction of the population by famine mortality will be greater than that of the area of laboured fields, since the latter includes the sowing of last Autumn when the population was much larger. If the difficulties of gathering in the crops can be overcome we may expect that the proportion of the area of tilled land to that of the numbers of the population will change in such a manner as to considerably facilitate the re-establishment of the food balance. It is now quite possible to admit the notion that the solution of the agrarian crisis in Russia will take place by way of restoring the balance between production and consumption without increasing the production, but at the price of the extinction of millions of people who cannot be fed by ruined agriculture.
Moscow, May 23rd 1933

Dear Duchess of Atholl, 28th July, 1933

Mr. Eden has asked me to thank you for the article entitled "The Northern Caucasus in the Spring," which you were good enough to send him.
Yours truly,
(Sd.) H. Fitz. B. Maxse
Private Secretary

Minutes

This article gives a gruesome picture of famine conditions in N. Caucasus and it would be interesting to know something more of the writer.

Qy. ask the Duchess of Atholl this, & also for a second copy for Moscow.
R. L. Speaight
4/8

I would rather not place us under further obligations to the Duchess, who is well-meaning but rather an incubus. It looks to me as if the article, which is dated "*Moscow*, May 23rd," was written by a companion of Dr. Schiller, the German agricultural attache, who, I believe, was recently in the North Caucasus.[47] If so, the British Embassy will have had this information direct from Dr. Schiller, who is in touch with them

through the German Embassy; and the new harvest will shortly change the situation, one way or the other.
L. C.
August 4th

37

Conditions in Soviet Union
R. W. Bullard, British Consul-General in Leningrad, to William Strang, 19 July 1933

Dear Strang, Leningrad, 19th July, 1933

It is generally believed, I know, that Stalin's wife committed suicide, and many people say that she was of the Opposition, but I had not heard until this week a detail which comes from a fairly good source. According to this version Stalin was cut short in a diatribe against the Opposition by someone who reminded him that the Opposition was represented in his own household, and to show that there was no favouritism he went home and wrote out an order for his wife's arrest: the order was presented to his wife and she made a pretext to go into another room and shot herself.

A Russian I know says that she recently got into conversation on a seat in the park with a young Jewish Rabfak student – poorly educated but sensible. The young Jewess said she had many relatives in the Ukraine and she spoke, as everyone does, of the dreadful conditions there, and said that she supposed Scrybin* killed himself in despair to think that he had contributed to the ruin of the Ukraine by participating in the work of the government of the Soviet Union. This view is obvious enough, but it is interesting to find it coming from such a person.

The public have now heard about the plague in the Caucasus (and in Siberia), and know that it is not the common bubonic plague, but the kind (pulmonary) that "kills you in forty minutes." Some people are hesitating to go to the Caucasus for their holiday for that reason [....]
Yours ever
(signed) R. W. Bullard

An Irishman who has been working at Murmansk and is going home says that he saw yesterday two women who had come up from Krasnodar

*Note in margin: "? Skrypnik."

to buy food, and that they had given him a dreadful account of conditions there. "Not a wheel turning in the town of Krasnodar" and cannibalism common.

Minutes

Quite interesting [....]
R. L. Speaight
9/8

The usual muddle.
L. O.
31/8

38

Conditions of Life among Labourers Employed upon Construction of White Sea Canal Memorandum by T. C. Rapp, British Consul in Moscow, 22 July 1933

Memorandum on White Sea Canal Works

A British subject who has just returned from forced labour on this canal gives the following details of the conditions as he knew them. He is not an educated man, but I imagine that his account is the unvarnished truth:-

S. left Baku on the 4th April last and arrived at Lag Punkt No. 7, near the White Sea entrance to the canal, on the 19th April. The next day he started to work. In his camp were about 3,000 men and women, but there were numerous other camps in the immediate neighbourhood, which, on account of the number of people, he describes as black as an anthill. The men and women were housed separately in wooden barracks. Between the outer and inner walls of the barracks sawdust was used as insulating material, but was ineffective, it appears, to prevent occupants from suffering from cold. The barracks were terribly overcrowded, the occupants being, says S., like matches in a box. The heating arrangements were very insufficient, for such stoves as there were only soft wood being available. No proper sanitary or washing arrangements were installed, and hot water for tea could only be obtained after an hour's wait in a queue.

Work was done on the payment by results system, *i.e.*, the amount of rations received depended on the manner [*in which*] the allotted task was completed. For this purpose the workers became divided into three classes: first, second and third. The first class consisted of those who were 130 per cent. efficient, the second of the 100 per cent. efficients, and the third of the 75 per cent. efficients. Before going to work in the morning at 6 A.M., a spoonful of cold porridge was served, the size of the spoon being different for each class of worker. Work lasted without a break until 4 P.M., when it finished for the day. The first class then

received 1,300 grammes of bread each, the second 1,000 grammes, and the third 500 grammes. In addition, they received weak fish soup and a little porridge, again according to class, the third class being excluded from the porridge. They also received a small ration of sugar occasionally and some unrecognisable product which was termed "tea."

When S. arrived the really cold weather was over, but he was still in time to see some suffering caused thereby. During the work men often became drenched to the skin, and there were no facilities whatever for drying clothes. Hands and faces and other parts of the body swelled from exposure, but there was no one to bother about that. The camp had no proper doctor, and only the very worst cases were sent to the hospital. Men often returned from work so utterly exhausted that they sank down on the barrack-room floor and died. During the winter season the deaths, he heard while there, had been appallingly numerous. Very many people contracted rheumatism and other diseases due to exposure.

Vagabonds and political prisoners were mixed up indiscriminately. If anyone received a food parcel and had anything he wished to keep he was obliged to take it with him to his work, as the barracks were perpetually rifled. The principal punishment inflicted was to oblige the culprit to walk up and down on the ice for hours in the biting wind until he dropped.

As regards the work, it was of a particularly heavy nature, as rock and heavy clay had to be dealt with. Nearly all the excavation, &c., was done by manual labour, as mechanical appliances were few. S. says that the work is now completed and that it is well done. He says that the canal is 21 metres wide at its entrance and about 4 or 5 metres deep. He was told by engineers there that the dimensions of the canal had been purposely restricted so that foreign ships could not enter it. He thinks that there are about thirty locks, but has only seen three or four himself. Permanent houses are now being built round the mouth of the canal.
T. C. R.
Consulate, July 22, 1933

S. says also that women had to work on exactly the same basis as the men.

Minutes

I have seen accounts of worse conditions than these in other labour camps. So far as food is concerned these people seem to be better of[f] than the peasants in the Ukraine and Northern Caucasus [....]
R. L. Speaight
5/8

It is now reported in the press that an amnesty has been granted to a large number of the prisoners employed on the canal [....]
L. C.
August 8th

39

Appointment of Mr. Akulov as Procurator of Soviet Union

William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 1 August 1933, Forwarding a Note on a Conversation between A. T. Cholerton, Moscow Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, and Iakov Podolskii, People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs

Very Confidential

Sir, Moscow, 1st August, 1933

I have the honour to transmit herewith a note of a recent conversation between Mr. Cholerton, *Daily Telegraph* correspondent in Moscow, and Mr. Podolski, the censor attached to the Press Department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. Mr. Podolski, with whom Mr. Cholerton is on terms of friendship, is a Jew, 37 years of age, and a member of the Communist Party since 1918. Mr. Podolski had hoped to be appointed Counsellor to the Soviet Embassy in China, as he is anxious to leave the country for the sake of his wife and children's comfort, but his services in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs are considered too valuable (he is in effect the liaison between the O.G.P.U. and the Press Department) for him to be spared at the present time.

I have, &c.
William Strang

Enclosure in No. 39

Mr. Podolski confirmed to Mr. Cholerton that Mr. Akulov, in his position as Procurator of the Soviet Union, would be independent of and superior to the head of the O.G.P.U. Mr. Akulov, he said, had a bitter hatred of the methods of the O.G.P.U. He confirmed that one of the objects of the creation of the Union Procuratorship was to set some limit to the arbitrary action of the O.G.P.U. Mr. Akulov was in a better position to do this now than when he had been a member of the organisation itself. It was a mistake, Mr. Podolski said, to regard the O.G.P.U. as

the rulers of the country. He was, as Mr. Cholerton knew, a Communist of long enough standing to be acquainted with the inner councils of the Party, and he could assure Mr. Cholerton that there were many old and influential Party members who had no love for the O.G.P.U. and could bring it to heel at any moment. One of the elements in the programme for the creation of a classless society during the second Five Year Plan was in fact the curtailment of the arbitrary powers of the O.G.P.U.

Mr. Cholerton said that this was all very well in theory, but experience showed that the O.G.P.U., when threatened, had only to raise the cry of treachery or "the Revolution in danger" for its influence to be fully restored.

On the agricultural question, Mr. Podolski said he was not sure what might happen. It might be that the authorities would have to modify their policy and allow more freedom of action to the peasants. On the other hand, quite possibly the peasants had been so harassed for the last few years that they might have become completely malleable to the Government's wishes [....]

Minutes

This is particularly interesting, as personal contacts between responsible Englishmen and higher Soviet officials are so rare. It is a pity that the account of Mr. Cholerton's conversation was not fuller: it would be interesting to know, for instance, what Mr. Podolski said about the Metro-Vickers trial[....]

R. L. Speaight

9/8

40

Situation in the Ukraine
Memorandum by W. G. Walton, 10 August 1933

Memorandum Respecting the Present Situation in the Ukraine

I had a long conversation yesterday with the Moscow correspondent of the *Neue Freie Presse* regarding the position in the Ukraine. He stated that the Nationalist movement is gathering strength, and at the present moment most of the former Opposition leaders, as well as a number of prominent Ukrainian Communist Nationalists, have been arrested. These arrests are not unconnected with Skrypnik's suicide. Skrypnik, who was accused of acting as a stalking horse for the Nationalists, was brought up before the Control Commission after Postyshev's speech (see Embassy despatch No. 371 of the 4th July);[48] apart from the accusations levelled by Postyshev, he was accused of participating in a secessionist plot. Skrypnik, during the course of his interrogation, produced a revolver and fired at Kossior (the Ukrainian member of the Politburo), whom he slightly wounded. He then fired a few shots at Postyshev, who hid under a table, and finally turned the revolver upon himself and committed suicide.

Whether this story is accurate I am not certain, but it probably contains an element of truth, as the obituary notice with regard to Skrypnik which appeared in the press was excessively severe.

The arrest of the Ukrainian Nationalists and old Oppositionists had been on a very wide scale, and a number of prominent Communists of the *intelligentsia* type, such as the poet Khvilevoi, have committed suicide.[49] A public trial is not contemplated, but certain smaller trials are being held at the present moment in the Ukraine in connexion with the grain-collecting campaign. The Nationalists are accused of informing the peasants that they as Ukrainians do not want them to supply grain to the State, but that they have got to execute the orders of the "Muscovites."

The three most important persons arrested are:-

Dr. Siak, the brother of an Austrian Galician Deputy of Galician origin. During the war he served as an officer in the Austrian army of occupation, and after the Austrian revolution served in Petlura's Ukrainian corps, where he negotiated the transfer of troops to the Reds. Siak (together with Yavorski and Shumski) was accused of conspiracy, the object of which was the secession of the Ukraine from the Soviet Union, and of being in close touch with Pilsudski and Rosenberg.

Shumski, an ex-Borodbist (a pre-1917 Ukraine Nationalist Communist party).[50] He belongs to the Ukrainian *intelligentsia*, and from the Communist point of view possesses all the defects of his class. He was the chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Commissars, prior to the formation of the Soviet Union and has occupied diplomatic posts.

Yavorski, a Ukrainian historian, who is a member of the Ukrainian Academy of Science at Kiev. He is a Ukrainian Galician by birth, and served during the war as a reserve officer in the Austrian army of occupation and was attached as intelligence officer to one of the Governors of the occupied districts. After the outbreak of the Austrian revolution he went over, and was one of the leaders and organisers of Petlura's Galician and Ukrainian corps. He participated in the negotiations of the transfer of the corps to the Reds. In 1928 he was a member of the Nationalist Opposition, and in 1929 he was expelled from the party after being denounced by his wife (who at the present moment lives at Lvov) as an ex-intelligence officer. Yavorski has, however, until the time of his arrest, managed to retain his appointments.

W. G. W.
August 10, 1933

Minutes

[....]

Apparently Skrypnik was not himself accused of intriguing with Dr. Rosenberg but 3 other Ukrainian nationalists have been so accused. We are unlikely ever to know on what evidence the accusation is based, unless Berlin is able to through [*sic*] some light on the subject [....]

R. L. Speaight
21/8

41

William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 15 August 1933

Sir, Moscow, August 15, 1933

With reference to my savingram No. 36 of the 5th August, in which I reported the restrictions which have now been placed on travel in the interior by foreign press correspondents, I have the honour to report the introduction of a new means of controlling the movements of foreigners travelling on Soviet railways, namely, the retention of their passports in the hands of the railway officials, which seems intended to serve the purpose of these restrictions.

2. On the journey from the Polish frontier to Moscow, after foreign passports have been inspected by the Soviet frontier authorities and returned to their holders, they are now taken by the conductor in charge of the train, and are retained until the passengers arrive at their destination. In the opinion of two journalists, a Polish and an American correspondent, who recently had this experience, the retention of the passport by the Soviet authorities is intended to prevent foreigners arriving in the Soviet Union from leaving the train at intermediate points between the Polish frontier and Moscow. I am inclined to interpret this measure in the same way, and it would appear, therefore, that the control of foreign journalists' movements does not only apply to journeys to grain-producing districts or to forbidden zones, but to any provincial towns or to the countryside in general. Persons travelling to large cities, such as Leningrad and Kharkov, to which there is tourist traffic, are, however, probably exempted from such restrictions.

I have, &c.

William Strang

42

Harvest in the Ukraine
William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 15 August 1933

Sir, Moscow, August 15, 1933

With reference to my despatch No. 435 of the 1st August regarding the general agricultural situation, I have the honour to report that the progress of the harvest in the Ukraine is being criticised in the press as most unsatisfactory. The plan of grain collections in July for individual and collective farms was only completed to the extent of 84.6 per cent., and, instead of there being any sign that this leeway was being made up in the first five-day period of August, the general rate of collections during this period still further declined, their average extent among collective farms in the Ukraine being only 12.5 per cent. of the August plan. The most backward district was Vinnitsa, where the collective farms only fulfilled 5.2 per cent. of the plan. The individual farms in the Ukraine are still more backward and grain deliveries in the first five-day period of August are stated to have amounted on an average to only 2.6 per cent. of the monthly plan. The progress of reaping in the Ukraine, apart from the further process of grain deliveries, is also criticised as backward. Somewhat more than half of the standing crops had been reaped by the 6th August, but the rate of reaping is reported to be gradually falling off.

2. The backwardness of grain deliveries in the Ukraine is strongly condemned in a recent decree of the Central Committee of the Ukraine Communist party, which compares the position in the Ukraine unfavourably with that in such districts as the Northern Caucasus, Middle and Lower Volga, and Crimea, where the July plan for grain deliveries was completed in full. The decree singles out the Odessa, Dniepropetrovsk and Vinnitsa districts as the most backward, and points out that in the latter district individual farms only fulfilled 1 per cent. of the August plan of grain deliveries during the first five days of August. The State farms in certain districts, it adds, namely, Vinnitsa, Kharkov and

Donetz, have actually not yet started their grain deliveries, "while payments in kind for the work of machine-tractor stations have been practically nil." The Central Committee of the Ukraine Communist party reproaches the local party organisations and the political departments in the State farms and machine-tractor stations as responsible for the unsatisfactory course of the harvest in the Ukraine, and it warns these organisations that, if the situation is not quickly remedied, disciplinary measures will be applied to them. These threats are to apply in particular to the party committees and political departments in the Odessa, Dniepropetrovsk and Vinnitsa districts. Certain officials of particular State farms and local branches of the grain trusts are likewise reprimanded and warned in the course of the same decree.

3. As reported in paragraph 2 of my despatch No. 401 of the 17th July, the final quotas of grain deliveries by Ukraine State farms are to be increased, in spite of the unsatisfactory progress of harvesting and grain collections in these farms, to which the official criticism reported in my present despatch bears witness. A further decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the party of the 10th August provides for similar increases in the quotas of grain to be provided by State farms in the central and eastern areas of the Union, and it would therefore appear that the Government have decided that, on the whole, conditions are favourable for a more than average harvest and that any deficiency in returns, at any rate on the part of State farms who are supposed to lack nothing in equipment and organisation necessary for a successful harvest, must be due to deliberate opposition to the Government's plans. There is as yet, however, no sign that the quotations for grain deliveries by individual and collective farms, which were based at the beginning of the year on the estimate of an average harvest, are to be increased. Indeed, a decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist party issued on the 2nd August once more draws attention to the fact that "no counter-plans regarding grain deliveries can be permitted, and those guilty of permitting counter-plans will be prosecuted under the Criminal Code." This warning is probably largely directed against counter-plans below the plans fixed by the State, but it is also clearly intended to prohibit those in excess of the plans sanctioned by the Central Government. The specific purpose of the decree is to define the obligations which have to be met by collective farms before distributing the surplus produce to their members. It observes that "certain collective farms have already fulfilled their annual plan for deliveries of grain to the State." and it enumerates the following further obligations which have then to be fulfilled. These are the delivery of grain under the regulations for payment

in kind to machine-tractor stations for work undertaken by them, the collection of excess funds for winter and spring sowing, the creation of insurance seed funds (amounting to 10-15 per cent. of the annual consumption of seed and the creation of forage funds to the amount of the annual consumption of forage by socialised cattle. Over and above such appropriations, states the decree, no further funds are to be created and the amount remaining is to be distributed in entirety between collective farmers "in accordance with the number of labour days worked by them."

4. In connexion with the perpetual warfare between the Central Government and Soviet grain producers, an article by Vyshinsky, entitled "The Prosecutor's Department and the Struggle for the Harvest," which appeared in the *Izvestiya* of the 3rd August is of some interest. Vyshinsky draws attention to the importance of the establishment of the Prosecutor's Department of the U.S.S.R. on the 21st June in the "struggle for the harvest," and observes that "the process of transforming collective farms into truly Bolshevik organisations" is meeting with "fierce opposition by the class enemy," who is now carrying on "an underground struggle" and is utilising all "legal methods." It is therefore the particular duty of the Prosecutor's Department "to tear off the mask" from the class enemy, and Vyshinsky admonishes the Prosecutor's Department and Soviet judicial authorities in general for the deficiencies in their work in this respect during the present harvest season. In the R.S.F.S.R., he says, "there are over 700,000 persons working in the departments of justice," and "this powerful army" must be drawn into the struggle for the protection of the harvest. Vyshinsky describes as two of the main dangers pilferage of grain and the tendency to postpone the threshing until August and September in face of strict instructions from the Central Government that it is to begin almost immediately after reaping. This tendency, he says, is being manifested in the Ukraine. In the struggle for the harvest the Procurator's Department must "co-ordinate their work more closely with that of the political departments, with the press, with the komsomol 'light cavalry,' with branches of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, with party control commissions, &c.," and Vyshinsky recommends the organisation of a regular military paraphernalia, including "signalling posts, control posts and supporting detachments."

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.

William Strang

Minutes

A tremendous effort is being made to speed up the harvesting [....]
R. L. Speaight
21/8

43

Soviet Harvest

Report by the *Times*, 22 August 1933, on Restrictions on Travel by Foreign Correspondents; Criticism of the Moscow Chancery for Turning Away Soviet Citizens Who Volunteer Information about the Famine

Sir R. Vansittart

In connexion with the attached cutting from the *Times*[51] which is quite contrary to the information we have received from the Embassy at Moscow I attach a minute on the subject of the Russian harvest prospects which may interest you in connexion with the German-Austrian conflict.
R. G. Howe
Aug. 24

It will be seen from the attached press cutting that the *Times* correspondent at Riga states that according to unofficial information the harvest in the Soviet Union is nowhere up to average and that although some crops are excellent, there are areas which have produced practically nothing. This is surprising because although it is beyond doubt that deficient organisation and machinery are causing considerable losses in the course of harvesting, we have no information which shows that the crops themselves are not everywhere exceptionally good.

In his despatch No. 401 of July 17th Mr. Strang reported that the Soviet authorities hoped to export 3 million tons of all types of grain as against 2 million tons exported last year, these hopes being probably based upon the report of M. Osinski, the President of the Central State Commission for Harvest Yield, who, in an article in the *Izvestia* on July 5th, had said that the harvest would be everywhere above the usual average, and heavier than in 1932, and in some areas excellent. As evidence of their belief in the excellence of the harvest the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a decree on July 13th increasing the quotas of grain to be delivered to the State by State farms in the Southern districts of the Soviet Union, and a further decree on the 10th August provided for a similar increase of quotas in the Central and Eastern districts. Instructions have, however,

been issued that the quotas for collective and individual farms are not to be altered.

There is evidence from many quarters of the serious defects in the harvesting arrangements. Writing in *Izvestia* on July 29th and again on August 1st M. Osinski quoted an account of a recent tour of the southern grain areas and stated that although the harvest was very good in the Ukraine and Kuban districts, harvesting was being seriously hampered by the bad condition of agricultural machinery, the irrational mobilisation of labour and faulty organisation. Reports from local centres reproduced in *Pravda* on July 30th showed that grain deliveries in Northern Caucasus, the Crimea and the Donetz and Odessa regions were behind schedule, owing chiefly to delays in reaping. Reports appearing in the same paper on August 2nd gave a more serious picture of the situation, from which it appeared that in some districts grain has been left standing until it has become over-ripe while in others it has been reaped while still green, and that considerable loss has been caused through defective machinery, inadequate labour supplies and pilfering; but no indication is given of the amount of the loss. The Soviet press estimates that in July only 84.6% of the planned grain deliveries were carried out, and that a further decline is likely in August. However, a deficiency of 15.4% does not appear very great, and in this connexion it may be mentioned that a recent decree of the Central Committee of the Ukraine Communist Party, urging harvesters in the Ukraine to make greater efforts, declares that the planned deliveries have been carried out in full in Northern Caucasus and the Volga districts.

Indications that the Soviet authorities are taking a serious view of the deficiencies in harvesting organisation can be found in the recent order restricting the movements of press correspondents in country districts, and in an article published by M. Vyshinsky in *Izvestia* on August 3rd in which he points to the need for the newly created Public Prosecutor's Department to turn all its resources to the task of combating class enemies on the farms, who are interfering with the harvesting organisation.

R. L. Speaight
23rd August, 1933

Many thanks.
R Aug 24

Minutes

[....]

? draw the Moscow Chancery's attention to the *Times* extract, the information in which conflicts with the reports of the Soviet authorities in Moscow despatches in N 5523 & N 5892/114/38, & say we shall be glad of their comments on it – although we fully appreciate the difficulty of obtaining information from other than official sources.

The Embassy of course frequently receive letters & even visits from Soviet citizens, bent on pouring out their griefs. They have lately discouraged such visitors – see N 4694/113/38[52] – and we are going to write to them in accordance with Sir R. Vansittart's and Mr. Howe's minutes on the printed copy of Mr. Strang's despatch in N 4378/113/38.[53] The conflict of opinion as regards the harvest prospects between official and unofficial opinion, as evidenced by the *Times* article, is perhaps a useful peg on which to hang the criticisms which we are going to make as to their discouragement of Soviet citizens bringing information, & I suggest that we do it all in one letter.

T. A. Shone
August 28

Please submit a draft.
R. G. H.
29.8

Draft submitted.
T. S. 30/8

Foreign Office, S.W. 1
Dear Coote, 4th September, 1933

I enclose an extract from the *Times* of August 22nd about harvest conditions in Russia, which you will probably have seen. I draw your attention to it because the "unofficial information" on the subject, gleaned by the *Times* Riga correspondent, is not only borne out by reports in many other British newspapers – (notably the *Daily Telegraph* which is publishing a special series of articles at present on the "famine" prevailing in Russia)[54] – but is also in conflict with the optimistic accounts of the Soviet authorities (notably Monsieur Osinski), reported in your despatches Nos. 401 (39/39/33) of July 17th and 435 (39/40/33) of August 1st.

The adverse reports in the majority of the papers here are of course denied by the *Daily Worker* and such-like, but while we realize that the

existence of famine conditions in parts of Russia may not necessarily imply a bad harvest, we think that the evidence goes to show that the harvest in many parts of the country has been far less satisfactory than the Soviet authorities anticipated, – and that not only on account of defective machinery and arrangements. In the Ukraine, of course, it is admitted to have been most unsatisfactory (your despatch No. 461 (39/42/33) of August 15th.[55]

It is important to us to have as accurate and unbiassed information as possible on this subject, and while we fully appreciate how difficult it is for you to furnish us with much information from sources other than Soviet official reports and press articles, we are always glad of anything giving the other side of the picture that you can get – e.g. periodical summaries or extracts from letters written by Soviet citizens (our letter N 4094/113/38 of June 29th last), or reports of interviews with Soviet visitors to the Embassy (your despatch No. 298 (2/42/33) of June 1st last).[56]

Vansittart recently asked why the two visitors mentioned in that despatch were turned away, and pointed out that it is the legitimate business of the Embassy to learn all it can, when information is volunteered; any risk involved is, after all, run by the informant. The fact that such visitors are not frequent makes it all the more desirable to hear what they have to say when they do turn up.

We shall therefore be glad if you (and His Majesty's Consulates) will make the most of every opportunity for supplementing official reports as to conditions in the Soviet Union; and we need hardly add that we should welcome your own comments or estimate of the true state of affairs – whether in the matter of the harvest, famine, industrial conditions, or whatever it may be, – if you feel able in any case to give them as well.

Yours ever
[*R. G. Howe*]

P.S. I enclose a translation of an extract from *Sevodnia* of 20th August describing the famine conditions in various parts of the Soviet Union, on the basis of reports from Russian emigrés.[57]

44

Famine in Russia
L. B. Golden, General Secretary of the Save the Children Fund, to Sir Robert Vansittart, 24 August 1933, and the Foreign Office to Edward Coote, 7 September 1933

The Save the Children Fund
40, Gordon Square
London W.C.1

Dear Sir, 24th August, 1933

Famine in Russia

We have received information from various sources regarding the famine in Russia. The Russian Refugee press of Paris and Riga are publishing alarmist reports of the situation in the Ukraine and North Caucasus. Private individuals are receiving letters indicating an extreme shortage of food.

On the other hand, our Chairman was informed in an interview he had with the first Secretary of the Soviet Embassy that the harvest was a "bumper one," though here and there bad patches existed.

You will no doubt remember that this Fund, in conjunction with the late Imperial War Relief Fund, was instrumental in raising and spending on the 1921 famine some £700,000 on relief in the province of Saratov.

It would, of course, be impossible to issue an appeal, for several obvious reasons, after the denial by the Soviet Government of the existence of a famine; but we are inclined to think that the Soviet Government will be forced to acknowledge the existence of the famine during the coming winter.

In view of these circumstances, I would esteem it a favour if I could have an opportunity of discussing the matter with some one dealing with the question.

I remain,
Your obedient servant,
L. B. Golden
General Secretary

Minutes

Mr. Howe. Shall I ask Mr. Golden to come & see me, or would you prefer to see him yourself?

I take it that the line to take is that, while information available here tends to confirm that famine conditions exist in some parts of Russia, there can be no question of issuing an appeal unless & until the Soviet authorities admit that conditions merit such assistance. After hearing what Mr. Golden has to say, we could offer to obtain the views of the Embassy.
T. A. Shone
August 28

Would you please see him as suggested.
R. G. H.
29.8

Mr. Golden came to see me today.

He made it clear that the Save the Children Fund had no desire to issue an appeal for funds to help starving Russians at present, & he emphasized that they wished to take no action which might be embarrassing to H.M. Govt. He undertook to consult us first, if it should be decided that the time had come to issue an appeal, e.g. this winter. The real purpose of his visit was to try & find out what information we possessed as to conditions in Russia & on this I was able to give him little information. He said that he himself & at least one other member of his Board had considerable experience of pre-war Russia. I gathered that the organization takes a rather particular interest in Russians – White & other refugees as well as Soviet citizens.
T. A. Shone
Aug 30

We might copy this to Moscow under a coverer as above. Meanwhile in view of the conflicting reports as to the harvest in Russia we are asking the Embassy at Moscow to report.
R. G. Howe
31 Aug

Please act as suggested.
G. M.
1.9.33

E. O. Coote, Esq.,
Moscow

Sir, 7th September, 1933

I transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter from Mr. L. B. Golden, the General Secretary of the Save the Children Fund, regarding famine conditions in Russia.

2. When he called at this Department on August 30th, Mr. Golden made it clear that his organisation had at present no intention of issuing an appeal for funds to help starving Soviet citizens, and he emphasized that they did not at any time wish to take any action which might be embarrassing to His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom. He undertook to ascertain the views of His Majesty's Government before making any such appeal, if and when his organisation decided that the time had come for such a step – for instance, during the coming winter.

3. The real purpose of his visit was apparently to seek reliable information as to the present alleged famine conditions in Russia, numerous reports of which have lately been appearing in the press. He said that he and at least one other member of the Board of the Save the Children Fund had had considerable experience of Russia in pre-war days, and he left the impression that the organisation takes a particular interest in Russian nationals, – refugees as well as Soviet citizens.

I am, with great truth,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
(For the Secretary of State)
[*R. G. Howe*]

45

Soviet Passport System for Urban Population
Edward Coote (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 26 August 1933

Sir, Moscow, August 26, 1933

The final form taken by the passport system as reported in Mr. Strang's despatch No. 245 of the 6th May, shows that the rural population has been comparatively unaffected by this experiment in population planning. The system of local registration, which has been introduced for the peasants, has, however, prepared the way for the redistribution of the population in the countryside, and a new decree, of which I beg leave to transmit a translation herewith,[58] suggests that the Government are likely sooner or later to embark on a programme of this kind. This decree, which bears no date, was issued by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars, and was published in the *Izvestiya* of the 16th August. It establishes an All-Union Committee of Migration attached to the Council of People's Commissars, which is to be formed, so it is stated, to utilise sparsely inhabited areas and to meet the desires of collective farmers to migrate thither. The committee is to draft a plan of migration, is to determine from what areas and to what area migration is to take place, and is to select settlers and finance their transport and settlement. According to the terms of the decree, it appears that in theory migration is to be voluntary, and that the Government is merely to assist prospective settlers, but it is doubtful how far this can be the case in practice. The system of administration to which the Soviet Government is committed now makes any form of *laissez faire* impossible, and it is hardly unfair to suggest that once the plan of "migration" is laid down the usual administrative methods will become inevitable, such as the establishment of emigrant quotas for the numerous over-populated collectives, and the compulsory admission of emigrants into the collectives which have been marked down as suitable for larger membership.

2. The opening paragraph of the decree referring to sparsely inhabited, but fertile areas, might suggest that more land is to be brought under

cultivation, yet in view of the present agricultural policy of restricting the sown area and concentrating on the improvement of yields, which has been frequently reaffirmed and so far consistently followed, this is probably not the case. Those best acquainted with Soviet agriculture have frequently commented on the over-population of most farms, and this view has more than once been discussed in despatches from this Embassy. Such farms could well shed some of their surplus members if room could be found for these elsewhere, and the fact that the new decree implies that room can now be found, may be interpreted as a sinister admission of the depopulation resulting from this year's famine. Whether such estimates of famine losses as Dr. Schiller's, namely, between 5 and 10 million deaths in the present year, are reliable or not, there is no doubt that many villages are entirely depopulated, and I have heard from other travellers that it is not uncommon to find villages with a black flag flying at each end of the central street, signifying that none of the population are left as the result of starvation and flight. Areas in which such villages are to be found, interspersed among comparatively prosperous ones, are to be met with all over the Union, and it may be expected that these will be selected as the "sparsely inhabited, but fertile areas" to which the Government's migration programme will apply.

3. The permanent flux of peasant migration in the Soviet Union is still laxly controlled. Apart from the wandering in search of food or employment by those of the agricultural population who have been hit most hardly by the last two years of crisis, there is a genuine seasonal migration of harvesting labour accounted for by the different dates of the ripening of grain in different parts of the country, a form of migration which is not discountenanced by the authorities. There is also the migration of peasants to towns for work as unskilled factory hands during the lean winter seasons in the country, and this is also tolerated. Such seasonal town labourers tend to return to their collectives at the time of the harvest, when vegetables and fruit are not particularly scarce, except in the famine-stricken villages, and when, if their contracts in the towns have been regularly fulfilled, they can return as full collective farm members to claim their share of the harvest in accordance with the work which they are able to put in at their farms. Sometimes, however, these labourers leave work in the towns and flock back to the harvest before their so-called "contracts with industrial undertakings" have expired, and this practice has now called forth an order from the Prosecutor's Department and the "truant" must be prosecuted under article 131 of the Criminal Code for "causing damage to the interests of the State." I transmit herewith a translation of an extract from the *Izvestiya* of the 15th August, which publishes the prosecutor's order and which appends the text of

the relevant article of the Criminal Code.[59] It will be seen that so rigid is the regimentation of labour that the offence of leaving their place of industrial employment renders these seasonally-employed peasants liable to not less than six months' deprivation of liberty combined with total or partial confiscation of property. The "crime" represented in the prosecutor's order as such an enormity is, of course, merely equivalent to the action of a workman outside the Soviet Union failing to turn up at his job after having regularly signed on. The penalty imposed for this trifle is as good an illustration of the stage to which enslavement has been carried as the regulations penalising absentee urban workers which have already received some publicity abroad among those sections of the press whose eyes are open to their significance.
I have, &c.
Edward Coote

Minutes

This foreshadows a wholesale redistribution of the rural population [....]
T. A. Shone
Sept 5

This new decree seems to afford further evidence of famine losses in the U.S.S.R.
R. G. Howe
6.9.33

46

Soviet Grain Harvest
Edward Coote (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 29 August 1933

Sir, Moscow, August 29, 1933

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a translation of a table published by the People's Commissariat of Agriculture on the 27th August, which contains official statistics relating to the state of the grain harvest throughout the Soviet Union on the 20th August.[60] This table is the first of its kind to be issued during the present season and, although no particulars of actual "grain deliveries," as opposed to the proportions of the crop reaped and threshed are included, its gives, perhaps, a more favourable picture than that provided by the random figures and critical descriptive statements which have so far been published in relation to the harvest in individual districts, and upon which it has hitherto been necessary to rely. Thus, while the figures of the whole Union show that 74.4 per cent. of the total sown area of grain crops has been reaped, a higher proportion than at the same date last year, the figure for the Ukraine, a district which, as reported in Mr. Strang's despatch No. 461 of the 15th August,[61] has been particularly reproached in the press for its backwardness, is as high as 94.4 per cent. The difference is, of course, largely accounted for by the fact that the Ukraine crop ripens earlier than the average dates of the whole Union; and the figures for the proportion of grain stacked and threshed to that reaped, which are more significant, are about the same in the Ukraine, at 24.4 per cent, and 24.9 per cent. respectively, as those for the whole Union (23.9 per cent. and 26.6. per cent.).

2. The figures for the other chief grain-growing districts vary slightly above and below the figures for the same date last year, the most backward in comparison being the Central Black Earth district and the North Caucasian region. According to Dr. Schiller, the agricultural expert attached to the German Embassy who has recently returned from the last tour which he expects to make during this harvest season, conditions in

most districts favour the gathering of a harvest superior to that of last year; but Dr. Schiller does not expect a substantially greater crop. Existing famine conditions and the political difficulties to which this year's agricultural decrees for safeguarding the harvest bear witness are held responsible, and he estimates that up to 30 per cent. of the harvest may be lost. In so far as individual districts are concerned, he has reported that the prospects in the Ukraine are as good as in any other of the important areas, but that the position in the Northern Caucasus is definitely poor, since the grain is affected by rust. He states that boasts of this year's successes in the celebrated North Caucasian farms "Gigant" and "Verblyud," which have appeared in the press, are not confirmed by his personal visits and that yields will be definitely low.

3. Dr. Schiller appears to have been genuinely distressed by his most recent tour, which was made in the Ural district, and, according to a member of the German Embassy, he has set his face against further tours owing to his disgust at famine conditions which are, he said, probably on a worse scale in the Urals than elsewhere. He travelled in the Urals in his own car, followed at a certain distance by local agricultural officials and by a G.P.U. representative, and on one occasion saw a curious example of the attitude of these officials to the local population. In a village at which he stopped, a woman came out of her cottage and threw a mess of cooked grass, a common food in the country nowadays, into a Soviet official's face, cursing him as the representative of the system responsible for her misfortune. The officials present apparently showed no surprise or excitement, but returned to their car, taking the outburst as a matter of course, and attempting to show complete unconcern. Dr. Schiller's position in relation to the Soviet agricultural authorities is a curious one. As you may be aware, his most recent publication, entitled *Krize der Sozialistischen Wirtschaft in der Soviet Union* [*sic*], appeared last April, and covers much the same ground as the volume by Mr. Cairns recently published for departmental circulation by the Empire Marketing Board.[62] Dr. Schiller's book contains less statistical material, being devoted rather to a review of recent agricultural policy, and it includes a restrained though definite appreciation of the present situation, only sparing the Soviet authorities any reference to actual famine deaths or accounts of personal impressions. It is, however, a clear condemnation of Soviet policy, and the Soviet authorities apparently had the intention, shortly after its publication, of prohibiting further visits by Dr. Schiller to the countryside. They abandoned this idea, however, and a member of the German Embassy has informed me that an official of the Commissariat of Agriculture actually told him personally: "We could do nothing, because Schiller's facts are all correct." Dr. Schiller's pamphlet

is undoubtedly of considerable value, since it is based on unrivalled first-hand knowledge, and I propose to transmit some analysis and comment upon its contents in a later despatch.

4. In paragraph 3 of his despatch No. 461, to which I have referred, Mr. Strang reported that, although the quotas from State farms due under this year's grain delivery plan had been increased, presumably in view of favourable harvest prospects, there was no indication that the quotas due from collective farms or individual farmers would be increased, and he drew attention to a decree forbidding the creation of any additional grain fund, beyond certain specified funds, before the distribution of the income to the collective farm members took place. A loophole in this prohibition has, however, been provided by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the party issued on the 19th August, a translation of which is enclosed herein.[63] According to this decree, collective farms may now establish additional funds by a majority decision of a meeting of two-thirds of the farm's members. The funds which may be created in this way will be formed in kind, but in order to serve their purposes it would appear that they must be realised in roubles. Their creation will therefore amount to a reduction of the grain allowed to collective farm members for their own consumption or private sale and an increase of that disposable for other purposes. Moreover, if these funds are realised by sale to the Government at convention prices, they will serve to swell still further the State's share of this year's harvest. The method of dealing with the additional funds has not yet, however, been made clear.

5. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and to the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.

Edward Coote

Minutes

Dr. Schiller's impressions – described in paragraphs 2 & 3 – constitute the latest and probably most reliable information we have as to present conditions in the agricultural districts. The serious lack of labour, through starvation or migration, in many parts of the country, and the hopelessly inadequate transport arrangement, must result in a very high wastage figure for this year's crops. Dr. Schiller puts this figure at 30% of the harvest.

The following extract from the *Economist* of Sept. 2nd – by the paper's Moscow correspondent – is of some interest:-

"In order to relieve the (labour) situation Red Army soldiers are being used for harvesting in some places, while some less essential factories have been closed, and the workers & the employees in many parts of S. Russia have been urged to take a hand in the gathering of what is generally reported to be an abundant crop. Returned travellers report a substantial improvement in the food situation in Odessa, as a result of the appearance on the markets & in the shops of bread & vegetables from the new harvest; and it said that many people have become ill from over-indulgence in the suddenly plentiful grain."

The promised despatch analysing & commenting on Dr. Schiller's report should be interesting [....]

T. A. Shone

Sept. 10

47

Visit of Monsieur Herriot to Soviet Union
Edward Coote (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 11 September 1933

Sir, Moscow, September 11, 1933

I have the honour to inform you that M. Herriot has just concluded a visit to the Soviet Union, lasting from the 26th August to the 9th September.

2. Travelling from Stamboul on the Soviet ship *Chicherin*, and accompanied by M. Serlain, M. Julien and M. Marcel Ray, M. Herriot arrived at Odessa at 9 A.M. on the 26th August. The party was met on the quay by representatives of the local authorities, including the chairman of the Odessa District Executive Committee and the chairman of the town soviet, and by M. Guelfand of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, who welcomed them in the name of the Soviet Government. M. Herriot said in reply that he hoped that his visit would be of use to the cause of peace and would benefit both the Soviet Union and France. He then posed for a "talkie" news-reel. Later in the day M. Alphand, the French Ambassador, arrived and joined the party. A visit was then paid to some collective farms, where a lunch prepared from the produce of the farms was served. Later in the day M. Herriot visited the Stalin Bakery, where he was so impressed by conditions that he wrote a glowing testimonial in the visitors' book. In the evening the party left for Kiev.

3. The 27th August was spent at Kiev. The party were shown the sights of the town, including the Cathedral of St. Sofia, the Ukrainian Academy of Science and the Museum Town, and were taken for a trip along the Dnieper. M. Herriot granted an interview to journalists, in the course of which he said:-

"The educational work which is being carried out amongst the peasants has produced a very great impression upon me. In connexion with this I want to acquaint myself in the most detailed possible manner with the organisation of education in the U.S.S.R. The population has wel-

comed me splendidly, and I was much touched by the welcome granted to me by the children. I have had the pleasure of coming into personal contact with the people, and of talking with men, women, and children. In Odessa and Kiev I was struck by the authority which is enjoyed by the workers directing the local organs of the Soviet régime. I appreciate this still more because I myself am a democrat. For any person who is interested in history, Kiev is a monument of the past which has endured a number of trials. It was a great centre of culture not only in mediaeval times but also in later days. I have been exceedingly struck by the manner in which you are able to co-ordinate respect for the spirit of socialism with respect for the Ukrainian spirit. Eleven years ago I wrote a book about Russia in which I foreshadowed the further development of the land of the Soviets. It is unnecessary to tell you that I was not believed at the time."

In the evening the party left for Kharkov.

4. In replying to a speech of welcome on his arrival at Kharkov on the 28th August, M. Herriot stated that he was confident that his tour of the Soviet Union would aid the detailed study by French public opinion of present-day conditions in the Soviet Union. During the day visits were paid to the Ogpu Labour Commune for Waifs, the Museum of Literature and the Kharkov Tractor Works. Dinner was taken in the building of the representative of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs for the Ukraine, and was attended by all the members of the Government of the Ukrainian S.S.R., headed by Comrade Chubar, with whom M. Herriot and M. Alphand discussed the collectivisation of agriculture in the U.S.S.R., the former giving it as his opinion that no reforms before the October revolution had really given any aid to the peasant. In the evening the party left for Dnieprostroi.

5. At 10 A.M. on the 29th August M. Herriot's train drew up at Dnieprostroi. The visitors were welcomed on the platform by the local authorities, and first of all visited the aluminium factory, the electric works and the electrical smelting plant. M. Herriot conversed with some French specialists and expressed his satisfaction that they were giving their knowledge and experience to aid the construction of the U.S.S.R.; he was also presented to some of the best shock-workers, whom he greeted cordially. He was himself welcomed with loud cheers. The party then inspected the great dam. After lunch they ascended to the top verandah of the restaurant and admired the panorama spread out beneath them. M. Herriot remarked that it reminded him of a Utopian town of H. G. Wells, and he was lost in admiration of the vast expanse of water, the splendour of the buildings, the magnificence of the vegetation and the superb aspect of the giant machines. The party also examined "the pearl

of hydro-technique, the Dnieper electric station named in honour of Lenin." They then visited the "international commune" where they saw electric threshers in operation, and M. Herriot not only made a suggestion in regard to the proper method of collecting grain in a pail, but also demonstrated with his own hands how it should be done. The French visitors are reported to have been greatly astonished when they were informed that the commune which they were visiting was the self-same commune which the "Nationalist Fascist press" declared to be in a state of famine, and to which monetary aid had been offered. In the evening the party left for Rostov-on-Don.

6. In the morning of the 30th August M. Herriot and his party arrived at Rostov. After the usual greetings they attended a meeting of 4,000 pioneers and collective farm children, who were carrying out the "light cavalry" campaign (*i.e.*, the system by which small children spy out and report their starving elders who are guilty of the serious crime of stealing small quantities of grain). Two tiny pioneers then delivered speeches, to which M. Herriot replied, declaring that he loved children and would do his utmost to bring about a Franco-Soviet rapprochement. The pioneers then sang a song. In the afternoon the visitors inspected the Verblyud State Farm No. 2. The Administration were greatly surprised to hear that none of the visitors had ever seen a combine before, and M. Herriot was taken for a ride in one. A reception was held in the evening. On the 31st August the party visited the Selmash Factory and the Don Tobacco Factory. They then left for Moscow.

7. The rest of the visit was spent at Moscow, where the party arrived at 9.40 P.M. on the 1st September. They were met at the station by Litvinov, Krestinski, Karakhan, the chairman of the Moscow District Executive Committee, the chairman of the Moscow Soviet, the deputy chairman of "V.O.K.S.," members of the French Embassy and the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and representatives of the Soviet and foreign press. On the 2nd September M. Herriot, accompanied by M. Alphand, had an interview with Molotov, which lasted more than an hour. During the day the party visited the Lenin Mausoleum, the museum in the former Church of St. Basil and the Museum of the Revolution, where M. Herriot exchanged complimentary speeches with the director and wrote a glowing eulogy in the visitors' book. In the evening M. Litvinov gave a reception to which the Diplomatic Corps were invited. On the 3rd December [*September*] the party visited the Central Aero-hydro Dynamic Institute, where M. Herriot again wrote complimentary remarks in the visitors' book. M. Alphand gave a lunch at which Litvinov, Bubnov and Grinko were present. In the evening the party went to the opera, where M. Herriot delighted lovers of music by following

"Boris Godunov" closely in the score. On the 4th September visits were paid to a model school at Fili, to the Kremlin and to the Exhibition of "Fifteen Years of Soviet Art." M. Herriot visited Kalinin and stayed with him over an hour. He also granted an interview to Soviet and foreign journalists, an account of which, extracted from the *Moscow Daily News*, I beg leave to enclose herein.[64] M. Herriot's remarks constitute a panegyric of the Soviet Union and all its ways; but it will be observed that, at the close of the interview, M. Herriot was forced to admit, in response to a question put by the representative of the United Press of America, that no comparison of the standard of living in the U.S.S.R. and other countries with different economic structures was possible. This is probably the only occasion during his visit on which M. Herriot was publicly embarrassed; and his admission has given no small pleasure to the Diplomatic Corps, most of whom, having been resident for some considerable time in the Soviet Union, do not share M. Herriot's optimistic views upon the conditions therein. In the evening the party visited the First Moscow Art Theatre. On the 5th September lunch was taken with Maxim Gorki, and visits were paid to the Marx-Engels Institute, an exhibition of the Paris Commune, the Central House of the Red Army and Soyuzkino, where M. Herriot was again photographed for the talkies. In the afternoon a reception was given in the French Embassy. On the 6th September the party visited the "October" military camp (for juvenile military training) and No. 1 factory kitchen of Mosnarpit (Moscow Public Feeding Trust). The Italian Ambassador, in his capacity of acting doyen of the Diplomatic Corps, gave a tea-party in honour of the distinguished guests, and the evening was spent at one of the "Moscow Art Theatres." On the 7th September visits were paid to the Museum of Modern Western Art, the State Institute for the Study of the Brain, and the Museum of the All-Union Chamber of Commerce. The chairman of the Moscow Soviet and the chairman of the Moscow District Executive Committee entertained the party to lunch, at which M. Herriot made a most cordial speech, a translation of which I beg leave to enclose herein.[65] In the evening the party visited another State theatre. On the 8th September the visitors again visited the Kremlin and other places of artistic and archaeological interest. In the evening the *Izvestiya* held a reception in their honour. On the 9th September they visited the Moscow Heat and Power Station and the First State Ball-bearing Plant. At the former M. Herriot invited the Moscow engineers to take part in the forthcoming competition for the designs of the new Lyons power station. Later in the day M. Herriot had a long conversation with Litvinov. The party left for Riga at 7.15 P.M.; they were seen off by Litvinov, M. Alphand, the

Latvian and Lithuanian representatives and members of the Moscow Soviet and the staff of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

8. As will be apparent from the foregoing account, M. Herriot's visit was marked by an atmosphere of the utmost cordiality. The red carpet which the Soviet Government spread before the feet of its distinguished guests has now become proverbial; and on this occasion the Soviet authorities were at pains to see that the carpet was of extra width, of splendid texture, of the deepest pile and most carefully brushed. My German colleagues inform me that their three consuls in the Ukraine reported unanimously that rigorous steps were taken to keep all undesirable elements far removed from the streets and the railway stations through which M. Herriot passed, and that extra rations of food, taken from the army reserve, and even clothes were issued to the townspeople. In this case the Soviet authorities were preaching to the converted, or at least the semi-converted; and I have little doubt that M. Herriot left Soviet Russia after a fortnight's intensive study of all the most creditable aspects of the Soviet system, an even more ardent admirer of that system than he was when he arrived.

9. The visit was, in short, an unqualified success, and must have been a source of great satisfaction to the Soviet Government. They are presumably aware that the present Franco-Soviet rapprochement is due rather to a common hatred and fear of Hitlerite Germany than to any necessarily permanent community of interest or natural sympathy between the two countries. They know now that, if M. Herriot should be called upon again to play a leading part on the stage of European politics, they will find in him a sincere admirer and a willing collaborator. How far his pro-Soviet proclivities would be frustrated by considerations of French internal politics or by the larger aspects that foreign or economic policy may assume at any given moment, it is as yet impossible to judge; but at any rate the autocrats at the Kremlin cannot but recognise in M. Herriot a friend on whose goodwill they can rely.

10. I am sending a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris.

I have, &c.
Edward Coote

Minutes

M. Herriot's visit was well stage-managed and his eulogies of everything Soviet must surely have come up to the most optimistic expectations of his hosts. Despite Franco-Soviet rapprochement, they were not

altogether popular with his own people [....]
T. A. Shone
Sept 18.

M. Herriot seems surprisingly gullible. He even informed journalists, after he had left Russia, that the reports of famine in the Ukraine were gross libels (though this is no doubt largely explained by the methods of deception practised on him, as described in paragraph 8, which are reminiscent of those practised by Potemkin on Catherine II, on her famous journey to the Crimea).
L. Collier
September 19th

48

Soviet Meat Quotas for Deliveries to the State
Edward Coote (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 11 September 1933

Sir, Moscow, September 11, 1933

With reference to Mr. Strang's despatch No. 533 of the 24th September last, in which was enclosed a translation of a decree establishing obligatory quotas of meat to be delivered to the State during the fifteen months of October 1932 to December 1933, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a translation of a decree fixing the relevant quotas for the twelve months from January to December 1934.[66] This decree, issued by the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the party on the 28th August, is drafted on the same lines as that of last year, except that it contains no schedule of the quotas to be delivered by State farms. Presumably a further decree to cover these farms will be issued subsequently.

2. The quotas for collective farms, as stated in article 3 of the present decree, are similar to those of last year, except that the quota for sheep farms is reduced. The previous quotas applied, however, to a fifteen-month period, while the new quotas must be fulfilled in twelve months unless the farms or individual holdings to which they apply have already fulfilled their previous quotas, in which case they can begin to fulfil their new quotas in advance before the end of this year. The quotas applicable to private holdings of individual farmers and private holdings in collective farms are arranged on the same principle as last year, namely, according to three groups of districts. The amounts to be exacted from each group are the same as before, but some districts have been shifted to higher or lower groups. These alterations are of interest since the changes tend to confirm estimates of famine areas derived from other sources. Thus, among others, the Moscow district, the Lower Volga district and the Tatar A.S.S.R., all of which are supposed to be comparatively prosperous this year, are promoted, while the Ukraine, Northern Caucasus, Kazakstan, Ural district and Kirghiz A.S.S.R. are reduced to a lower category. All the latter districts, in particular the Northern

Caucasus and Ukraine, are believed to be famine areas in which fodder has been most scanty and an increase in livestock resources is, therefore, least likely to have occurred.

3. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.
Edward Coote

Minutes

[....]

This supplies interesting confirmation of the existence of distress in the "famine" districts, e.g. N. Caucasus, Ukraine etc.
R. G. Howe
23.9

49

Soviet Agriculture
Edward Coote (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 12 September 1933

Sir, Moscow, September 12, 1933

With reference to paragraph 3 of my despatch No. 481 of the 29th August, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a memorandum by Mr. Vyvyan consisting of a review of a recently published work on the *Crisis of Socialist Agriculture in the Soviet Union* by Dr. Schiller, the agriculture attaché at the German Embassy.[67] This memorandum can of course shed no light on prospects for this year's harvest, which remain an enigma; even Dr. Schiller is unwilling to commit himself to any statistical estimate of its outcome after this recent trip in the countryside. As I have already reported in my despatch under reference, he does not, however, consider that the total crop will be a great improvement on that of last year, in spite of earlier and probably more successful sowings, and the improvement in the rates of reaping, threshing and grain deliveries, as reported in the Soviet press. The machinery of coercion, which has been so widely developed in advance this year, is obviously calculated to secure more plentiful grain deliveries in the first months of the collection campaign, but, as the deliveries may be proportionately less drawn out, this does not necessarily signify a proportionate improvement in the final results. Dr. Schiller's comparatively unfavourable view of this year's prospects is largely based on his personal experience that famine conditions in the Ukraine, North Caucasus and the Urals are far worse than last year, and upon his conviction (which may of course be a personal one, and the value of which I am not competent to assess) that the progressive exhaustion and depression of agricultural labour largely discounts the improvement expected from more rigorous coercion and more favourable climatic conditions. It is perhaps worth observing that, even if it were possible to make a rough estimate of the probable proportion of this year's total harvest to that of last year, no calculation of the amount to be diverted to export could be made on this basis.

Although the total harvest is a factor taken into consideration when the amount to be exported is decided on, this amount does not depend on a surplus being available, however a surplus may be defined in the case of the Soviet economic system. Last year there was obviously no surplus, but the total export of the 1932 grain crop will probably not be far short of 2 million tons. Possibly the need for a change in the Soviet definition of a surplus is therefore as important a consideration as the quantitative success of the harvest when considering export prospects.

2. As I have already had occasion to remark in my despatch under reference, the flood of articles and reports on the progress of the harvest which appear in the Soviet press are practically worthless in assisting one to appreciate the real position. First one district and then another is singled out for alternate abuse or commendation, without it being at all clear on what grounds either treatment is deserved. The Soviet reporters generally proceed from the particular to the general and laud or vilify a whole district on account of their impression of the ideology of one farm, whereas, as I would again repeat, the most peculiar aspect of Soviet agriculture is its phenomenal lack of uniformity, owing to the rigidity and inorganic character of the economic system. An illuminating example of the unreality of these reports is provided by the campaign at present being carried on against "record hunters" in the harvest campaign. Under the stress of Socialist competition and other forms of Bolshevik enthusiasm, various agricultural enterprises are being accused of bad harvesting work owing to a desire for quick and sensational returns. The *Izvestiya*, in commenting on the most recent harvest results, selects what is one of the most famine-stricken districts in the Soviet Union, namely, the Urals, for a reproach on account of "record hunting." It seriously suggests that the low level of stacking in proportion to reaping shown by the Urals is due to the fact that "a number of areas in the Urals are continuing their sporting race for super records in grain deliveries."

3. The press is now, however, regularly publishing the tables issued by the Commissariat of Agriculture to illustrate the progress of the harvest. Under cover of my despatch under reference, I transmitted to you a translation of the table giving results up to the 20th August. The results up to the 5th September are now published, and these may be summarised as follows:-

In the whole Union 73.2 million hectares of grain (*i.e.*, not including millet, maize, peas or beans, crops which are often included under grain in Soviet statistics without closer particularisation) had been reaped, representing 86.7 per cent. of the sown area. This was 6.3 million hectares more than at the same date last year. By the 5th September 65 per cent. of the reaped crops had been stacked in comparison with 48.8 per cent.

on the 1st September, a notable increase. The relevant figures for the Ukraine and North Caucasus, both of which had been very backward hitherto, rose to 63 per cent. each. As regards threshing, the figure for the whole Union was 43.3 per cent. of the reaped grain. No figures are being regularly published regarding the progress of grain deliveries, but the Ukraine, North Caucasus and other important districts are stated to have fulfilled their August quotas.

4. Statistically, therefore, the present harvest makes a better showing than that of last year at the same date. Several of my colleagues and the majority of foreign journalists are persuaded that the worst is past and that final results will show a decisive improvement on 1932 harvest returns. I do not believe, however, that this represents an informed opinion, but merely a judicious one. Journalists especially are inclined to place their money alternatively on rouge and noir, and this year it is the turn of rouge to come up, or so they believe. Meanwhile, the foreign press has, I hear, reported that the ban on journeys in the interior by foreign journalists has been lifted, but this not the whole truth. Mr. Duranty, the *New York Times* correspondent, whom the Soviet Union are probably more anxious to conciliate than any other, returned from abroad in August having heard that journeys in the interior by foreign correspondents had been prohibited, and thereupon addressed a letter to M. Litvinov protesting against this prohibition and stating that he intended to tour in the grain districts of the Ukraine on a certain date in September, accompanied by a colleague. In due course he received orally from the Press Department an assurance that he might travel on a certain fixed date later in the month. Mr. Duranty professed to be much irritated by this action, which he felt had cut the ground from under his feet by obliging him to recognise a ban upon his movements which infringed the liberty of the press. Nevertheless, he and his colleague have set out happily enough, and I have no doubt that, as a totally unqualified agricultural observer, he will have no difficulty in obtaining sufficient quantitative experience in tour hours to enable him to say whatever he may wish to say on his return.

I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.

Edward Coote

Minutes

This despatch and Mr. Coote's letter of September 12th to Mr. Howe, in paper N 6890/114/38 submitted below, give the latest and best esti-

mate as to the Russian harvest which the Embassy can give, on the conflicting & often unreliable reports available.

The net yield this year will almost certainly be higher than last year, but this does not necessarily mean that more grain will be available for export next year. For the Soviet authorities may not be prepared to allow the famine conditions which have prevailed this year, owing largely to the coercion upon the country districts to yield up their grain, to occur again.

While the coercion of the peasants has on the whole been intensified this year, there have been some half-measures of conciliation – e.g. collective farm trade, encouragement of private ownership of livestock etc. A recent Soviet decree set up an emigration committee to direct the repopulation of barren country districts (particularly those, presumably, which have suffered from the famine). Although the famine has, even now, never been officially admitted; and although there is reason to suppose that the starvation of the population in certain districts (e.g. the Cossacks) has been something like a deliberate policy; the balance of probability would seem to be in favour of Mr. Coote's assumption that the Soviet Govt. are "hardly likely to allow" the present conditions to continue or recur, if they can prevent it. I should not be surprised to see a more conciliatory policy towards the peasants put into effect – particularly as the industrial workers appear, from the widespread outbreak of sabotage which has occurred recently, to be in a thoroughly disgruntled state. It may be dangerous, even in Soviet Russia, to alienate too much of the population at one time.

Mr. Vyvyan's analysis of Dr. Schiller's report is of interest, but I think it is rather long for printing & hardly of sufficient general interest. Dr. Schiller favours free agricultural cooperatives as the solution of the Soviet agrarian problem, but if the present violent measures fail, as he considers they are likely to do, he thinks it may be too late to find a peaceful solution [....]

T. A. Shone
Sept 21

I think Mr. Vyvyan's resumé of Dr. Schiller's brochure is well worth the time necessary for its perusal.

R. G. Howe
23.9

50

Tour by Mr. W. Duranty in North Caucasus and the Ukraine

William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon,
26 September 1933

Sir, Moscow, September 26, 1933

With reference to Mr. Coote's despatch No. 503 of the 12th September,[68] I have the honour to inform you that Mr. Walter Duranty, the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times*, returned to Moscow a few days ago after a ten days' trip in the North Caucasus and the Ukraine in company with Mr. Richardson of the Associated Press. Mr. Duranty has given to a member of my staff the following account of the impressions gathered during his trip:-

2. In Rostov Mr. Duranty and Mr. Richardson spent a few days going round the town and the markets and interviewing the heads of the central administration of the political departments in North Caucasus farms and other officials. During their stay in Rostov they journeyed by car to collective farms, at first within a radius of about 20-30 miles and later on farther afield. The condition of the collective farms in these sections of the country varied very considerably, some of them having fulfilled 100 per cent., others only 31 per cent., of their grain delivery plans. The deliveries naturally depended upon the efficiency of the management of the collective farms and also upon the number of people who still remained in the district. In the North Caucasus, in consequence of a heavy decrease in the population, it was found necessary to send into the fields all persons residing upon the collective farm with the exception of the president and the economic manager of the farm. Mr. Duranty often came across patches where weeds (especially *spiraea* and *barbarea vulgaris*) were so thick that it was impossible to harvest the grain. Certain small settlements of about eight and nine houses (known as "khutor") were deserted. More than half the grain was still in the fields and had not been stacked. During the first five days of September it was impossible to do any stacking owing to rains. Since then, the weather had improved and a certain amount had been brought in. The condition

of the animals was fairly good, but Mr. Duranty was struck by the very small number of calves to be seen and the lack of small cattle and poultry. As an instance of the great variation between conditions in one farm and another, Mr. Duranty was told that, on a certain farm worked by Letts, who had immigrated thither some hundred years ago, as much as 12 kilog. of wheat and 5 of maize would be obtained by each collective farm worker per working day, when distribution of the produce took place.

3. On the Lettish collective farm, Mr. Duranty was told that last year they had fulfilled 200 per cent. of their grain delivery plan, but that the surrounding farms had done badly, and the better farms had therefore to "carry" the inefficient ones. As 200 per cent. represented almost the whole harvest yield, the collective was left denuded, and the Letts stated that if this took place this year they would pack up and go back to Latvia on foot as their ancestors had come a hundred years before.

4. The collective farm workers had some complaints to make, of which the chief was against the so-called counter-plans. These, however, would not be allowed this year. Mr. Duranty was told of a case in which an official who had proposed that a voluntary "loan" of grain should be granted to the State had been arrested by the Political Department, and no more had been heard of the loan. Another complaint was that, prior to the establishment of machine-tractor stations, collective farms had owned their own tractor stations. One particular farm had seven tractors, which were kept in first-class condition. Under the decree published in the early spring, these tractors were sold to the machine-tractor stations, added to the pool, and allowed to deteriorate. In many cases tractors supplied by machine-tractor stations failed to work at all. A further complaint was that many collective farms which had formerly existed as independent units were grouped into large collectives. This interfered with efficiency, but it had been possible, by the introduction of the so-called "brigade system," to split up these large collective farms into their component parts. The Letts complained that much confusion and disorganisation might have been avoided if the consolidation of smaller collectives had not been carried out. A still further complaint was that collective farm workers were obliged by contract to work a certain number of days on State farms. They much preferred to work on their own farms, because there payment was in grain, whereas the State farm paid wages in money, 5 roubles a day, which the Letts said was almost useless, as it would purchase very little.

5. According to Mr. Duranty, the population of the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga has decreased in the past year by 3 million, and the population of the Ukraine by 4-5 million. Estimates that he had heard

from other foreigners living in the Ukraine were that approximately half the population had moved either into the towns or into more prosperous districts.

6. The president of the Lettish collective farm was very frank in his conversations, and, amongst other things, mentioned that a considerable number of Cossacks had left the district. Some had been deported, but most had simply emigrated elsewhere, either to the towns or to parts of Russia where the conditions were slightly better. There had not been any actual armed revolts amongst the Cossacks, but in 1930 and 1931, and even later, many murders had taken place, mostly of Communists. In some places Cossacks had gone into the hills, formed themselves into bands, and raided the inhabited points. Mr. Duranty was struck by the fact that there were now practically no troops in the North Caucasus, but that nearly all the officials whom he met had only been in the North Caucasus since last year.

7. From Rostov Mr. Duranty went to Kharkov, and on the way he noticed that large quantities of grain were in evidence at the railway stations, of which a large proportion was lying in the open air. Conditions in Kharkov were worse than in Rostov. There was less to eat, and the people had evidently been on very short commons. There was a dearth of cattle and poultry. Supervision over visitors was also stricter in Kharkov. During the year the death rate in Kharkov was, he thought, not more than 10 per cent. above the normal. Numerous peasants, however, who had come into the towns had died off like flies. On the 19th and 20th July, over 200,000 people were mobilised in Kharkov and despatched to work in the fields. Most of them had only worked four or five days, but about 75,000 had been working in the country during five or six weeks. I have had this statement that town workers are compulsorily drafted into fields confirmed from other sources.

8. Mr. Duranty estimated that about 30 per cent. of the harvest would be lost as a result of pilferage and weather conditions. In the Ukraine about 66 per cent. of the grain collection quota had been gathered in up to date. On the whole the harvest yield in the Ukraine was from 10 to 12 centners per hectare. Allowing for deliveries to the State, for payments to machine-tractor stations, for the return of grain loss, and for insurance and seed funds, &c., which would amount to about 50 per cent, of the harvest, the average wage per labour day would be about 4-5 kilog. per man. Even those collective farms which had fulfilled their grain deliveries would not be allowed to sell grain in the open market until the whole area had fulfilled its obligations. As soon as such sale of grain was permitted the price of bread would fall, and a kilogramme of black bread, which at present costs 2.50 roubles, would, it is esti-

mated, be sold for 80 kopeks. It was difficult, however, to provide the peasants with the necessary manufactured goods, of which there was a great shortage.

9. Mr. Duranty had a conversation with the head of a political department of a machine-tractor station, who explained to him the working of these departments. This official admitted that the work of the political department could be divided under the three headings of coercion, instruction and assistance. He appeared to be rather grieved that people in Moscow considered their activities to be similar to those of the town G.P.U. They certainly had to struggle against kulak propaganda and strikes, but they had found that, as time went on, they had to employ less coercion, and they hoped that, in the next few years, their work would be confined to education and propaganda.

10. Mr. Duranty considers that the political departments may well prove a success. Their work, however, could not be properly assessed until January 1931 [*1934*?], and it might be that their victory would prove a Pyrrhic one. The Ukraine had been bled white. The population was exhausted, and if the peasants were "double-crossed" by the Government again no one could say what would happen. It was all very well, Mr. Duranty said, to call the U.S.S.R. a pacific country. It had to be, for, if a war occurred within the next five years, before the peasants had had time to forget the winter of 1932 and the spring of 1933, it would be impossible to mobilise the peasants. There were two kinds of opposition to collectivisation. The first lay in the tendency of collective farm workers to adopt the line that, "as we are now socialised, it is up to the State to help us when things go wrong." The second was more positive, namely, a policy of passive resistance, designed to cause such a deterioration in the situation that the authorities would be forced to return to something like nep.

11. According to Mr. Duranty, Postyshev is the real force in the Ukraine. He and his "boys" in the political departments now run the country. Chubar and Kosior appear to have very little to do, and are produced for the reception of eminent visitors. During a conversation with a head of a political department Mr. Duranty asked why the political departments in the machine-tractor stations had not been established before. He was told that the reason was partly that they had not been thought of, and partly that there were previously not sufficient tractors to go round. Now, however, the position was improving, and tractors which would stand up to the work were being manufactured in fairly large quantities in Russia.

12. At Kharkov Mr. Duranty saw the Polish consul, who told him the following story: A Communist friend employed in the Control Com-

mission was surprised at not getting reports from a certain locality. He went out to see for himself, and on arrival he found the village completely deserted. Most of the houses were standing empty, while others contained only corpses. The consul also mentioned that, during the early part of the spring, stones were thrown at any car passing through a village, it being supposed that any such car must be an official one. There was a good deal of passive resistance in the Ukraine, but no mass deportations had taken place as the result of this.

13. Mr. Duranty thinks it quite possible that as many as 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union during the past year.

14. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.

William Strang

Minutes

The King; Cabinet; Dominions

An interesting account of conditions by an actual observer who might be expected to write of what he had seen without bias against the Soviet Govt. (– in fact, with bias in their favour).

Mr. Duranty considers it possible that 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food, during the last year, & I think this estimate exceeds any we have yet had.

His estimate that 30% of the harvest will be lost this year tallies with that of Dr. Schiller.

Now that Mr. Duranty & other press correspondents are again being allowed to visit the grain areas and, presumably, to report on their experiences, it would not be surprising if the Soviet Govt. were contemplating admitting the famine conditions in some part of the country & perhaps appealing for outside help. The Secretary of the "Save the Children Fund" told me not long ago that the Board of his organisation thought this might well happen during the winter. Mr. Duranty may be working up an appeal to the U.S.A.[....]

T. A. Shone

Oct 2

Paragraphs 5 and 10 are particularly interesting.

L. Collier

October 3rd.

Paragraph 13 is horrifying – particularly coming from Mr. Duranty.

R Oct 3

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Memorandum by Mr. Vyvyan Recording Recent Conversations with Russians in Moscow

Memorandum by J. M. K. Vyvyan,
26 September 1933

I

Tourists who publish their experiences on their return from the Soviet Union are apt to give a uniform impression of the attitude of Russians to foreigners and of the type of information which they themselves receive from conversation with Russians. If the returned tourists are favourably disposed to the Soviet Government, they record with gratification, if they are hostile, they record with resignation, the Spartan enthusiasm of the new generation of Russians, who, they believe, are glad to "tighten their belts" in the cause of creating a classless society. This uniformity of impression is probably largely due to inability to talk to Russians in their own language, with the result that the visitor "who has come with a completely open mind" finds himself, all unawares, in the position of M. Herriot in the following story which is perhaps worth recording: On leaving one of the Moscow theatres, after a performance in his honour, M. Herriot was confronted by a large and curious crowd at the exit. Full of expansiveness, he expressed a wish to step forward to shake hands with his admirers, much to the consternation of his G.P.U. guard. The latter quickly and unobtrusively placed his plain-clothes G.P.U. officers in the front rank of the crowd, whereupon M. Herriot, with no little *bonhomie*, shook each dreary Chekist by the hand and entered his car satisfied with the contact he had made with the hospitable soul of Russia. This story is told by a prominent member of the caste [*sic*] at the theatre [....]

II

As an instance of the risk which Russians run from casual conversations which may be overheard, the following incident, related to me yesterday by a half-caste engineer, who said that he had just witnessed

it, is significant. My informant was travelling in a crowded tram and overheard a conversation between two very poorly clothed workmen near by. One of the men was deploring the living conditions to which he was subjected, the virtual starvation, the crowded trams, and so forth, and the other was contradicting him and repeating the hallowed Communist slogans. After a few minutes the tram stopped and a small, unobtrusive man moved towards them, produced a red card showing that he was an Ogpu agent, and told them to leave the tram and "come along with" him.

In such circumstances it is difficult to pick up concrete information from Russians, but I heard a few days ago an account of conditions in the Ukraine from the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent (who cannot, of course, use it).

A friend of his wife, a young woman employed in a mining institute in Kharkov, has recently come to Moscow to see her uncle Smidovich (see "Who's Who" in the Soviet Union, No. 1417), who is, of course, a Communist of considerable importance. His niece is, however, not one of the faithful, and describes conditions in the suburbs of Kharkov, where she lives, as similar to those prevailing during the 1921 famine. Her statement that numbers of office workers are being sent out into the country to help in the harvest is confirmed from other sources (see Mr. Strang's despatch No. 525 of the 26th September),[69] so that some credence may be given to her account of an instance of cannibalism in the neighbourhood of Kharkov. A fellow-lodger of hers recently went to the country to visit her father and mother-in-law. Their village, when she entered it, was almost deserted, and she at first saw only a few people in the physical condition typical of famine areas. When she reached her father's house she found her father in an almost half-witted condition. He appeared to have a little meat, which at first surprised her, but he then babbled to her that it consisted of pieces of her mother-in-law's entrails. Shortly afterwards the woman was surrounded by villagers, who muttered among themselves: "She is fat; she comes from the towns." The woman then ran from the village as fast as she could, and Mr. Cholerton's informant avows that her hair turned grey after her return to Kharkov.

This gruesome story, somewhat reminiscent of Hansel and Gretel, is not particularly convincing; but if it is untrue, it seems curious that the other information from the same source should be so well attested. Not only does the author of this story repeat Mr. Duranty's statement that office workers are being drafted to help in the harvest, but she also confirms the story that Skrypnik (whose recent suicide was commented upon in despatch from His Majesty's Embassy No. 447 of the 11th

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Famine in Ukraine
Memorandum by the European Federation of Ukrainians Abroad to Sir John Simon, 27 September 1933

[*Translation from the French*]

Sir, Brussels, 27 September 1933

We take the respectful liberty of presenting you with the attached memorandum on the famine in Ukraine.

Although the subject of our procedure is the question of organization of assistance to the afflicted population of Soviet Ukraine, we believed it to be necessary to bring to light the economic, social and political circumstances that brought about the disaster.

Actually, any relief effort would be ineffective if we did not manage to influence the Soviet authorities in its favour. It is for this reason that we are seeking the support of political forces as well as of humanitarian organizations.

We are taking the liberty of addressing Your Excellency to request that you be kind enough to submit our request to your Government and to be so kind as to speak for our suggestions.

We shall be infinitely grateful to the Government of Great Britain for any step that it is willing to take in favour of our country. We should also be very much obliged if the English delegates to the League of Nations and the International Relief Union or other international bodies capable of granting assistance to an afflicted population put forth and sustained the question of organizing aid to Ukraine.

With our thanks in advance, yours most respectfully and faithfully

[*sgd.*] Dm. Andriewsky
Secretary General

[*sgd.*] N. Hrab
Secretary

Memorandum on the Famine in Ukraine

The Soviet republic of Ukraine, with an area of 452,000 square kilometres and with a population, prior to 1933, of 31 million inhabitants, as well as the North Caucasus, with more or less the same area inhabited

mainly by Ukrainians, are victims of a misery without equal, occasioned by famine, epidemics and massacres.

During the last winter and spring, the population of these large agricultural regions, almost completely deprived of its usual food, had to eat bark and grass, rats and dogs, which led to tremendous mortality, numerous cases of madness and cannibalism and a general state of exhaustion through lack of nourishment. Because the starving and the sick are not helped by anyone, the streets of the villages and cities are strewn with corpses; entire villages are emptying as a result of death and mass exodus.

In the spring of 1933, the country that was once rich and prosperous looked like a huge camp, where the population, fleeing death and looking for food, moved constantly, all the while coming up against borders that were closed by order of the Soviet authorities. The situation has not changed noticeably, even after last summer's harvest.

The Moscow Government took every measure to hide the truth and forbade even correspondents of foreign newspapers to visit the regions struck by famine. Nonetheless, through numerous private letters published in the Ukrainian press outside the USSR, as well as thanks to credible foreigners who entered the country, the truth has filtered out. According to the testimonies of both, one must believe that a very large number of people, which comes to a few million, has perished by famine over these last months in the Ukrainian lands.

In the face of such a fact, inconceivable in our century, world public opinion, at first dismayed, is beginning to be moved and is seeking to come to the help of the needy. Authorized voices are beginning to rise in order to speak about human solidarity and its moral obligations. An international action is being organized to save a people whose physical existence is threatened.

The famine that prevails in Ukraine poses to the world a problem which, by its ins and outs, singularly exceeds the simple question of humanity and has a general import that is great in a different way.

It is to be noted that the famine has as its cause neither bad weather nor poor harvests. Ukraine, "the granary of Europe," is still producing grains and other food products in a quantity that is more than adequate to feed its population. But for years its products have, in large part, been either wasted or destroyed without profit to anyone or exported abroad, so that nothing remains for the population to eat. It is the Communist régime, established by Muscovite Bolshevism; it is the Soviet authorities, by the disorganization of the agricultural economy, by the forced collectivization of farms and the monopolization of the fruits of Ukrainian labour; it is the Soviet State, short of foreign currency, which, by

snatching grain from the starving, down to the last seed, in order to throw it onto the international market, are the ones really responsible for the catastrophic situation in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian people is fundamentally opposed to the Communist régime, conceived and practiced in Muscovy. What is more, it desires separation from Russia and the organization of an independent national state.

From the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine by the Bolsheviks, the Moscow leaders have had to face up to the opposition of the inhabitants. To assure themselves of the possession of the country and its resources, they have for years fought the leanings and aspirations of the Ukrainians, first by pursuing a regular war and then by stifling the spontaneous uprisings of the population, by shooting the unarmed masses, and by deporting the peaceful inhabitants by the thousand.

In spite of everything Ukraine has resisted. To crush this resistance the Soviets decided to institute absolute control over the economic resources of the land and decreed the collectivization of farms and this all the more rigorously as the produce of Ukraine was meant to be exported abroad. (This correlation between the policy of the Soviets and their economic measures in Ukraine was recognized by Stalin's special envoy, Postyshev, empowered at the beginning of 1933 to subdue the Ukrainians.)

Any resistance to this policy and to its measures, even from Communist circles, is crushed without pity; thus several Ukrainians, members of the Communist party, and people's commissars (Poloz, Laptchynsky, Javorsky, Levytzky, Voloboujew, Choumsky, Maxymovitch, Kwylowy, Skrypnyk) were dismissed, condemned, deported, shot, or committed suicide.

The national character of this struggle pursued by the Bolsheviks in Ukraine, aiming at the extermination of the Ukrainians by famine, was noted by many foreign observers. It is the conditions of this atrocious and merciless struggle that explain the absurd economic measures that threaten the very existence of Soviet power.

Already in 1921-1922 Trotsky had deliberately provoked famine in Ukraine to deal with the Ukrainians who were defending the political independence of their country. Today, with the same purpose, collectivization is hitting 80 per cent of the farms, while in Muscovy it barely affects 40 per cent. This explains why the famine is confined to Ukrainian regions, the biggest wheat producers, while Muscovy, according to numerous attestations, has known only a shortage of provisions and not famine. The Soviets, who have immense stocks of wheat at their disposal, do not deliver them to the starving in Ukraine; they use them to

feed distant regions. All this shows, quite obviously, that we are faced with a well thought out plan that aims to depopulate the country and colonize it with the Muscovite population, which is more docile and more completely in support of communism. It is to this end, moreover, that a special commission was set up in Moscow, under the chairmanship of Mouraloff.

To our mind, the tragic events of which Ukraine is the scene comprise three questions before which the civilized world cannot remain indifferent.

From the economic and social point of view, the Soviets are threatening to lay waste to the most fertile country in Europe and to wipe out the people that is best qualified for cultivation in order to carry out subsequently a redistribution of the population. As outrageous and insane as this plan may seem, the architects of universal upheavals will not be in the least upset by it and in order to realize it they will hardly stop before the most inhumane behaviour.

From the political point of view, the ruin or at least the weakening of Ukraine by the Russians will remove the natural barrier that has been raised for centuries between Western Europe and Muscovy, a barrier made up of the Ukrainian ethnic group, which is related to Europe by its mentality and traditions. The civilization and safety of the Western nations could suffer from this.

Finally, from the moral point of view, public opinion and the responsible leaders of the civilized nations could not permit the Soviets to eliminate an entire nation. The vigorous protests and diplomatic steps provoked once by the massacre of the Christian peoples of the Balkans, at the time of Gladstone, the wave of protest raised in our time by the persecution of one ethnic minority or another, give cause to hope so.

Besides, the existence of the League of Nations, responsible among other things for the defence of the rights of peoples and the justice that is their due, is proof that the civilized world will not long remain deaf and mute before the most abominable political crime recorded in the annals of modern times.

It is our duty to draw the attention of responsible international circles to the extreme urgency of the measures to be taken with regard to Soviet Ukraine and its starving population. As we see it, the intervention of the moral and political powers, in order for it not to be too late, should take place without delay with the central government of the USSR.

a) by a representation, whether collective or separate, with a view to immediately stopping the economic and political practices that in fact are leading to the extermination of the Ukrainian population which is at present under Soviet authority;

b) by asking the Soviets for official and effective authorization for the foreign missions and organizations that will want to help the starving and the sick to enter the USSR to bring food and medicine there and to work there freely;

c) by subjecting any relations with the government of the USSR to the fulfilment of the two above conditions and by abstaining from trade in produce with the Soviets, at least as long as famine exists in the countries included in the Soviet Union.

There is good reason to bear in mind that the new harvest will not relieve the extreme distress of the Ukrainian lands. In the opinion of credible informers, next winter will be, for Ukraine, as murderous as the last, since the population is extremely weakened and the Soviet organization completely disordered, not having permitted that the harvesting be done in a satisfactory way. Moreover, the sown area is, for the same reasons, ever diminishing, and it will take years before the agricultural economy of Ukraine is back in order.

A change in Moscow's attitude towards Ukraine would be the necessary preamble for any action on behalf of the dying population. One can hardly hope for it from the Bolsheviks without firm and determined pressure from abroad. Such pressure, at a time when the Soviets are trying to renew normal relations with Europe and America, when they are eagerly signing nonagression pacts, would seem to come at the right time and have some effectiveness. In the present circumstances, to maintain friendly relations with them, without imposing the above-mentioned conditions (a and b) would be tantamount to strengthening them in their attitude and helping them to inflict the *coup de grâce* on Ukraine.

Minutes

No particulars of this organisation can be traced. While the deplorable account which it gives of conditions in the Ukraine is no doubt largely true, it is anti-Soviet in complexion and I presume that we can only ignore its appeal.
T. A. Shone
Oct 4

As long as the Soviet Govt. continue to deny the existence of famine conditions in the Ukraine & N. Caucasus they will certainly refuse to accept any representation of the kind suggested by this Organisation, about which we know nothing.
R. G. Howe
5. Oct

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Alleged Famine in the Ukraine
E. H. Carr, United Kingdom Delegation to the League of Nations, to Laurence Collier, 30 September 1933

Dear Collier, 30th September, 1933

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Norwegian delegate, in his capacity as President of the Council, addressed to his colleagues enclosing various documents regarding the alleged famine in the Ukraine.

These papers were submitted to a private meeting yesterday which was officially described, not as a meeting of the Council, but as a consultation between members of the Council. After a somewhat lengthy discussion, due to the reluctance of a good many members to turn down flatly a proposal of an apparently humanitarian character, though it was obvious from the first that it was politically impracticable, it was decided that the President should, at his discretion, tell the petitioners that the only course open to them appeared to be to address themselves to the International Red Cross or to some similar organisation of a purely non-political character.

Yours ever,
E. H. Carr

[*Translation from the French*]

Norwegian Delegation Geneva, 27 September 1933

Confidential

The Right Honourable Sir John Simon G.C.S.I., K.C.V.O., M.P., Geneva

My dear Colleague,

I have the honour of sending you enclosed copies of the following documents:

1) Letter of 25 September 1933 from the Central Ukrainian Committee for Relief to Soviet Ukraine;

2) Letter of 25 September 1933 from the Head of the Ukrainian Mission in France;

3) Letter of 26 September 1933 from the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations; and

4) Telegram of 26 September 1933 from Senator Zaloziecky and Deputy Serbeniuk.

These documents relate to the question of the famine that is raging in Soviet Ukraine. I received them in my capacity as President of the Council.

On the occasion of these petitions I spoke to the Secretary General of the League of Nations, asking him to be good enough to include this question urgently on the Council's agenda. The Secretary General, in replying that to his regret reasons of a formal order prevent inclusion, was good enough to advise me to raise the question in a private meeting of the Council, which I intend to do.

Even though I am not convinced that the point of view of the Secretary General is justified, and am rather inclined to think that Article 3 of the Internal Regulations of the Council authorizes me to have the question put on a provisional agenda, I found it my duty all the same – in order to avoid any delay – to follow his advice.

It goes without saying that I cannot form a personal opinion for myself as to the real situation, but I consider the information contained in the above-mentioned petitions – and which have been strongly confirmed verbally by visits that I received – to be so serious in nature that I deem it my duty to look for a way of deliberating on this issue with my colleagues on the Council.

I do not dare express myself on the question of knowing whether the League of Nations can do anything in this matter and, possibly, in what way, but I wonder whether it would not be possible for the League of Nations, referring to the information received, amicably to address the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, asking it whether it wishes to supply the Council with information about the situation and whether the League of Nations could, if the case arises, be of any use to it in a possible relief effort, adding that the League of Nations would gladly extend its co-operation to it and would be prepared to discuss the method of any such co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

(s) Joh. Ludw. Mowinckel

[*Translation from the French*]

Geneva, 25 September 1933

His Excellency Minister Mowinckel

President of the Council of the League of Nations

Excellency!

The undersigned representatives of the Central Ukrainian Committee for Relief to Soviet Ukraine turn to you and ardently beg you to be so good as to raise the question of the famine that is raging in Soviet Ukraine in the forum of the League of Nations and to bring the League of Nations to organize an international action on behalf of the Ukrainian population, which is dying of hunger. The facts of the famine are indisputable, despite the efforts expended by the Soviet Government to conceal the truth and to deny the existence of this veritable catastrophe caused by famine. This fact is borne out by thousands of letters that we receive from our compatriots from beyond the Soviet border, by the statements of hundreds of Ukrainian refugees drawn up as minutes, by statement of neutral parties, especially of foreign journalists who have succeeded in visiting the Ukrainian territory ravaged by famine in spite of being forbidden by the Soviet authorities.

Such well-known and respected names as that of His Eminence Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna and the names of Ukrainian Greek Catholic bishops with His Eminence Metropolitan Count Scheptytzkyj at the head are there to assert that this catastrophic famine, unequalled in history, is a true peril.

We do not intend to complicate an international action with political considerations and we will not mention the reasons that have led to this appalling catastrophe in Ukraine; the whole world knows these reasons. It is no secret to anyone that Ukraine, a land endowed by nature with great riches, was driven into this misfortune by the disastrous economic policies of the Soviets. Setting aside the politico-economic considerations of this annihilation of Ukraine, we appeal to the League of Nations to come to the aid of the starving, for this a matter of human solidarity.

We have complete faith in the League of Nations, which in past years has already granted its aid in similar cases, that it will organize an action to come to the aid of the wretched population, overcome all obstacles and bring the Soviet Government to allow an international action.

Ukrainians in the West, who are outside the territory of the Soviet Republic, as well as Ukrainians of Canadian and United States citizenship, are prepared to put grain and any other kind of food at the disposal of their starving brothers, if the League of Nations makes transport to Soviet Ukraine and internationally controlled distribution possible.

The undersigned have come to Geneva as envoys of the Central Ukrainian Committee for Relief to Soviet Ukraine, a committee organized in the capital of Western Ukraine, Leopol (Lwow), to make all the necessary applications to the League of Nations in the name of this committee.

The Committee is composed of parliamentary representatives for Western Ukraine to the Polish parliament, of thirty-six central Ukrainian cultural, economic and humanitarian organisations, which include the organizations of emigrants from Soviet Ukraine. The Ukrainian Relief Committee for the Roumanian parts of Ukraine, based in Czerniwci (Cernauti), is working in close contact with us, as are all the other committees located in various parts of Europe and America.

For the Central Ukrainian Committee for Relief to Soviet Ukraine

(signed) Milena Rudnycka — Z. Pelenskyj
Deputy Milena Rudnycka, Vice-President of the Central Committee — Deputy Zenon Pelenskyj, Secretary of the Central Committee

Address: Comité Ukrainien Central de secours
Lwow, Podwale 7

[*Translation from the French*]

Alexandre Choulguine
Chef de la Mission Ukrainienne en France
A. Représentant de la République
Démocratique Ukrainienne auprès
de la Société des Nations
6, rue Michel Chauvet, Genève

His Excellency Monsieur Mowinckel
President of the Council of the League of Nations

Mr. President, Geneva, 25 September 1933

Since 1920 I have had to defend before the League of Nations, as a representative of the Ukrainian Democratic Republic, which became a victim of Moscow's aggression in 1921, the political interests of my country, which have sometimes been very grave. This time I have the honour of turning to Your Excellency to defend a cause that is above any politics. It is a great problem that concerns the human conscience: at the height of peace hundreds of thousands, millions of men are dying of famine, and are suffering horribly without any help almost in the middle of Europe. The very existence of a great nation is threatened.

Our people is in mourning. All the Ukrainians, all our organizations which are located outside the USSR, are unanimous in begging the League of Nations to raise its voice to save our people.

Several Ukrainian representatives have rushed even here, to Geneva, to show by their presence or by their appeals their solidarity with the cause that I am raising here. The delegates of the Ukrainian committees

of relief for the starving, which were set up in Lwow, Tzernovtzi (Bucovine), Prague and Brussels, the emigrant association known as the European Federation, have been anxious to be represented in Geneva at this moment which is so tragic for Ukraine, in order to defend before the League of Nations with regard to the famine the cause that is also ours.

I am advised that the Ukrainian deputies to the Polish Parliament, who represent the Lwow committee of relief to the starving, have presented to Your Excellency on this very day a memorandum the text of which, thanks to the kindness of the signatories, has been communicated to me. I therefore join fully in this memorandum and I join to it the organizations that I head: the High Council of Ukrainian Refugees (a federation of central organizations of refugees located in Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Luxembourg, Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Turkey and Yugoslavia) and the Ukrainian Association for the League of Nations. Thus the solidarity of our activity to save Ukraine from famine is absolute.

In closing this letter permit me, Excellency, to ask you to do what is possible to raise within the Council of the League of Nations the painful question of the famine in Ukraine which I am contemplating submitting as well to the Assembly by presenting an open letter to its President.

Yours faithfully,
A. Choulguine

Liaison Committee of Women's International Organisations
Hon. Secretary:
Miss Elsie M. Zimmern,
26, Eccleston Street
London, S.W.1

Member Organisations:
World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union
International Council of Women
World's Young Women's Christian Association
International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
World Union of Women for International Concord
International Federation of University Women
Equal Rights International
International Federation of Women Magistrates, Barristers and Other Branches of the Legal Profession
St. Joans Social and Political Alliance

September 26th, 1933

His Excellency Monsieur Joh. L. Mowinckel,
President of the Council,
League of Nations

Excellency,

On behalf of the above Committee of Women's International Organisations may I beg you to bring to the notice of the Council of the League the desperate condition of the famine stricken population of Soviet Ukraine.

Again and again the League has rendered invaluable services to the cause of humanity and we entreat Your Excellency as President to submit to the Council the present need for League action in any form which you may think wise.

The Committee was unanimous in their decision to appeal to you.

I append certain notes on the situation.

On behalf of the Committee I have the honour to remain,
Your Obedient Servant,
(signed) Margery Corbett Ashby
President
of one of the Organisations
Int. Alliance for Suffrage & Equal Citizenship

There appears to be a very serious famine in the Ukraine. Details are hard to obtain as it is almost impossible for a visitor to Russia to obtain permission to visit the Ukraine, but the inhabitants are escaping in large numbers in spite of the efforts of the frontier guard, recently reinforced, to prevent them.

Last year there was a famine. The consequent result was that seed grain for this year was eaten and in spite of this the population became so weak physically that they were unable to prepare the ground adequately and this year the famine is far worse. Orders were given that whatever the yield of the harvest the same amount of corn was to be delivered by the Ukraine and troops were sent to guard the crops and prevent the starving peasants from stealing the half ripe corn for food. There have been and will be no rebellions as the peasants are too weak to organise.

The following figures give some idea of the extent of the calamity. In the village of Zalywanschtschyna in the central Ukraine 2,000 inhabitants died out of a total population of 3,500. In the village of Kumaniwka 1,200 died out of a total population of 3,000. These figures could be multiplied indefinitely. Cannibalism is rife in all parts and such is the state of despair that regardless of consequences to the writers letters are

openly being sent abroad describing the state of the country and appealing for help.

The best proof that conditions are really serious is the appeals for assistance being made by Ukrainians domicilied in other countries.

1. The appeal of the Greek-Catholic Church in Polish Ukraine signed by the Metropolitan and Bishops.

2. The appeal of "Le Comité ukrainien de secours aux affamés de l'Ukraine et du Kouban," Brussels.

3. In Germany a joint relief committee has been formed by the Red Cross, the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, the Menonites and others, called "Brüder in Not."

[*Translation from the French*]

Telegram
London, 26 September 1933
President Mowinckel. Richmond, Geneva

We too sign with the Ukrainian deputies of Poland their petition regarding the famine and are in full agreement with them. – Senator Zaloziecky. Deputy Serbeniuk

Minutes

We have also had an appeal on the subject from the European Federation of Ukrainians Abroad— see N7217/21/38.[71]

In the circumstances, no other action at Geneva was possible, & none seems possible here.
T. A. Shone
Oct 5

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Relief of Famine in Soviet Ukraine
Interview by Laurence Collier with Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Strange Malone, Mrs. Ethel Christie and Miss Alice Nike, 27 October 1933

Colonel Malone, accompanied by Mrs. Christie and Miss Nike of the Quaker Relief Organisation, called on me this morning and handed me the attached record of a meeting to discuss the relief of famine in the Soviet Ukraine. Colonel Malone and his friends, it appeared, hoped to enlist the help of H.M.G. in persuading the Soviet Government to allow a relief mission to enter the Ukraine.

I pointed out that the Soviet Government, though they were now prepared to admit that something like a famine had existed in the Ukraine until the last month or so, were taking the line, in their public pronouncements, that they were now quite capable of coping with the situation from their own resources. Moreover, their recent policy had been to prevent any foreign organisation conducting relief in their territory – as Mrs. Christie and Miss Nike would remember, they had expelled the Quaker relief workers without giving any reason for their action; and they were even making difficulties for Lady Muriel Paget's work of relief for British subjects. Lastly, anything to do with Ukrainian nationalism at the present moment was like a red rag to a bull to the Soviet authorities; and the fact that two Ukrainian members of the Roumanian Parliament, a member of the Ukrainian Bureau and Mr. Makohin, a well-known Ukrainian nationalist, were connected with the scheme, would in itself be enough to damn it from their point of view. In these circumstances I could not hold out any hope that H.M.G. would interest themselves in the scheme in any way [....]

Notes of a meeting held at 6, Phene Street, Chelsea, S.W.3, on Friday, September 29th, 1933, at 3 p.m.

Present:	
Colonel Malone	(in the Chair)
The Rt. Hon. Lord Noel-Buxton	(President, Save the Children Fund)
Mr. L. B. Golden	(Gen. Sec. ditto)
Mr. T. P. Conwell-Evans	
Mr. M. Schalit	(Hon. Treasurer, Federation of Jewish Organisations)
Mr. A. M. Kaizer	(Gen. Sec. ditto)
Miss Alice Nike	(Society of Friends, Russia & Poland Committee, Friends Service Council)
Senator Zaloziecky	(Rumanian Senate)
Mr. Serbeniuk, M.P.	(Rumanian Chamber of Deputies)
Mr. J. Makohin	
Dr. V. J. Kisilewsky	(Ukrainian Bureau)

The Meeting was called to discuss the question of the provision of relief to the people alleged to be suffering from starvation in Ukraine.

The organisations represented had either in the past taken an active part in relief work in Soviet Russia or were still engaged in it. The Save the Children Fund had raised and distributed approximately £700,000 in the Saratov area during the 1921 famine. The Society of Friends had done similar work in another area. The Federation of Jewish Relief Organisations are now carrying out relief work, distributing relief through Torgsin. They have their own representative in South Russia and could do much more work if the difficulties in the way of distributing material, clothing, etc., were removed.

Senator Zaloziecky described, according to the information in his possession, the present state of affairs in Ukraine.

It was stated that the Ukrainians had information concerning the situation, as well as means of raising money and resources from the ten million Ukrainians outside Russia (especially foodstuffs from Polish Galicia), but that the British organisations had the best experience and standing to carry out relief work.

It was felt that the first step to be taken was to obtain more reliable information concerning the state of affairs in Soviet Ukraine and the Caucasus, and the possibility of sending out a reliable investigator was discussed. The names of Sir Benjamin Robertson and Sir John Hope

Simpson were suggested, but it was felt that, should persons of such international standing as these visit Russia, an investigation could only be carried out under official auspices.

The decision reached was that someone who had had previous famine experience should be asked to visit Russia and make an independent report; and Miss Nike suggested the name of Mrs. Christie of the Society of Friends.

The question of approaching the Soviet Ambassador with a view to a strong official delegation representing all relief organisations being sent out was discussed, but it was felt that this and the question of any appeal for assistance could not be considered until better information was available.

It was felt that an informal committee might advantageously be formed to continue these investigations and it was decided to meet again at 40, Gordon Square, at 11.15 a.m. on Friday, the 6th October 1933.

Minutes

Mr. Golden, Secretary of the Save the Children Fund, & a member of the meeting described within, called here about this question in August last (see N 6401/113/38).[72] We gave the Moscow Embassy the gist of what then transpired in a despatch, but I take it that we need not write to the Embassy in the present case until we hear the result of Col. Malone's soundings of the Soviet Embassy.
T. A. Shone
Oct 31

I agree. The Soviet Govt. do not admit that famine any longer exists.
R. G. Howe
31.X

No action unless & until we hear further. Mr. Norton to see.
L. C.
Oct 31st

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Tour of Mr. Chamberlin in South Russian Grain Belt

William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 14 October 1933

Sir, Moscow, October 14, 1933

With reference to my despatch No. 525 of the 26th September,[73] I have the honour to report that Mr. W. H. Chamberlin, correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, recently returned from a ten days' trip in the South Russian grain belt. He had some difficulty in obtaining permission to make this journey and had to submit an itinerary to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs before permission was granted. He was accompanied by Mrs. Chamberlin, who is of Russian origin and speaks Russian. They were thus able not only to converse with everyone they met, but occasionally to divide their forces so that if Mr. Chamberlin was engaged with the official guides, Mrs. Chamberlin could enter into contact with bystanders. They pursued their enquiries principally in three areas, one in the North Caucasus and two in the Ukraine. In the North Caucasus they used the German agricultural concession, "Drusag," as their centre, and made excursions into the surrounding districts. In the Ukraine, they made investigations at Poltava and in the region around Belaya Tserkov, a village on the railway south of Kiev. In Poltava they were more strictly under official guidance than elsewhere, but in general they were allowed considerable freedom of movement. They found chairmen of local soviets and presidents of collective farms willing to speak freely. Such persons, living in remote places (and in Russia a village even a few miles from the railway is remote), could have no idea of the function of a foreign press correspondent and had obviously had no coaching in the art of window-dressing so skilfully practised by officials and official guides in the larger towns.

2. Mr. Chamberlin has written a series of five articles for the *Manchester Guardian* describing his experiences on this trip. Similar articles will appear in the *Christian Science Monitor*.[74] Mr. Chamberlin was

good enough to give me an account of his findings, of which the following is a summary.

3. In the villages in the Kuban round about the "Drusag" concession, there were wild rumours as to the numbers of people who had died of starvation within the last year. Mr. Chamberlin took the trouble to obtain figures from the chairman of the soviet of the Cossack settlement of Kazanskaya. He appeared unexpectedly at this settlement and the records were produced to him without hesitation. They showed that whereas the population of the area had been 8,000 in the summer of 1932, it had fallen to 7,000 in the summer of 1933. About 850 persons had died during the year and about 150 had moved elsewhere. The number of people who had died from all causes in the first four months of 1933 were respectively 21, 34, 79 and 155. Of these the numbers which had died from what Mr. Chamberlin called "exhaustion" were respectively 1, 7, 20 and 98. The figures for May were not available, but he thought that the months of April and May were the peak months as regards mortality.

4. In the Poltava area he found one commune where there had been no deaths from starvation, but in the villages round about there was no single place without some deaths from starvation. Again and again he found the local estimate of death from all causes during the last year to be about 10 per cent. of the population. This was in the villages. In the towns the estimate was about 5 per cent. A teacher in a village in the Poltava region told him that in some villages the mortality was 5 per cent. and in others it was as much as 15 per cent. The mortality was higher among the individual peasants than among the collective farm workers, and higher among the men than among the women. One conclusion he drew was that the food shortage had been used as a weapon against the individual peasants. In the Ukraine some relief had been afforded to collective farms, chiefly by way of seed loans, but also in the form of grain for food. The worst place he himself saw was the village of Cherkess, near Belaya Tserkov, south of Kiev. In this village most of the houses were empty and dilapidated, and of a former population of 2,000, 640 had died and 480 had fled. In a house entered at random in a village near Poltava he found a young girl, who told him that her father was out working and that her mother and four brothers and sisters had died of starvation. In the Cossack settlements in the Kuban all the dogs and cats had been eaten and the people had even been forced to eat weeds.

5. An official at Poltava described to Mr. Chamberlin some of the relief measures adopted to cope with the situation. Two thousand homeless children had been placed with peasant families and 500 in children's

homes. Two thousand four hundred people had been fed at feeding points, and 6,000 had been drafted off to the Donbas to work in the mines.

6. Mr. Chamberlin's own estimate of the number of deaths from starvation or from the effects of under-nourishment in the whole Union during the last year is between 4 and 5 million, of whom more than 2 million died in the Ukraine, something less than 2 million in Kazakstan and half a million in the North Caucasus. Mr. Chamberlin is a cautious and conscientious investigator and his opinion may be accepted with confidence. A common remark made to him by peasants, and on one occasion by a servant girl in a hotel, was that no imperialist war had ever cost so many lives as this year's famine.

7. He often asked himself why the population did not flee *en masse* from the famine areas. He could only attribute their immobility to the characteristic Russian passivity of temperament. In the Ukraine he had the impression that the population could find nothing better to do than to die as a protest.

8. There was now, he said, no longer a famine in any of the regions he had visited, but the aftermath of famine still remained. There were many cases of dysentery, sporadic cases of typhus, and in the Kuban a great deal of malaria. In some collective farms in the Kuban Valley a third of the members were down with malaria.

9. As regards this year's crop, he found the situation to be as follows: The Poltava area was the best of the three. The crop was good and there would be no serious distress this year. Between 35 and 40 per cent. of the yield would have to be paid over to the State or to the machine-tractor stations, but as the yield was about 20 bushels to the acre, the surplus would be about enough to nourish the population. In the Kuban the situation was not so good. The people had suffered more from under-nourishment than elsewhere and were still in a weak state. The fields were rather better cleaned than last year, but the weeds were still very bad in many places. The harvest, as a whole, was not very satisfactory, the wheat crop in particular being light. There would be no wheat bread at all in the Kuban this year for the people to eat, the crop being so small that it would all have to be delivered to the State. The people would have to live on maize and barley, which were a rather better crop. Herr Dittlof, the chairman of the "Drusag" concession, confirmed this. In the Ukraine, as a whole, the harvest was good. The official estimate places the total production of grain in the Ukraine at from 20 to 21 million tons, which is equal to the production of 1930. In the Odessa and Dniepropetrovsk areas the harvest was especially good, but there are some bad areas especially in the north-west. The German consul at Kiev told Mr.

Chamberlin that in some parts of the Ukraine there would be more hunger next year than this year.

10. Mr. Chamberlin says that in his opinion the chief reason for the improvement in the crop this year over last year is that climatic conditions were favourable. A second but less important factor was the introduction this year of the system of grain collection by fixed quota, by which the obligations of each holding were clearly defined (see Sir Esmond Ovey's despatch No. 64 of the 30th January, 1933). A further contributory factor was the famine itself, which convinced the peasants that, unless they made a desperate effort, they would starve again next winter. The political departments of the machine-tractor stations also played a part, but he thinks that their rôle has been rather exaggerated. Their establishment has, however, brought a better type of leadership, propaganda and inspection.

11. Among the peasants themselves Mr. Chamberlin found no enthusiasm for the new order of collectivised agriculture, which he considers is alien to their character. He made a point of asking peasants whom he met what they thought of Stalin's new admonition to the collective farm workers to "become well-to-do." One of them replied: "Words and deeds are different things." Another said: "It does not look much like it," while a third said bluntly: "Stalin is lying to us." He found, however, that the active resistance of the peasants had been broken both by terror and by mass deportations. In the Kuban deportations are still going on, and Mr. Chamberlin himself saw a trainload of peasants being transported from their homes. There has, he says, been a physical change in the population of the North Caucasus. The Cossack element has been largely eliminated, whether from death or deportation, and a poorer but more docile class of peasant has taken its place. The area has been the arena of a terrible class struggle, and bears every sign of the ordeal through which it was passed. Formerly a rich and prosperous region, it is now a scene of terrible poverty. Mr. Chamberlin estimates that fewer than half the families in the Kuban have as much as one cow.

12. At Poltava Mr. Chamberlin was given the following official statistics of the change in the animal population of the Ukraine between 1929 and 1933. The figures for 1933 are not quite complete and cover only 86 per cent. of the village soviets. Between 1929 and 1933 the number of horses fell from 5,543,000 to 2,772,000; the number of pigs from 3,472,000 to 1,390,000; and the number of sheep from 6,652,000 to 1,543,000. In 1929 the number of cattle was 7,600,000; it is now 3,832,600, of which about 2 million are cows. Since 1929 the Ukraine has lost about half its live-stock. Several years of reconstruction will be required before this situation can be remedied.

13. Mr. Chamberlin says that this year's harvest in the Union as a whole is not so good as the harvest of 1930, but it is better than the harvest of 1932. In 1930 the total production of grain was, he said, something under 80 million tons. In 1932 it was about 60 million tons. In the present year it is, he thinks, about 75 million tons. He says that the Germans describe this year's harvest as somewhat under the average. (The Soviet official statistics, however, give the total yield for 1930 and 1932 as 83.5 and 70.8 million tons respectively).

14. Mr. Chamberlin is still sceptical about the future of collectivised agriculture, and he doubts whether it has a higher productive capacity than the individual system. This year's experience, he says, really proves nothing, because the weather was a decisive factor in the yield. It will be necessary to wait for several years in order to judge whether there can be a general recovery in agriculture, both in grain and live-stock. He recalls that in 1930, the year of a good harvest, people were saying (as they are saying this year) that the bread problem had been solved. Anyone who had suggested in 1930 that in the year 1932-33 5 million people would die of starvation would have been branded as a counter-revolutionary. This year's harvest is possibly an exceptional one, the result not only of favourable climatic conditions, but of a desperate effort on the part of the half-starved population to save itself from starvation next winter. He asks whether such an effort could be repeated, and whether in less favourable conditions it could succeed. He doubts whether the gain in motive power from the supply of tractors and the gain in management from the activities of the political departments can off-set the loss of haulage power from the death of live-stock and the loss of human skill consequent upon the death and deportation of the best class of agriculturalists. Two other factors making for doubt are that, though the management of some collective farms is good, it is still in general of a very low order, and that even though there may be a sufficient surplus of grain for subsistence this year, it is to be questioned whether there will be an adequate supply of manufactured goods to give to the peasants in return for the sale on the collective farm market of the free portion of their grain.

15. The grain collection campaign, he thought, had proceeded smoothly. In the Poltava area the collection had been completed when he was there, and up to the 30th September the collection in the Ukraine had been completed by 75 per cent.

16. Mr. Chamberlin says that there is no doubt at all that famine was general in the Ukraine this last year. This fact was confirmed to him at station after station on his journey through the country. Nor is there any doubt that the North Caucasus is a semi-devastated region which would

almost have to be recolonised. It is also, he says, true to say that there is at the present moment no famine in the Ukraine and North Caucasus, but the recovery, such as it is, amounts to no more than the recapture of the position reached in 1931, and the recovery is in regard to bread alone and amounts to no more than the reattainment of mere subsistence. People no longer swell up from hunger and are no longer driven to eat weeds, but there is still a shortage, even of bread, and in many places low rations of from ¼ lb. to ½ lb. a day. The test of this year's harvest will come next April. He would guess that there would be considerable distress by that time and there might even be some deaths, but there will be no repetition of the horrors of the past winter; for a great step forward will have been made – the step from starvation to hunger.

17. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade and the Export Credits Guarantee Department.

I have, &c.

William Strang

Minutes

The King; Cabinet, Dominions.

A very interesting report by a man who, W. Strang considers, is likely to give a sound opinion as to prevailing conditions.

I have read Mr. Chamberlin's articles in the *Manchester Guardian* and this despatch gives a good summary of them; Mr. Chamberlin's facts & figures are based mainly on information obtained from the Soviet authorities in the districts concerned, but there is not the same reason to suspect them of window-dressing, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union (see para. 1). Mr. Chamberlin's estimate of 4-5 million deaths from starvation in the Union is only about half Mr. Duranty's (N 7182/114/38),[75] but that, & his description of conditions, are pretty grim [....]

T. A. Shone

Oct 30

This is, to my mind, the most reliable summing up of the situation in the U.S.S.R. as regards the famine & as regards this year's harvest that we have received. On both these points it fits in with our reports from other sources.

R. G. Howe

31 Oct.

Mr. Chamberlin has the reputation of being somewhat pro-Soviet. but much less so than Mr. Duranty. He is altogether a much more trustworthy

and reputable journalist than the latter.
L. Collier
October 31st.

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Famine in the Ukraine

The Ukrainian National Council in Canada to Ramsay MacDonald, 2 October 1933, Laurence Collier to the Dominions Office, 21 November 1933, J. H. Thomas, Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, to Sir William Henry Clark, High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Ottawa, 19 January 1934, and Sir William Henry Clark to the Ukrainian National Council, 2 March 1934

Right Honourable Ramsay MacDonald,
Prime Minister of Great Britain,
London, England

Sir: October 2nd, 1933

We are taking the liberty of directing your attention to the deplorable fact that for a considerable time the population of Eastern Ukraine (now under a military Bolshevik occupation) are being systematically starved by the Moscow authorities.

The tragedy of the great famine of 1921-22, when nearly ten million people died from hunger, is being repeated, but in all probability on a still larger scale. Thousands of letters are being received in Canada continuously, containing gruesome details of the vast number dying; there are settlements in Ukraine where only one-third – sometimes only one-fourth – of the original population are still alive.

Crop failure is not the reason for this famine, but the brutal policy of the Moscow rulers who, needing grain for export to balance their budget, pitilessly take everything from the farmers, already proletarized. Especially in Ukraine, where the peasants are opposed to the foreign Russian rule, are they being deprived of literally everything, being left without even the smallest ration for daily meals, under the excuse that they are hiding food. With such tactics, even a bumper crop, of huge yield, could not save these people from starvation.

Having in mind the tragic plight of their compatriots, and realising their moral duty in the matter, the Ukrainian National Council in Canada

turn to you, as to a leader of a great civilized nation, with an urgent request to take the necessary steps to arrange for an immediate neutral investigation of the famine situation in Ukraine, with a view to organizing international relief for the stricken population. Any private action, even on the largest scale, would prove inadequate owing to the magnitude of the calamity. We are prepared to supply you, if necessary, with original documents and information giving details of the famine conditions.

We trust that your Excellency will take this, our appeal, under most serious consideration.

We remain,

Yours faithfully,

Ukrainian National Council in Canada

President

[*sgd.*] S. Skoblak

Secretary

[*sgd.*] J. M. Boyduck

Chairman of Advisory Board

[*sgd.*] L. Biberovich

Ukrainian National Council in Canada

Bulletin No. I

Winnipeg, Sept. 15, 1933

"There were several cases in our district where parents have eaten their own children in a state of insanity caused by extended starvation," said Mrs. Marie Zuk, of Kalmazovka, district Odessa, Soviet Ukraine, in a conversation with Mr. L. Biberovich, General Secretary of the U. N. C. in C. She had arrived in Winnipeg early in September, with her two small children, on her way to Consort, Alta., where her husband has been farming since his arrival in Canada in 1928, having left her native village on August 7th, 1933.

"The most remarkable case of this kind happened this spring in the village of Oleshki, where a young married couple, Ivan Chuhan and his wife, killed and consumed their two small children. The gruesome crime was accidentally discovered when a pig was stolen from the Kolhosp (collective farm) and the members of the militia organised a search of all the houses in the vicinity in an endeavor to locate the stolen 'treasure.' Finally they found some meat of a peculiar appearance at Chuhan's home and, pressed to the wall, the man admitted having murdered both of this children in order to still the unbearable hunger. The head of the second

child was found in the oven, where it was being prepared for consumption. The couple were arrested.

"The conditions in Ukraine were bad enough in 1930, but in 1931 they became really critical. The present situation is as follows. There is literally no bread there; no potatoes (all the seed potatoes having been eaten up); no meat, no sugar; in a word, nothing of the basic necessities of life. Last year some food was obtainable occasionally for money, but this year most of the bazaars (markets) are closed and empty. All cats and dogs disappeared, having perished or been eaten by the hungry farmers. The same is the case with the horses, so that cows are mostly used as draught-animals. People also consumed all the field mice and frogs they could obtain. The only food most of the people can afford is a simple soup prepared of water, salt, and various weeds. If somebody manages to get a cup of millet in some way, a tablespoon of it transforms the soup into a rare delicacy. This soup, eaten two or three times a day, is also the only food of the small children, as the cow or any other milk has become a mere myth.

"This soup has no nutritive value whatever, and people remaining on such a diet get first swollen limbs and faces, which makes them appear like some dreadful caricature of human beings, then gradually turn into living skeletons, and finally drop dead wherever they stand or go. The dead bodies are held at the morgue until they number fifty or more, and then are buried in mass graves. In the summer the burials take place more often in view of quick decomposition which cannot be checked even by a liberal use of creoline. Especially devastating is the mortality from hunger among children and elderly people. Nobody ventures to dress the dead family members in any clothes, as the next day they would be found at the morgue, naked, stripped of everything by unknown criminals.

"There are many cases of suicide, mostly by hanging, among the village population, and also many mental alienations.

"The famine in Soviet Ukraine in 1921 was undoubtedly a terrible one, but it appears like child's play in comparison with the present situation.

"The village Kalmazowka was one of the more fortunate ones, but in the adjoining villages of Olshanka and Synukhin Brid the death toll defied all description. Those who were not deported to the dreaded Solovetsky Islands, or to the Ural Mountains, died from starvation, and at present not more than one quarter of the original population is living there – and they are leading a life of misery. No word of complaint or criticism, however, is tolerated by the authorities and those guilty of the

infraction of this enforced silence, disappear quickly in a mysterious way.

"Worst of all, there is no escape from this hell on earth, as no one can obtain permission to leave the boundaries of Ukraine, once the granary of Europe, and now a valley of tears and hunger.

"In crass contrast to this terrible condition of mass death from starvation is the real condition of crops. Last year the wheat crop in our district was good, and this year it is even better still. Unfortunately the peasants derive no benefit from it, as the grain fields are watched day and night by armed guards, to prevent theft of grain ears, and after threshing the grain is immediately removed to the government storehouses, or to the nearest port.

"There are two classes of farmers in Ukraine. Most of them are already 'collectivized' and are working on the state or collective farms. A limited number still work on individual farms, but the taxes in kind, imposed on them by the authorities, render their existence a permanent privation. Cow milk – and there are only very few fortunate enough to possess a cow – must also be delivered to the government creameries at a nominal price. The only exception in this general suffering are the members of the Communist Party, and the various officials, mostly non-Ukrainians, as they receive their 'payoks' or rations of food from the government depots.

"As mentioned above, some food could still be had last year at the bazaars on certain occasions, but the prices were exorbitant. For instance, a pound of bread (secretly sold) used to cost 6 rubles; a pound of butter or sugar, 15 rubles; an apple, 2 rubles; a cup of millet, 3½ rubles; 10 onion, 2 rubles; a cup of beans, 3 rubles; etc. The prices of manufactured goods are likewise high. A pair of ladies' very simple shoes cost at present 90 rubles, so that the majority of the people wear primitive home-made mocassins.

"What a different picture did I find in Moscow on my way to Canada!

"The markets there were flooded with most delicious food-stuffs! Only Ukraine seems to have been sentenced to death by starvation by the central government in Moscow.

"The religious life in Ukraine is at a total standstill, although the people are perhaps more religious now than ever before. The church communities are unable to maintain priests, who either moved to other places or become homeless tramps. The church buildings were turned into workmen's clubs. When, on the occasion of Christmas or Easter, some travelling priest is invited to celebrate a Mass, at once an anti-religious demonstration is staged by the local Young Communist group, who, with an accompaniment of brass band and singing and carrying

caricatures ridiculing saints and religious rites, try to disperse the flock of the faithful. Of course, no religious wedding ceremonies, funerals, or christening of babies, are performed nowadays. Young people wishing to become man and wife, simply move to one place and live together.

"Most of the village schools are empty, as the children are too hungry to attend to learning. The hospitals, although some of them are directed by good old-time physicians, are bare of all medicines. When a sick person comes to a hospital asking for a remedy, a uniform liquid, held ready in bottles, is dispensed to all without any individual examination."

Mrs. Zuk was expelled two years ago from her family home by the chairman of the local collective farm who took the house for himself. For a while she lived in a small abandoned shack on the border of the village but being later expelled from there she moved around from house to house, wherever she could find shelter. It was a great hardship for her to leave her home village where her old mother and a married daughter still reside, but there was no alternative in view of threatening annihilation. It was only owing to the fact that her husband sent her some money from time to time through the "Torgsin," which was paid out to her in foodstuffs and other goods, that she was able to avoid the lot of her less fortunate compatriots.

Minutes

In addition to (1) the letter to the Prime Minister from the Ukrainian National Council in Canada there are annexed within:-

(2) a letter to the Prime Minister from British subjects of Ukrainian descent at Ward, Manitoba,

(3) four resolutions passed by a meeting of Ukrainian Canadians in Oshawa, Ontario [....]

Query. Send the D.O. copies of all three petitions and suggest (a) that a reply be sent to (1) – (the most important) – to the effect that H.M.G. in the U.K. cannot undertake any action with a view to investigating conditions in territories under the control of the Soviet Govt., or organising relief for the inhabitants, in the absence of any indication that such action would be acceptable to the Soviet Govt.; (b) that letters (2) and (3) be answered by sending the writers a copy of the above reply to (1); adding, in the case of (2), that H.M.G. are not disposed to make representations to the Soviet Govt. in regard to the administration of territories under their control, which would be regarded as interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union & would not be likely to prove effective.

? inform D.O. at the same time of what was recently done at Geneva about Ukrainian petitions (see N 7265/21/38).[76]
T. A. Shone
Nov 7

I agree with the above but I would suggest that in our reply to (1) we should add that the question of the famine in the Ukraine was recently considered by the Council of the L. of Nations who came to the conclusions that the only course open to the various Ukrainian Committees outside Russia was to address themselves to the Int. Red Cross or some similar organisation of a non-political character.
R. G. Howe
Nov. 8

Draft
[*To Dominions Office*]
Sir, 23 November, 1933

I am directed by Secretary Sir John Simon to transmit herewith, for the consideration of the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, copies of three communications from Ukrainian organisations in Canada to the Prime Minister, which have been referred to this Department:-(1) a letter from the Ukrainian National Council in Canada, urging that steps be taken to arrange for a neutral investigation of the famine situation in the Ukraine, with a view to organising relief for the inhabitants; (2) a letter from British subjects of Ukrainian descent at Ward, Manitoba, urging that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom use their influence to prevent the extermination by hunger of the inhabitants of the Ukraine and to obtain for that territory the right of self-determination as to Government etc; & (3) a series of resolutions passed at a meeting of "Ukrainian Canadians" in Oshawa, Ontario, protesting against existing conditions in the Ukraine.

2. Sir John Simon has been informed that in September last, a number of appeals for action in connexion with the alleged famine in the Ukraine which had been addressed to the President of the Council of the League of Nations by various Ukrainian organisations, were considered by members of the Council in private consultation; and that it was then decided that the President should, at his discretion, inform the petitioners that the only course open to them appeared to be to address themselves to the International Red Cross or to some similar organisation of a purely non-political character.

3. Subject to the concurrence of Mr. Secretary Thomas, Sir John Simon proposes to reply to the Ukrainian National Council in Canada

that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom cannot undertake any action with a view to investigating conditions in territories under the control of the Soviet Government. or to organising relief for the inhabitants, in the absence of any indication that such action would be acceptable to the Soviet Government. He would at the same time inform them of the decision which, he understands, was reached when the question was recently considered by members of the Council of the League.

4. Sir John Simon proposes to answer the second and third communications of which copies are enclosed herewith, by forwarding copies of his reply to the Ukrainian National Council, and adding, in the case of the second communication, that His Majesty's Government in the U.K. are not disposed to make representations to the Soviet Government in regard to the administration of territories under their control, as such representations would not only have no prospect of success, but would also inevitably be regarded by the Soviet Government as interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union.

5. I am to enquire whether Mr. Secretary Thomas concurs in the terms of these replies.

L. C.

Nov. 21st

Downing Street
18 January, 1934

The High Commissioner in Canada
for His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Sir,

With reference to my despatch No. 183 of the 20th May, 1931, and connected correspondence, regarding the activities of Ukrainian organisations in Canada, I have the honour to transmit to you the accompanying copies of communications from such organisations which have been sent to the Prime Minister, vis: –

(1) A letter from the Ukrainian National Council in Canada urging that steps be taken to arrange for a neutral investigation of the famine situation in the Ukraine, with a view to organising relief for the inhabitants.

(2) A letter from British subjects of Ukrainian descent at Ward, Manitoba, urging that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom should use their influence to prevent the extermination by hunger of the inhabitants of the Ukraine and to obtain for that territory the right of self-determination as to Government etc.

(3) Four resolutions passed at a meeting of "Ukrainian Canadians" in Oshawa, Ontario, protesting against existing conditions in the Ukraine, which were forwarded by Michael Petrowsky, Cedar Dale, Oshawa.

(4) A resolution passed at a mass meeting of Canadian citizens of Ukrainian descent held by the Ukrainian Education Association at Thorold, South Ontario.

2. I understand from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that in September last's number of appeals for action in connection with the alleged famine in the Ukraine which had been addressed to the President of the Council of the League of Nations by various Ukrainian organisations, were considered by members of the Council in private consultation and that it was then decided that the President should, at his discretion, inform the petitioners that the only course open to them appeared to be to address themselves to the International Red Cross or to some similar organisation of a purely non-political character.

3. Secretary Sir John Simon has suggested that the reply to the Ukrainian National Council in Canada should state that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom cannot undertake any action with a view to investigating conditions in territories under the control of the Soviet Government, or to organising relief for the inhabitants, in the absence of any indication that such action would be acceptable to the Soviet Government, and should at the same time inform the Council of the decision which is understood to have been reached when the question was considered in September by the members of the Council of the League of Nations.

4. He has suggested that the communications, copies of which formed the second and third and fourth enclosures of this despatch, should be answered by forwarding copies of the reply to the Ukrainian National Council, and adding, in the case of the second communication, that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are not disposed to make representations to the Soviet Government in regard to the administration of territories under their control, as such representations would not only have no prospect of success, but would also inevitably be regarded by the Soviet Government as interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union.

5. I should be glad if you would ask the Canadian Government whether they would see any objection to your conveying replies on the above lines to the senders, or whether the Canadian Government would prefer to reply themselves. In the event of your sending the replies I should be glad if you would forward copies to me for record.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. H. Thomas

Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom
Earnscliffe, Ottawa

The President,
Ukrainian National Council,
Flora Avenue & McKenzie St.,
Winnipeg, Man.

Sir, 2nd March, 1934

I am instructed by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of October 2nd last addressed to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, relative to the famine situation in the Ukraine.

His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom are unable to undertake any action with a view to investigating conditions in territories under the control of the Soviet Government, or to organizing relief for the inhabitants in the absence of any indication that such action would be acceptable to the Soviet Government.

Mr. Thomas understands from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that a number of appeals for action in connection with the alleged famine in the Ukraine were, last September, addressed to the Council of the League of Nations by various Ukrainian organisations. It was then decided by members of the Council that the only course which appeared to be open to the petitioners was for them to address themselves to the International Red Cross or to some similar organisation of a purely non-political character.[77]

In view of the Canadian status of your Council I am forwarding copies of your communication and of this reply, to the Canadian Government.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
[*sgd.*] W. H. Clark

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Soviet Grain Deliveries
Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 7 November 1933

Sir, Moscow, November 7, 1933

With reference to my despatch No. 601 of the 4th November, I have the honour to inform you that, according to the text of a telegram addressed to-day by the Ukraine Communist party to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party and to Stalin, Kaganovich and Molotov, the year's plan for grain deliveries has now been fulfilled in the Ukraine in all crops by State farms, collective farms and individual peasants. The telegram states that the instructions of the Central Committee of the party and of Stalin, "to make this year the last year of difficulties," have been thereby carried out, and it adds that the success is due to the assistance granted by the Central Committee to the Ukraine in the spring of this year in the form of seed, food-stuffs and fodder, and in the large amount of agricultural machinery put at the Ukraine's disposal by the Central Government. In order to make the announcement appropriate for the day of its publication, which as a day of revolutionary celebrations is one of the festivals of the Red Army, the telegram concludes by stating that the Ukraine will continue "to strengthen the country's preparedness for defence and increase the fighting power of our glorious Red Army."

2. As was stated in my despatch under reference, no figures of the stage of State grain collections have recently been published, but the statistics of the progress of harvest operations which I have reported make the announcement of the fulfilment of grain deliveries in no way surprising, since there is no doubt that this year the grain derived from the harvest has been delivered at once to the State.

3. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.
Chilston

Minutes

At what a cost to the inhabitants has this been done! [....]
T. A. Shone
Nov 13.

58

Relief Work in South Russia
Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Strange Malone to Laurence Collier, 1 December 1933

Personal

Dear Mr. Collier, Dec. 1st., 1933

A short time ago you were good enough to discuss, with Mrs. Christie and Miss Nike and myself, proposals which we had put forward for relief work in South Russia. I thought that you might care to know how far we had got and I therefore enclose a draft constitution which has been drawn up but has not yet been definitely agreed.

I also wanted to ask you if you knew anything about the Ukrainian Bureau in London (40 Grosvenor Place) as we proposed to co-operate with them. I have given them some assistance in the past and they seem to be genuinely trying to help the Ukrainians and are very much opposed to the German-Skoropadsky movement.

One is however always anxious to know what is behind organizations of this sort and I hoped that perhaps you could find out for me.

I can look in and see you if you like.

Sincerely yours

[*sgd.*] Cecil Strange Malone

Draft Constitution

Russian Appeal

1. The name of the Committee shall be:-

United British Appeal (for Russian Relief).

2. The Committee shall consist of three representatives of the following societies:-

The Federation of Jewish Relief Organisations,

The Society of Friends,

The Save the Children Fund.

Additional members (interested individuals or societies) may be co-opted by a unanimous vote of the three founder societies.

3. The Committee shall raise money in any way it may consider best for the purchase of food through Torgsin (or otherwise as may be determined) for the immediate relief of the starving in Russia, irrespective of nationality or creed.

4. (a) The office of the United British Appeal shall be at....

(b) The money received as the result of the appeal shall be receipted, acknowledged and banked by....

(c) The Committee shall carry out its relief through the Federation of Jewish Relief Organisations.

(d) The expenses shall be sanctioned by the committee out of the proceeds of the appeal – it being understood that no special staff or offices be engaged but be provided by the founder societies.

Draft

Lieut.-Col. Cecil Malone
(For Mr. Collier's signature)

Personal

Dear Colonel Malone, 19 December, 1933

I fear I have been a long time in answering your letter of December 1st in which you were so good as to enclose the draft constitution of the United British Appeal Committee for Russian Relief, but I have been rather busy lately, and I have also been collecting information on the Ukrainian Bureau, about which you also asked me in that letter.

The chief activity of the Ukrainian Bureau, in this country at least, seems to be the issue of periodical bulletins in which it maintains that Poland has not lived up to her engagements to grant autonomy to Eastern Galicia and protests against the treatment of Ukrainian minorities by the Polish and Soviet Governments (though the protests are more frequently directed against the former than against the latter Government). It does not approve of the Skoropadsky movement, however.

~~You can imagine that, in view of this body's attitude towards two Governments with which H.M. Government are in normal relations, the Foreign Office do not have much to do with it.~~

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd) Laurence Collier

Minutes

I cannot find out from these pp. to which group of Ukrainians this bureau belongs. But as their propaganda is anti-Polish (far more than

anti-Russian), they cannot be "Petlurists"; Colonel Malone seems to know that they are not in with Skoropadski; and they are perhaps connected with Makohin, who is also concerned with this Relief Committee (see N 7748/21/38).[78]

Perhaps a reply to Colonel Malone on the lines of the annexed draft will meet the case, unless Mr. Norton can obtain more definite information regarding the Bureau, which he could give Col. Malone.

T. A. Shone

Dec 13

59

Agriculture in the Ukraine
Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 4 December 1933

Sir, Moscow, 4th December, 1933

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a summary of a speech delivered by Postyshev, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, on the 19th ultimo, at a session of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, regarding the methods adopted in the Ukraine for ensuring the success of the Bolshevik campaign in regard to the collective farms.[79]

2. These methods have been both thorough and ruthless, and the famine conditions prevalent in the Ukraine throughout the year must, to a great extent, be put down to the measures of coercion employed by the Bolsheviks in achieving the results which they claim. It will be interesting to see whether, as Dr. Schiller avers in his book published early this year (see Mr. Coote's despatch No. 503 of the 12th September last),[80] the progressive exhaustion and depression of agricultural labour largely discounts the improvement expected from more rigorous coercion and more favourable climatic conditions. One can only hope for the sake of the Ukrainians that they have succeeded so well in carrying out Stalin's instructions in regard to the programme of work for the year that they have really made this the "last year of difficulties."

3. I have sent a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.
Chilston

Minutes

The results of the "purge," & the organisation of political departments in the machine-tractor stations and State Farms (paragraph 2 of the enclosure), are of some interest.

There is to be intensive propaganda by cinema, wireless, sport, libraries, exhibitions, theatres &c, to assist this Bolshevik campaign in the Ukraine; & Party organisations must continue "the struggle for the clean, whitewashed cottage, the bath & the hairdresser's shop."

(It must be a great consolation to those who die of hunger to think that their survivors may be able to get a bath & a shampoo!)[....]
T. A. Shone
Dec 14

There have been indications lately that Stalin is contemplating lightening the burden on the peasants. We shall doubtless be informed of the policy at the forthcoming All Union Congress of Soviets.
R. G. Howe
10.12

From this & N 8763/21/38[81] it is clear that Ukrainian nationalism is now regarded as a serious danger.
L. C.
Dec 19th.

60

Situation in the Ukraine
Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 4 December 1933

Sir, Moscow, December 4, 1933

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the summary of a resolution of the Unified Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Communist party of the Ukraine, held on the 22nd November last, embodying portions of a speech made by Kosior, the Ukrainian representative on the Council of Nationalities.[82]

2. The resolution contains an outline of the policy pursued during the year with regard to the Ukraine, and describes the enemies who dwell within and without the Bolshevik fold, as well as the steps which have been and are to be taken to cope with them. Kosior's views supplement Postyshev's recent speech, a summary of which was forwarded to you in my despatch No. 653 of to-day's date.[83]

3. Great importance is attached to the exposure of Skrypnik, the late Commissar of Education of the Ukraine, who before his death by suicide is alleged to have favoured the interventionist plans of Fascist Germany and Poland, aiming at the separation of the Ukraine from the Soviet Union. Kosior mentions that the German Fascists have the support of the English diehards, and no doubt more would have been made of this point had Lord Rothermere's recent suggestions in the *Daily Mail* on the subject of a territorial rearrangement in Eastern Europe appeared at an earlier date. An unceasing struggle must, according to the resolution, be carried on against the ever-present dangers, against Russian chauvinism and against Ukrainian nationalism. Russian chauvinism still remains the chief danger not only in the Soviet Union, but also in the Communist party. This, says Kosior, does not alter the fact that in certain republics of the U.S.S.R., and especially in the Ukraine, the chief danger at the moment is local nationalism, which is connected with foreign imperialist intervention. Both these tendencies are encouraged by counter-revolutionary elements, including the Trotskists, and are directed towards the

weakening of the position of the U.S.S.R. and the strengthening of the position of capitalism. Anybody, therefore, who attempts to undermine the connexion of the Ukraine with the Soviet Union is an enemy of the Soviet Union, and consequently a counter-revolutionary.

4. Among the most important measures which it is proposed to take to counteract the activities of the enemies within and without their gates is the formation of a college in Kharkov, attached to the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Ukraine, for the study of Marxism and Leninism. The object of the college is the creation of Bolshevik-Ukrainian cadres in collective farms, State farms, factories and higher cultural establishments, especially amongst the youth of the "Soviet *intelligentsia*" in the Union. Here some 150 persons will undergo a course lasting one and a half years, after which they will be sent out to fill responsible posts. The training of qualified scientific workers is to be supervised, and the Ukrainian Higher Agricultural Communist School is to be reorganised as the Ukrainian Communist University. The creation of over 400 political department newspapers, the majority of which are issued in the Ukrainian language, is referred to as one of the achievements of "Bolshevik Ukrainisation"; and the political bureau of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian party is charged with the duty of improving the standard of the press and of bringing up a suitable body of pressmen.

I have, &c.
Chilston

Minutes

The resolution advocates an intensive campaign for the cultivation of true Bolshevist ideas in the Ukraine, & betrays considerable anxiety as to foreign encouragement of Ukrainian separatism.

We have had information to the effect that Skrypnik was in touch with Herr Rosenberg, in connexion with plans for detaching the Ukraine from the Soviet Union[....]

T. A. Shone
Dec 14.

61

Articles by Monsieur Herriot on Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Minutes by T. A. Shone and Laurence Collier, 5 and 7 December 1933

Minutes

In the first of these two articles[84] M. Herriot ridicules the stories which have been current that the Soviet authorities only allowed him to see what was good during his recent visit to Russia; and says that they, like *the stories about famine in the Soviet Union*,* are part of Hitler's propaganda for the establishment of an independent Ukraine.

In the second, he observes that any Frenchman who has seen the Russia of to-day & is alive to the present situation in Europe, is bound to remark on the evident desire of the Russians for rapprochement with France. He then comments on the sources of Soviet strength, – industrial development, the Red Army & the liberal attitude of the Soviet régime to the various nationalities which go to make up the Union and lead to its extension in Asia[....]

T. A. Shone
Dec. 5

These articles throw more light on the mind of M. Herriot than on the situation in Russia!

L. C.
Dec. 7th.

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*A line was drawn beside the italicized words and an exclamation mark was written in the margin.

62

Ukraine

Memorandum by Ponsonby Moore Crosthwaite on the History of Ukraine and Its Relations with Poland and Russia, 11 December 1933

Note on the Ukraine

The Ukrainians or Little Russians occupy a very large territory north of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Kiev, the former capital of the Ukraine, was one of the earliest centres of Russian culture and religion. After the irruption of the Tartars, however, the connexion with the Great Russians round Moscow was broken, and the whole Ukraine ultimately became part of the Polish-Lithuanian Empire. In 1667, after the great revolt of the Ukrainian Cossacks against the Poles, the portion east of the Dnieper was ceded to Russia. In the rest of the territory what little civilisation there was came from the Polish nobles, who owned the whole of the land. After the partitions of Poland at the end of the 18th century, all the Ukrainians were incorporated in the Russian Empire, except those living in Galicia. The Kingdoms of Galicia and Lodemeria, the old "Red Russia" (whence the name "Ruthene" for the Ukrainians in Galicia), fell to Austria. Eastern Galicia, which is also know as the Western Ukraine, differs from the rest of the Ukraine in that, owing to historical circumstances, the Ruthenes are Uniate Catholics, while the Ukrainians elsewhere are Orthodox. Furthermore, there is in Eastern Galicia a very large Polish minority; before the war there were approximately 3 million Ruthenes, 1 million Poles and 500,000 Jews (for further observations on Eastern Galicia see paragraph 6).

2. In the Russian Ukraine there grew up during the 19th century a literary "regional" movement, which succeeded in creating a Ukrainian language out of the local dialects, and finally developed into political separatism. This development was in some degree aided by the gradual diminution of the number of Polish landowners west of the Dnieper. After the outbreak of the Russian revolution in 1917, a series of provisional Governments, of varying shades of red, were set up in the Ukraine

with the recognition of the Russian authorities. On the 9th February, 1918, the Central Powers signed a separate peace treaty with the "Ukrainian People's Republic" at Brest-Litovsk. This was followed by a German occupation, by the dissolution of the "People's Republic," and by the setting up of Skoropadski as "Hetman" (a title derived from the Cossacks of the Dnieper). After the collapse of the Central Powers, however, Skoropadski could not maintain his position, and Petliura and Vinnichenko, ex-President of the "People's Republic," established a Government at Kiev, where they proclaimed the union of the Ukraine with the West Ukrainian Republic set up at Lemberg by the Galician Ruthenes. This led to a war with Poland, in which Petliura, who had entered Galicia, was defeated and turned out.

3. At the beginning of 1919 Petliura, in his turn, was driven out of the Ukraine by the Bolsheviks, and took refuge in Eastern Galicia. In 1920 he joined forces with Poland against Russia. Early in the summer of 1920 the Poles with Petliura advanced as far as Kiev. The Ukraine had in the meantime seen a second Ukrainian Soviet Government, a "White" Government under Denikin and a third Soviet Government. The Poles were soon evicted from Kiev and were driven back almost to Warsaw, but, in its turn, the Bolshevik advance was decisively defeated in August 1920. The present boundaries were fixed by the Treaty of Riga, negotiated in 1920 and 1921, between Poland on the one hand, and the Russian and Ukrainian Soviet Republics on the other. This settlement left to Poland Eastern Galicia and a large strip of Volhynia to the north, inhabited mostly by Ukrainians, while Poland and Russia recognised the "Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic." On the 28th December, 1920, a Russo-Ukrainian treaty was signed defining relations between the two Soviet Republics, and 1923 saw the adoption of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., of which the Ukraine became a constituent member.

4. The idea of compensating Poland for the loss of her outlet to the Baltic by an outlet to the Black Sea has long been popular in certain quarters in Germany. The latest suggestion in this connexion is apparently that a strip of territory leading to the Black Sea and including the port of Odessa should be ceded to Poland. Its advantages from the German point of view are: (1) That it costs Germany nothing (for German assistance would no doubt at the most be confined to an undertaking not to attack Poland in the rear while she was occupied in the Ukraine); (2) that it would cost Russia a great deal, in proportion to the amount of territory ceded (see paragraph 5) – this consideration might appeal especially to certain sections of the present anti-Communist Government;

and (it may be hazarded) (3) that it would present Poland with a task of almost insuperable difficulties (see paragraph 6).

5. The loss of any large part of the Ukraine would be a crippling blow to the U.S.S.R. Almost 20 per cent. of the total population of the Union live there. The soil is the richest in Russia, so that, under normal conditions, there is a considerable surplus of all kinds of agricultural products for export. Furthermore, there is an abundance of minerals. Of the total Russian production of coal in 1927, 97 per cent. came from the Donetz basin; of the total production in the same year of cast iron 76 per cent. came from the Ukraine. Other minerals worked there are manganese and phosphorite. Industries of all sorts have been developed here since the initiation of the first Five-Year Plan. The hydro-electric station at Dnieprostroy is one of the show exhibits of the Soviet Union. Finally, the Ukraine is an essential link with the outside world, as Odessa and its neighbours are the only warm-water seaports on Soviet territory. In short, Russia could scarcely voluntarily consent to the loss of any portion of the Ukraine. It could only be taken away by force and kept by force. Russian opposition would be almost equally strong whether the Ukraine was set up as a really independent State or whether any portion of it was incorporated in Poland.

6. At first sight it might seem advantageous to Poland that she should obtain any part of this territory or alternatively that a buffer State should be created over which she would be given an opportunity to exercise control. There was in 1919-20 very influential backing in Poland for a scheme of this sort, as the alliance with Petliura and the advance to Kiev shows. It was then hoped by the Polish landowners in the Ukraine that they might save their estates there from confiscation. That reason has now gone, for the Ukrainians would hardly be induced to separate from the Soviet Government in order to surrender their land once more to a foreign aristocracy. In 1920, moreover, the Poles got away with a settlement at Riga, which is as favourable from a territorial point of view as any they could venture to expect if they did not incorporate the whole Ukraine. Already about 14 per cent. of the total population in Poland of 32 millions are Ukrainians and their relations with the Poles are, at the best, bad, and at the worst, execrable. They are divided by class from the Poles, who are in the eastern provinces mostly landowners; they are also divided by religion, the Ukrainians in Eastern Galicia being Uniates, and elsewhere Orthodox (as already stated), while the Poles are of course almost exclusively Roman Catholics. The population of the Ukraine, according to the 1926 figures, was nearly 20 millions, of whom about 80 per cent. were Ukrainians (9 per cent. Great Russians and 5 per cent. Jews). Inevitably then the strength of the Polish element in the Polish

dominions would suffer by any accession of Ukrainian territory. An independent Ukraine, on the other hand, would have a different element of danger. It would exercise powerful attraction over the Ukrainians in Poland as defined by the Treaty of Riga, whom the Poles are by no means ready to lose. In particular, the Ruthenes in Eastern Galicia, who are extremely anti-Polish in sentiment, would have for the first time a definite and direct objective which they could all work for, such as incorporation in the U.S.S.R. does not at present provide. But few Poles would now countenance the abandonment of Eastern Galicia with its large Polish minority, its great estates and its old centres of Polish culture. Marshal Pilsudski, indeed, after his *coup d'État* in 1925, favoured the idea of a Polish-Ukrainian federal State (which, he hoped, would incidentally solve the problem of Eastern Galicia). But the idea found little support among his countrymen and seems finally to have been abandoned after the risings and "pacification" of 1930, which showed him that encouragement of Ukrainian nationalism was a double-edged weapon, almost as dangerous to Poland as to Russia. Up to that time there is no doubt that the Polish authorities had encouraged it on Soviet territory, but they now realised that the Soviet Government were retaliating by doing the same in Poland.

7. Any such scheme as those under discussion would then be violently and inexorably opposed by Russia. Every prudent Pole would recognise in it a threat to the security of Poland as it exists to-day. Of the Ukrainians themselves it is harder to speak. Their attitude is perhaps not very important in the eyes of the propounders of the scheme, but it is a point which would have to be considered if the scheme is to go further. The Little Russians are distinct from the Great Russians; Sir J. Headlam-Morley said that the difference was as great as that between the Englishman and the Scot. But they are as different from the Poles as are the French from the Italians. There is no doubt that there are serious reasons for discontent in the Ukraine at the present time. Soviet agricultural policy has brought terrible sufferings on the peasant population, resulting this year in an actual famine. But the peasants, though many, are divided, and there is an important element in the towns whose existence depends on the continuance of the present link with Moscow. The Ukrainian separatist parties are bitterly divided among themselves. The majority of the *émigrés* from the Russian Ukraine are Petlurists and the Skoropadsky faction, favoured by Berlin, are probably a small minority. While there is evidence that nationalist feeling has grown even among Ukrainian Communists, these latter, of course, would prefer to attempt to alter the present policy of the Central Government at Moscow, rather than to break away altogether. There is also nothing to show that the Ukrainians as a

whole would be in a position, if given their independence, to keep it, or that they would welcome the support of the Poles or Germans in this enterprise.
P. M. C.
Foreign Office, December 11, 1933

Minutes

Northern dept.

This is really your subject—and if you concur & approve the terms of this memo, it might perhaps be printed further to complete the series of memo[*rand*]a on possible developments of German policy.
R.G.W.
12/12

I concur in the views expressed in the memorandum, and agree that it should be printed.
L.C.
Dec. 13th.

63

Ukrainian Committees
Lord Newton to Sir Lancelot Oliphant, 13 December 1933, Draft Reply by Sir Lancelot Oliphant, 13 December 1933, and Reply by Lord Newton, 15 December 1933

Private

Dear Oliphant, Dec. 13 1933

I wonder if I could see you for a few minutes tomorrow Thursday afternoon, or would you come to luncheon if disengaged at 1.30? I am being approached about an Ukraine committee and do not wish to commit myself before hearing what the F.O. has to say about it. Would you kindly telephone. If you come to luncheon you would probably find only myself & my daughter.

Yours vy sincerely
Newton

Draft

Lord Newton,
75, Eaton Square,
S.W. 1
Private and confidential
(for signature by Sir L. Oliphant)
13th December, 1933

Dear Newton,

~~I am sorry to say that I am already engaged and thus cannot accept your nice invitation to lunch tomorrow as you suggested in your letter of to day.~~

I can tell you now, however, what we think here about Ukrainian committees and whether you should join them. We do not, of course, try to influence anyone who is no longer in our Service for or against

any national movement; but since you have been so good as to ask for our views, I can say, frankly, that people in responsible positions like yourself would probably do better to leave them alone.

So long as H.M.G. are in normal – I will not say friendly – relations with the Soviet Government they cannot look with favour on movements for the disruption of the Soviet State; and – not to mince matters – that is the ultimate aim of all these Ukrainian committees. Some of these committees, according to our information, are really not to be taken seriously from the political point of view; others are possibly more serious and certainly include some honest and reputable members. But up till now the net result of their efforts seems to have been to bring about the death or exile of numerous innocent persons; and it is questionable whether they are justified in expecting to achieve more than that in the present circumstances. From your own point of view again, even harmless participation in a society of this sort is liable to misinterpretation; and in view of the official and eminent positions you have held misinterpretations in your case might have more serious consequences and entail greater responsibility than in the case of an ordinary private person.
L. O.
13 Dec.

Dear Oliphant, Dec. 15 1933

Many thanks for your letter. I think that your advice is sound and I will leave the Ukrainian [*sic*] alone – at all events for the present [....]
Ys. sincerely
Newton

64

Ukrainian Nationalism
Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 18 December 1933

Sir, Moscow, December 18, 1933

With reference to my despatch No. 654 of the 18th [*4th*] December reporting on the resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist party on the subject of Ukrainian nationalism,[85] I have the honour to inform you that the speeches of Kosior and Postyshev, which led up to this resolution, have now been fully published in the Soviet press. These extremely discursive reports cover much the same ground as the resolution, but throw some further light on the two subjects with which it dealt, namely, the recent history of the Ukrainian particularist movement in the first place and secondly the more general question of Soviet policy towards Ukrainian nationalism and the perversions of this policy which the Ukrainian nationalists are alleged to have perpetrated.

2. Both Kosior and Postyshev declare that a serious conspiracy has been discovered in the Ukraine during the past year, as a result of the labours of 1,200 picked Communist workers, who have been distributed in the Ukraine to deal with the question of Ukrainian particularism. A formidable number of names of different conspirators and malcontents are scattered through Kosior's and Postyshev's reports, and there seems to be no doubt that, whether or not an organised conspiracy existed, the Central Government has acted as if such a conspiracy did exist and has carried out numerous arrests throughout the Republic of Ukrainians in important positions who were hostile to the "party line." Postyshev enumerates the State organisations in which he claims that Ukrainian nationalists have been discovered; such as the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the Ukraine, even the Collegium of which is said to have contained counter-revolutionaries, the People's Commissariat for Education, and also the All-Ukrainian Academy of Science. One of the members of the latter institution is particularly condemned for having

praised "the Fascist swastika" as "one of the most remarkable symbols of prophecy of the good, and of the desire for well-being and for release from misfortune." "Comment on this statement is," Postyshev says, "superfluous."

3. Both Kosior and Postyshev point out that the chief rôle in this year's Nationalist conspiracy in the Ukraine "was played by counter-revolutionaries with party tickets in their pockets." Skrypnik's name is prominently quoted among a host of others as a ringleader in the conspiracy, which is described as the most recent wave of a nationalist movement which has been in existence ever since the revolution, and has already been suppressed on various occasions. Both Kosior and Postyshev provide complicated but obscure reviews of the history of the movement, the last outbreak of which, before this year, is said to have been that of 1926-28, associated with the name of Shumsky.

4. In specifying the activities of the conspiracy suppressed in the last few months, the most interesting point made by the two spokesmen of the Central Government is its alleged association with foreign "interventionists." "Polish Pans, German imperialists and English diehards" are said by Postyshev to have "encouraged and financed Ukrainian national counter-revolution"; and Kosior declares that, "of all the counter-revolutionary nationalists which have just been exposed, the "important majority came to us from abroad – from Prague, Galicia, &c.... The despatch from abroad of *agents provocateurs* and counter-revolutionaries was carried out partly under the guise of emigration to the Ukraine of people supposedly suffering under the persecution inflicted upon members of the Communist party of Western Ukraine" (*i.e.*, Communists under Polish rule).

5. It is not stated whether any regular trial of the alleged Ukrainian nationalists has been carried out, but a number of "statements" of malcontents discovered in recent years are quoted by Kosior, which bear the familiar stamp of an Ogpu examiner's style. These "statements" are, of course, drafted to show close correspondence with the assumed programme of foreign Ukrainian nationalists, such as Konovalets and Skoropadsky, both of whose names constantly recur in Kosior's and Postyshev's reports as instigators of the conspiracy on Soviet territory. Of such "statements" the following is a typical example:-

"Germany, together with France and Poland and other capitalist States, will take part in an attack on the Soviet Union. Subsequently Poland will cede to Germany the German territory in her possession and the Danzig Corridor.

"As compensation, Poland will receive, after the conquest of Soviet Ukraine, some territory at the expense of Lithuania, and besides this...

access to the Black Sea. The Eastern Ukraine will fall under the influence of Germany which will be able to exploit the coal and iron resources of the Don Basin."

Kosior goes on to say that "after the rise of Hitler to power in Germany the work of the nationalist organisation assumed a more active character. One of the serious organisers of the Ukrainian military organisation (U.V.O.), ... Bukshovanny, closely associated with Konovalets, decided to enter the Communist party of the Western Ukraine." This individual is quoted as having stated that in the second half of February 1933 he saw a certain Sushko in Berlin "who informed him that he had had a conversation with A. Rosenberg, ... a supporter of intervention against the U.S.S.R." "On the basis of this conversation," he continues, "Sushko told me that Germany would take a definite anti-Soviet line and would join a coalition with Italy, England and France to form an interventionalist *bloc* against the Soviet Union, and that Germany was already beginning negotiations with Poland to draw her into the *bloc*. Rosenberg, according to Sushko, thinks that the U.V.O. must undertake direct action against the Soviet régime, since the advent of Hitler to power and his aggressive line against the Soviet Union have created a favourable situation for separating the Ukraine from the Union." There are many other similar statements, with which I will not trouble you, contained in Kosior's and Postyshev's reports to the Central Committee of the Communist party. A point which is, however, of interest is that the alleged disclosure of intrigues between Ukrainian Nationalists and foreign interventionist circles coincides with the arrests of Soviet port officials and of employees of the Control Company, who, as I reported in my Savingram No. 43 of the 12th December, are rumoured to have been charged with providing channels of communication for these intrigues. I have, however, no reliable information on this point at present, and it may be that these rumours are *post hoc propter hoc* deductions.

6. No very clear description is given in Kosior's and Postyshev's reports of the form which counter-revolutionary and nationalist "direct action" is supposed to have taken. One of the "national Fascists" is said, however, to have made a statement to the following effect: "The Soviet prospects for this year's harvest may assist the Soviet Union economically to strengthen and alleviate the material position of the workers and peasants. It is essential that the position of the peasantry, in spite of this year's good harvest, should deteriorate." This "statement" continues by declaring that it was therefore necessary to encourage certain technically unsuitable agricultural measures, such as stacking the grain when green, and also carrying on agitation among the peasants to the

effect that, "however much they work, the grain will be taken away from them by the Soviet State on one pretext or another." Prominence is also given to opposition to centralisation, which was publicly expressed by Skrypnik in criticising the Central Government's decree "regarding the utilisation of the land." (This decree was reported upon in Mr. Strang's despatch No. 497 of the 9th September, 1932.) Skrypnik declared that "if this law was accepted, it would mean that the sovereignty of individual republics merely means that they possess their own Government and do not possess their own territory. I consider that a decisive repulse should be given to all such tendencies."

7. On the subject of the "party line" in the matter of Ukrainian nationalism and the perversions of this "Leninist national policy" (*i.e.*, minorities policy), which is declared to have been one of the most conspicuous evidences of counter-revolutionary activity in the Ukraine, both Kosior's and Postyshev's reports deal at immense length. Evident difficulty is shown in reconciling the tendency of the party to denounce as counter-revolutionary any evidence of particularism, either cultural, economic or political, with the Communist slogans of freedom and self-expression for subject nationalities. Refuge is taken in recurrent variations on the main theme of the Central Committee's final resolution – that the greatest present danger is Great Russian chauvinism, but that this does not alter the fact that the greatest danger in individual republics, notably the Ukraine, is *bourgeois* nationalism. Kosior explains that, according to Lenin, "there is no abstract distinct national culture in general, but there is class culture, either *bourgeois* or proletarian. Whoever is in favour of distinct national culture in general is, in fact, in favour of *bourgeois* culture and against the proletariat." It is further explained that the freedom of the Ukraine was won by a proletarian revolution in co-operation with the Great Russian toiling masses, and that every manifestation of Ukrainian nationalism that has occurred has been the work of nationalists who have been definitely *bourgeois* in sympathies and opposed to the economic interests of the proletariat as a whole. Stalin is quoted as pointing out that the October revolution "led the national colonial revolutions ... not in the name of nationalism, but in the name of internationalism." After all this has been said, it is difficult to see what the All-Union Communist party has got to offer in the way of a minorities policy. It seems to be little else than to call the same thing in different republics by different names. Postyshev declares that "the great achievements in the work of industrialisation in the Ukraine and the liquidation of defects in agriculture disclose the richest prospects, and provide exceptional opportunities for our further successful progress in the work of creating Ukrainian Socialist culture." Ukrainian culture, in fact, is to be the real-

isation of the Central Government's general political and economic policy for the whole Union, inside the Ukraine.
I have, &c.
Chilston

Minutes

This does not add much to the previous despatches on the subject. The statements extracted by the OGPU from Ukrainians of course emphasize the connection between the Ukrainian nationalists & foreign Powers – Germany & Poland in particular but also France and Gt. Britain[....]
T. A. Shone
Jan 2.

But it shows how nervous the Soviet govt. are on the subject of Ukrainian nationalism – which tempts one to believe that, in spite of the apparent futility of the Ukrainian nationalist organisations abroad, there may be something in it.
L. C.
Jan 3rd.

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German-Ukrainian Relations
Memorandum by Lieutenant-Colonel Cecil Strange Malone for the Advisory Committee on International Affairs of the Labour Party, February 1934

German-Ukrainian Relations

The object of this Memorandum is to consider the connections between Germany and the Ukrainian Movement. In order to assess this question at its true value it is necessary to understand what the Ukrainian Movement is and the insignificant part played in it by the Hetman Movement, the importance of which has been much exaggerated. It must at once be said that the connection of certain Ukrainians with Germany has undoubtedly done some harm to the Ukrainian Movement. The Emigre, ex-hetman Skoropadsky, with his headquarters in Berlin, appears to have very little following even amongst the diverse Ukrainian emigre organisations in Europe, U.S.A., Canada, Brazil, Argentine or elsewhere, and it is fantastic to imagine that he has any control at all over the mass of Ukrainians estimated at some 33,000,000 inhabiting the contiguous territory running north from the Black Sea as far as the Pripet marshes, westward into Poland and the Carpathians and eastwards towards the River Don. Ukraine has been independent in the past and was an independent State as late as the latter part of the eighteenth century. The same Russian policy which destroyed Poland made an end also of the independence of Ukraine. They have maintained a literature and culture of their own. There is an extensive press supplying Ukrainian colonies in all parts of the world, press bureaux, and very many organisations of all shades of political and religious opinions – very few of whom have any connection with Germany.

It is desirable briefly to review the historical position because similar methods and even the same individuals are now being employed as in the past.

Even before the War, German-Ukrainian relations were developing. In the south of Ukraine, more than 300,000 Germans lived as colonists.

These colonists exercised a certain cultural influence over the Ukrainians; in fact they were successful in converting some millions of Ukrainian peasants to the Protestant Faith. And the "Bruder in Not" organisation formed in Berlin to alleviate starvation amongst these colonists may of late have some political complexion.

Moreover, before the War, more than four million Ukrainians were living within the frontiers of the politically German Austria, in Galicia and Bukovina, and the Vienna Government often came forward in support of the Ukrainians against the authority of the Polish Local Government Officials. The Ukrainian parts of the Austria were always coveted by Russia, and formed a lasting bone of contention between St. Petersburg and Vienna. If Russia was prepared to acquire Galicia, it is also true that the heir to the Austrian throne, Rudolf Habsburg, always dreamed of the conquest of Ukraine, and of converting his dual monarchy into a triple one.

There was a certain amount of Ukrainian irredentist propaganda in Austria and Germany before the War, and a monthly review was published in Vienna, entitled *Ukrainische Rundschau* which openly advocated the creation of an independent Ukraine. The political storm raised in the Berlin and Vienna parliaments, when it was alleged that German Hakatists were in touch with Ukrainian Nationalists in attempting to foment unrest in Eastern Galicia will be recalled; but this was strongly denied by Ukrainians and was never proved. (Hakatists was the name given to the Deutscher Ostmarkenverein or German Society of the Eastern Frontiers, founded in 1894 by Von Hausemann, Kennemann and Von Tiedemann, from the initials of whose names the word "Hakatist" is derived.)

During the War, the Governments of Berlin and Vienna proclaimed the independence of the Ukraine as one of the most important objects of the War. Austria formed also, in addition to a Polish legion a Ukrainian legion. Both in Germany and Austria the "Union for the Delivery of the Ukraine" was created, and this Union undertook the training of more than 200,000 prisoners of war, who were destined as the basis of a Ukrainian army.

The attempt at the end of the Great War to establish Germany's influence in Ukraine is particularly important, because many of the same leaders are still in touch with Berlin and are co-operating with what is known as the Rosenberg plan.

After the 1917 Kerensky Revolution, the Ukrainian Republic was proclaimed at Kyiv and set up with the Central Rada. After the November 7th Revolution, the Soviet recognised the independence of Ukraine and Mr. Picton Bagge and General Tabouis were appointed as British and

French diplomatic representatives to Ukraine respectively. But in February 1918, the Ukrainians were driven out of Kyiv by the Bolsheviks and suffered considerable losses. As a result of this reverse the Ukrainian Rada was forced to seek foreign aid. Germany, having recognised Ukraine as an independent State, seemed to be the most likely ally, and to her Ukraine turned for help, which was readily granted. With the aid of German and some Austrian troops the Ukrainians quickly drove the Bolsheviks out of Ukraine and retook Kyiv (March 2nd, 1918). But the Germans soon showed their real intention of making Ukraine their own granary and source of supplies.

This policy aroused the antagonism of the Ukrainian peasants whose crops were being forcibly requisitioned by the Germans, and of the Ukrainian Government who found its power over-ridden by the decrees of the Germans. Finally, on April 29th, 1918, the Ukrainian Rada was overthrown by German troops and the Germans set up the Hetman Paul Skoropadsky as dictator. This régime lasted until November 15th, 1918, when Skoropadsky was overthrown by the Ukrainians under Petlura.

In the meantime, the Austrian Empire had come to an end and another National Ukrainian Government of Eastern Galicia had been established at Lemberg, and on January 22nd, 1919, united with Petlura's Government of Great Ukraine. Years of bitter struggle ensued, which it is not necessary to particularise here. Skoropadsky withdrew to Berlin where he remained quiescent until the last few years.

The German Rapallo policy, which lasted until the proclamation of the Third Reich, would not of course, improve German-Ukrainian relations. German-Polish hostilities undoubtedly aroused the sympathies of the West Ukrainians in favour of Germany, but the Galician Ukrainians never played an authoritative part in Ukrainian politics as a whole. But the pact of non-aggression between Poland and the Soviet Union to some extent united the Ukrainians in those two countries because Poles and Soviets were in one camp and Greater and Western Ukrainians in another. The Third Reich therefore found a Ukraine which was to some extent politically united.

German Influences

The accession to power of Herr Hitler appears to have stimulated the activities of the Skoropadsky group, who meanwhile had been living at the Schloss Bellevue in Berlin on the gold which they had been able to bring away with them from Russia.

The German policy of colonisation towards the East is well known and was set out in Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf* and Rosenberg's

booklet *Der Zukunftsweg einer Deutschen Aussenpolitik*. Skoropadsky dispatched to London Dr. Korostovetz to act as his propaganda agent, establishing an office and publishing a periodical called the *Investigator*. During the visit to London in 1933 of Herr Rosenberg, Korostovetz obtained an interview, and immediately afterwards the *Investigator* appeared more frequently. From time to time the *Investigator* has issued circulars endeavouring to obtain money in return for possible future concessions in Ukraine, and they have also circularised the shareholders of Lena Goldfields (February 28th, 1931), asking for support in their anti-Soviet activities. The *Investigator* still continues to appear but very irregularly. It is more pro-German, anti-Jew, and anti-Soviet than pro-Ukraine. Every number contains pro-Nazi articles, for example, the issue of February 1934, contains two articles headed respectively "The Youth of New Germany" and "The New Prosperity of Hitler Germany."

The only known British supporter of the Hetman Movement of any substance is Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

There are also in Berlin representatives of another organisation which has apparently had some influence on Ukrainian affairs. This is known as the Ukrainian Military Organisation, the chiefs of which are Mr. E. Konowalec and R. Jary. This organisation has been concerned only with Eastern Galicia (i.e. Polish Ukraine) and is known as U.W.O.

It is alleged that U.W.O. has been subsidized by the German Colonial Organisation, controlled by Herr Karl Von Loesch, the organisation in Germany responsible for controlling the activities of German Minorities abroad. The apparent interest of Von Loesch in the Ukrainian Movement in Galicia arises from the fact that Germany thought that by manipulating this Ukrainian Minority it could be made of assistance to the German Minorities in other parts of Poland. In other words, the Ukrainians were to be used to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the Germans. Some of the petitions from the Ukrainian Minority in Poland to the League of Nations were, to a certain extent, stimulated by this idea and other petitions based on real grievances of the Ukrainians were prejudiced by the activities of U.W.O. whose activities gave the Polish Government a weapon which they used at Geneva. To some extent, the activities of U.W.O. led to the cruel pacification of the Ukrainians by the Poles in the Autumn of 1930. When the League of Nations considered this matter at the Council Meeting on January 30th, 1931, they realised that many petitions had been put forward, not so much to obtain justice, to right wrongs, as for propaganda purposes. In this manner very great harm had been done to the Ukrainians by the German agent provocateurs. Nevertheless, this did not justify the Polish treatment of Ukrainians and the Council did not dispute the hideous and brutal wrongs which had been

done to the Ukrainians by the Polish Authorities which Lord Cecil described as "shocking to the conscience and opinion of civilised mankind." Nor did they dispute the great injustices under which they still suffer.

Another organisation which obviously has pro-German sympathies was the European Nationalities Congress, of which the Secretary-General is Dr. Ewald Ammende. This Congress composed of all sorts of European Minorities used to meet for two days at Geneva before the Annual Meeting of the Assembly. It was apparent that this Congress had pro-German tendencies, but this can perhaps be excused because of the weight and number of German Minorities in Europe. The Congress also did useful work in co-ordinating the fight of the Minorities. However, when this Congress met at Berne on September 18th, 1933, its German background was obvious. Certain Jewish representatives wished to raise the question of the treatment of the Jewish Minority in Germany, but this question was ruled out of order. The refusal of this Minorities Congress to discuss the problem of the Jewish Minority in Germany showed clearly that the Congress was under definite obligations to Germany. Cleverer strategy would surely have allowed the subject to be raised. It was noticed at this Congress that those Polish Ukrainians whose affiliation with Germany through Konowalec had already been suspect, joined in opposing Jewish claims and thereby lined up with Hitler. Fortunately, two Ukrainians from Rumania, Senator Zaloziecky and Mr. Serbynuik, members of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies respectively, opposed this attitude and declared that they spoke for a much larger body of Ukrainians. The Polish Press was in exaltation and the *Kurjer Codzienny* (Krakow) of 15th October 1933, devoted the front page to an article headed "German Agents Unmasked."

Dr. Ammende has since constituted at Vienna, with himself as Secretary-General, the *Interkonfessionelles und ubernationales Hilfskomitee fur die Hungergebiete in der Sowjet-Union* with Cardinal Archbishop Innitzer as President.

At first it was hinted that this Committee was formed more for German anti-Soviet propaganda than for real serious relief work, but the presence of people of such standing as Cardinal Innitzer, the Chief Rabbi of Vienna and others appears to have checked such propaganda work, as they are not willing to allow their names to be used for this purpose whatever may have been in the minds of those who first invited them.

German-Polish Pact and Ukraine

The above notes bring us up to the German-Polish Pact. The importance of this pact obviously depends on what, if any, are the secret agree-

ments behind it. For positive information on this matter it is only possible to report the various impressions with which the pact was received and to watch closely the activities of the organisations described above. The suggestion that there are secret agreements for giving Germany opportunities to expand eastwards into Soviet Ukraine is contained in the *New Statesman and Nation*, February 3rd, 1934, but the rest of this article is so full of inaccuracies that it is of little value. (For instance, the article, out of all proportion, over-estimates the influence of the Hetman Movement amongst Ukrainians.) Again, Mr. Litvinoff, the Soviet Foreign Commissar, in a speech to the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. in Moscow, states that they had information pointing to official proposals regarding penetration. Further, Stalin, in his report to the Seventeenth Party Congress at Moscow, pointed out that those who were in favour of occupying the Ukraine – Hugenberg and Rosenberg – are taking the upper hand in everything in Germany, whilst the supporters of the old policy (Rapallo) find themselves in disgrace (*Moscow News*, February 3rd, 1934).

Popov, a Member of the Communist Party in Ukraine, speaking at the Thirteenth Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, also referred to this question (*International Press Correspondence*, February 5th, 1934).

At a meeting in London on November 30th, 1933, a speaker with considerable knowledge of these questions stated that the plans of Hitler were to advance into Russia in the spring of 1935, by which time Germany would have been rearmed and Japan would have left the League of Nations. At the same time, he declared, the Germans planned to launch a drive north-eastwards through the Baltic States and for this purpose a General, who had previously worked under Von der Goltz during the former German occupation of the Baltic provinces was being kept in "cold storage" for this work, just as Skoropadsky was being kept in readiness for the southern adventure. The speaker, in further justification of his statements, referred to an interview between Goering and Skoropadsky which had appeared in the White Russian organ *Czas Savoi*.

On the other hand, the *Economist* (February 3rd, 1934), usually fairly well-informed on Russian Affairs, states as follows:-

"To outside observers this pact is as welcome as it is unexpected; and it would be ungenerous, as well as impolitic, to assume that either of the contracting parties has its tongue in its cheek, or that the pact conceals some nefarious secret common design against some third party, e.g. Russia. Poland, after all, has just concluded a non-aggression treaty with Russia; and the notion that the Polish Government has immediately

proceeded to plot with the German Government a gross violation of this Polish-Russian Pact is too clever to be convincing."

The Polish Press welcomed the German-Polish pact as a great success for Polish Foreign Policy. *Kurjer Poranny* says that the new pact makes the Kellog Pact a reality in Eastern Europe, and that the signing is not only a triumph for Poland but a victory of the peace factors in Germany. *Gazeta Warsawska* says that through the signing of the pact, peace in Europe is extended. Poland only desires peace. *Dziennik Poznanski* of January 28th, 1934, in an article headed "Ten Years Peace," emphasises that the German-Polish Pact is not opposed to Rumania, Russia or France, with whom Polish relations have not suffered any weakening and are maintained in full strength. It does not destroy their bonds with France for the French Government has been kept informed throughout the negotiations. If judgement on the pact is reached quietly it will be seen that it means a great success for Polish Foreign Affairs because it means that people must stop considering Poland as a transitory State. The pact excludes the possibility of deciding disputes by force and guarantees for the next few years peace in the East, but *Dziennik Poznanski* goes on to say that it would be foolish to hazard now any guess as to the practical meaning of the pact, which is only a skeleton agreement. (Of course, this is a very important point because anyone who has read the plot will realise that it is only a skeleton. C.L'E.M.)

Official Polish sources deny that there is any secret understanding and say that (1) Rosenberg is not so influential now in Germany, (2) the German Polish Pact is a victory for Hitler over the Junkers, (3) the pact is a victory for the Catholics over Protestant Prussian influence, and (4) Soviet Russia was consulted before the pact was signed.

It would, however, seem that a more immediate reason for the signing of the pact is that Germany does not feel that the time is yet ripe to broach the Corridor question and wished to stabilize affairs in the East, in order meanwhile to deal with Austria, the Saar, and possibly Czechoslovakia. This view is also borne out in *L'Europe Centrale* of February 3rd, 1934, which explains the Polish satisfaction with the pact by saying that the Poles, no doubt, feel that if the Germans undertake to endure with goodwill for ten years the existence of the Corridor, which they have already endured with illwill for fifteen years, they will, in the end, become accustomed to it. The signing of the German-Polish pact also finally disillusioned the already disappearing West Ukrainian groups, who saw the salvation of the Ukrainian nation only in a struggle against Poland.

Weakness of German Influence

The weakness of the Skoropadsky Group amongst Ukrainians may be judged from the following facts: First of all, the Skoropadsky Group is a purely emigrant group with a very small following. Emigrés as a whole have little influence on the policies they try to determine and they are really of no importance with either Ukrainians or Germans, but even amongst the emigrés the Skoropadsky group is a very uninfluential one, and his actions have already been denounced by many of them.

In the Soviet Ukraine, obviously, the Hetman Movement can have very little following, and it should be remembered that in 1919, General Skoropadsky had to flee from Ukraine, and his Czarist tendencies and political alliances with several monarchist groups of Russians abroad make him just now extremely unpopular.

In Poland, out of seventy-three papers published in Ukrainian, only one weekly paper is pro-Hetman, and the activities of Mr. Korostovets in England have been loudly denounced by the most important Ukrainian papers. In the United States, out of ten newspapers only one is pro-Hetman, and there are, in addition, a few small groups known as SITCH. In Canada, out of eight papers one is pro-Hetman. Bukovina (Rumania) and Podkarpatska Rus (Czechoslovakia), with four and nine Ukrainian papers respectively, have no papers sympathetic to the Hetman.

The Ukrainian group in Germany (U.W.O.), which has devoted its attention to Polish affairs in the past years, had connections only with certain terrorist groups in Polish Ukraine and has been most strongly opposed by the Ukrainian Parliamentary Group in the Polish Sejm as well as by other constitutional groups in Poland. The position of this group is now a difficult one, owing to the German-Polish pact.

It should here be stated that the support given to Ukraine in England, by certain M.P's as well as certain organs of the press who, during and after the "pacification" of Galicia lent their support to the Ukrainians in their struggle against brutal Polish oppression and in the fight for their autonomy rights, had a very good effect in Galicia and to a certain extent offset German influence. This was again enhanced by the satisfactory treatment of a petition signed by British M.P's when it was considered by the League at Geneva and again by the statement by Sir John Simon on April 26th, 1933, re-affirming that the British Government still considered that Eastern Galicia should be given autonomy.

Following the German-Polish Pact, it will be interesting to watch the activities of these various groups. If there is a secret agreement to partition the U.S.S.R. the logical developments would be for the Germans to give more support to Skoropadsky and none to Jary for his operations

in Poland. It is significant to remember that the German-Polish Pact was signed on the same day as the Polish Sejm passed the "reform of the Constitution Act," which practically deprived all Ukrainians of their constitutional rights. In the last few weeks there have been rumours of an anti-Jewish Campaign in Polish Ukraine and it would be a natural sequence of the changed direction of policy for Jary's energies to be diverted to this direction.

There would, however, seem to be very many practical difficulties in the way of carrying out Rosenberg's plan. If Germany regained the Corridor and if Poland had any increase of Ukrainian territory, the Ukrainian population in the Polish State would predominate over the Polish population and might soon shatter the whole State, and one cannot help wondering whether the Polish "Reform of the Constitution Act" is not connected with this possible future development.

As for Great Britain, she can certainly never allow for one moment a German industrial sphere stretching from the Saar to the Caucasus and including, as it would, the newly developed industrial districts of Dniepropetrovsk. At the same time we have to face the evidence that there is a growing Ukrainian independence movement probably stronger than ever before. This is due partly to the Soviet Ukrainization policy from 1923 to 1929, during which time Ukrainian culture and language developed until this policy was reversed in 1930 and replaced by a policy of centralization from Moscow and liquidation of Ukrainian organisations, and partly due to the starvation which has been experienced in many districts of Ukraine. Any hostility on the part of Great Britain would only be playing into the hands of Germany and increase the German-Nazi influence.

Minutes

Draft to Col. Malone herewith. His memorandum is worth reading.
T. A. Shone
Feb. 21

This is much the best memorandum on the Ukrainian question that I have ever received from a private source.

It might be worth while to ask the Berlin chancery if they can trace the "interview between Goering & Skoropadsky" referred to on page 5.*

*Footnote in the minutes: "As the paper has only now returned from Mr. Norton, this matter has lost actuality & need not be pursued. L. C. May 10."

Perhaps Mr. Norton could throw light on the statement on p. 3 which implies that Korostovetz received money from Rosenberg. (Korostovetz & his friends have always denied the receipt of any German money.)
L. C.
Feb 21st

I am enquiring on this point.
C. J. N.
15/3

The results of the enquiry were mainly negative, but it seemed more likely than not that Nazi money was being spent on this movement.
L. C.
May 10th

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Annual Report on Soviet Union for 1933
Extracts from a Report by Lord Chilston, 2 April 1934

Annual Report on Russia for 1933

[....]

Passportisation and Migration

122. At the end of 1932 a decree was enacted introducing compulsory passports, which all adult members of the proletariat or urban residents (*i.e.*, including peasants in State farms, but not others) had to be prepared to show when signing on at a place of employment, when moving into new quarters or at the demand of a policeman. At the same time, the ordinary police force was put under the Ogpu and was specially charged with the operation and enforcement of the system.

123. The issue or refusal of a passport was to be decided according to the social status or utility of employment of the applicant, and the decree was eventually applied to Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, to a 100- or 50-kilom. zone around them, to Kiev, Odessa, Rostov-on-Don, Stalingrad, Stalinsk, Baku, Gorki, Sormovo, Magnitogorsk, Chelyabinsk, Grozny, Sevastopol, Stalino, Perm, Dniepropetrovsk, Sverdlovsk, Vladivostok, Khaborovsk, Nikolsk-Ussurisk, Spassk, Blagoveshchensk, Anzhero-Sudjansk, Prokopiersk, Leninsk, Minsk, and to inhabited settlements within the limits of a 100-kilom. belt on the Western European frontier of the U.S.S.R. Elsewhere it was to be applied without consideration of the individual's social status, and passports were to be issued to everyone employed in industrial undertakings or State farms, but not to collective farm or individual peasants. The object of the decree appeared to be to keep "undesirables" from key districts; and the inclusion of towns such as Blagoveshchensk and Khaborovsk, and a belt of

100-kilom. on the western frontier of the U.S.S.R. seems to suggest that the measure was in some degree a military one.

124. This system of registration prepared the way for a redistribution of the population in the countryside. A decree published on the 16th August established an All-Union Committee of Migration, attached to the Council of People's Commissars, which was to utilise sparsely inhabited areas and meet the desires of collective farms to migrate thither. In theory migration was to be voluntary, and the Government were merely to assist prospective settlers, but it is probable that a certain measure of compulsion will be used. It is well known that many farms are over-populated, and it is probable that people will be sent from them to populate the sparsely inhabited areas, which would include those that were devastated by the famine. By a further decree of the 11th December special privileges were established for the population of the Far Eastern Region; all collective farms and collective farm workers were to be relieved of compulsory grain and rice deliveries for ten years, and individual peasants for five years. Certain districts, including the Maritime Province, were to be totally relieved of the obligation to deliver meat, milk, &c., and in other districts the quotas for delivery were to be reduced by 50 per cent. The price to be paid to fish collectives for deliveries of fish was to be increased by 20 per cent., and wages were to be increased by from 10 per cent. to 30 per cent. It was explained that the decision to grant this exceptional treatment to the Far Eastern Region was due to the influx of immigrants and the desire for alleviating their lot. Since, however, conditions in certain parts of the Far Eastern Region at least are better than those that obtain on an average in the Soviet Union, it is possible that the real reason behind the decree was a desire to maintain a contented population in the area that faces the Japanese menace, and to stimulate local production for the needs of the large number of troops concentrated in that area. At the same time, if migration is to be promoted, this decree would facilitate the work of the Committee of Migration referred to above.

The Ogpu

125. The harrying of persons suspected of *bourgeois* or kulak origin, and the system of delation and espionage to which it gives rise, proceeded as usual during 1933. In the country districts a new method of espionage was invented, that of the "light cavalry," by which small children are employed to spy on their starving elders and report to the authorities such of them as are guilty of the heinous offence of stealing grain, even in the smallest quantities. Several trials of "wreckers" were

reported in the press. There is reason to believe, however, that the Soviet Government were beginning to grow uneasy at the prospect of the wide powers exercised by the Ogpu, and were thinking of limiting them. As early as the 20th June a decree was published by the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. establishing a Procurator's Department of the U.S.S.R., M. Akulov being made Procurator of the Soviet Union, and M. Vyshinski Deputy Procurator. Formerly there had been only separate procurator's departments of the constituent republics, but no central organisation. The decree was no doubt primarily intended to strengthen the hold of the ruling Communist class on the countryside and to ensure the successful gathering of the harvest. The Procurator of the Union was, however, given authority to exercise supervision over the acts not merely of the police and the criminal investigation department, but also of the Ogpu itself. This may well have been a result of the Metropolitan-Vickers case. In any case, it appears to have been a genuine attempt to curb the powers of the Ogpu.

The Ukraine

126. On the 4th July M. Nikolai Alexeivich Skrypnik, an old Bolshevik, a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party, a member of the Politburo of the Ukrainian Communist party and Commissar for Education of the Ukrainian Republic, was attacked in a speech by M. Postyshev as being the one person most responsible for allowing the Ukraine to become honeycombed with wrecking, counter-revolutionary and separatist organisations working in the interest of foreign capitalist circles. Four days afterwards he committed suicide. The exact circumstances of his death remain obscure, but at the time it was officially stated that he had been guilty of political errors and had fallen a prey to *bourgeois* Nationalist elements; his ideological mistakes had taken a practical form in his literary work and in his administration of the Commissariat of Education. It is believed that many Ukrainians were arrested at the same time.

127. That the Ukrainian particularist movement was causing considerable anxiety was proved by the speeches delivered by MM. Postyshev and Kosior at the Unified Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Communist party of the Ukraine on the 22nd November. Both speakers declared that a serious conspiracy had been discovered, that conspirators had been found in the highest places, that the chief rôle was played by counter-revolutionaries with party tickets in their pockets, and that foreign interventionists, Polish,

German and English, were associated with the movement. M. Kosior stated that the Nationalist deviation of M. Skrypnik aided the work of the Ukrainian Nationalists, which was directed towards the secession of the Ukraine from the Soviet Union and the handing over of the Ukraine to Polish fascism or German imperialism. The position he had taken up meant the separation of the Ukraine from the U.S.S.R. and a *volte-face* to Galicia. M. Kosior admitted that Russian chauvinism remained the chief danger both in the Soviet Union and in the Communist party; but in certain republics, especially in the Ukraine, the chief danger at the moment was local nationalism, which was connected with foreign imperialist intervention. Among the more important measures which it was proposed to take to counteract the enemies within and without the gates was the formation of a college in Kharkov, attached to the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Ukraine, for the study of Marxism and Leninism. This is intended to supply Bolshevik-Ukrainian cadres in collective farms, State farms, factories and higher cultural establishments, where 150 persons are to undergo a course of one and a half years, after which they are to be sent out to fill responsible posts. The training of qualified scientific workers is to be supervised, and the Ukrainian High Agricultural Communist School is to be reorganised as the Ukrainian Communist University. Steps are also to be taken to reform the press.

128. It is clear that in 1933 Ukrainian particularism was not dead, and caused the authorities some anxiety; but it was not in a flourishing condition, and every effort was being made to hasten its demise. It is practically certain that only assistance from abroad can keep it alive. In most countries the terrible famine of the spring would have caused sanguinary riots, if not revolution; in the Ukraine the people died without a murmur. It may be that they are treasuring up bitter memories in their hearts; but it is hardly possible, unless some violent blow is struck at the whole body of the Soviet Union from outside, that the present constitutional position of the Ukraine can be sensibly altered.

[....]

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Famine Relief in the Ukraine
Interview by Laurence Collier with Mrs. Ethel Christie, Russian Assistance Fund, 16 May 1934

Mrs. Christie called to-day to tell me of the present position of the scheme for famine relief in the Ukraine, etc. which she and Colonel Malone had discussed with me, as reported in N7748/21/38/1933.[86] She said that, as then foreshadowed, Colonel Malone and his friends had decided to collect money for sending parcels to individuals, in the same manner as had been done by the Quaker organisation, and that for this purpose they had issued an appeal (of which she left with me the attached copy)[87] and put a notice in several newspapers. As a result, they had collected quite a satisfactory sum of money and had begun to send parcels through "Torgsin" to people in South Russia whose names were known to them.

The existence of their fund, however, had now become known to a number of persons who were interested not only in famine relief but also in propaganda to enlighten world opinion of the true conditions in the Soviet Union; and these were now urging her to join with them in a series of meetings to arouse public opinion in this country. In this connexion she mentioned particularly Madame Tchernavin, of whom we have heard before (See N2638/2638/38/33), and a Dr. Amende, an Estonian, who had been connected with the Union of Minorities at Geneva and Cardinal Innitzer's International Relief Fund at Geneva, and to whom I have promised to give an interview as the result of a private letter written by the Duchess of Atholl to the Secretary of State.

Mrs. Christie said that she knew, from her own private sources of information, that the famine in the South of Russia was by no means over – in fact, it was almost as bad this year as it had been last; and she felt uneasy in her conscience when she saw how little the average person in this country realised the true state of affairs. She had therefore come to ask my advice on what she should say to Dr. Amende and his friends.

I told Mrs. Christie that as a Government official I had no *locus standi* for giving her advice on such a subject, and that in any case the Foreign Office, being a Department of a Government which was, rightly or wrongly, in normal relations with the Soviet Government, could not give any official encouragement to propaganda directed against that Government's actions. What I could and would do, however, as a private person, was to put the position before her as I saw it and let her decide for herself. It seemed to me that her course of action depended upon which of two alternative objects she wished to aim at – either to relieve individual suffering or to arouse public opinion here to a realisation of the general conditions which had produced that suffering – for in present circumstances the two objects were unfortunately incompatible. As far as I could see, there was no likelihood that any amount of agitation in this country would alter the present agricultural policy of the Soviet Government which had brought about these famine conditions, while there was every likelihood that such agitation would cause the Soviet Government to interfere with her present relief work. In that connexion I asked her whether the parcels were sent from her fund as such or in the name of individual persons, and she replied that they were always sent in the names of individuals – often in her own name. I said that this was certainly some safeguard, but that if she herself were involved in the agitation her name would obviously become suspect; and though I knew that it was an advantage to the Soviet Government to allow these parcels to be sent, in view of the foreign currency which they collected thereby, it might well be that parcels sent in the name of anyone who was suspect to them would never reach their destination. I asked her whether receipts for the parcels already sent were in fact coming in. She replied that none had come in yet, as the despatch of parcels had only begun a short time ago, but that the Quakers still obtained receipts for their parcels, which were also sent in the names of individuals.

Mrs. Christie then left, saying that she would think over what I had said and would make sure that Dr. Amende came to see me (though I had not expressed any particularly strong desire to see him). She remarked on leaving that it was a curious thing that while her associates in this matter (apart from the Quakers) had previously been almost all Conservatives of the *Morning Post* persuasion, she now found that Conservatives were less interested or disturbed by conditions in Russia than Liberals and even members of the Labour Party. She was inclined to think that this might be due to the close parallel which could now be drawn between the actions of the Soviet dictatorship and those of Herr Hitler in Germany or even, to some extent, of Signor Mussolini in Italy.
L. Collier

16th May, 1934

P.S. Dr. Amende has since called – please see N.2988/127/38.[88]

L. C.

May 16th.

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Famine Relief in South Russia
Interview by Laurence Collier with Ewald Ammende and Fritz Dittloff, 17 May 1934

Dr. Amende (see N 2756/2756/38) called on me yesterday afternoon, accompanied by Dr. Dietloff, the former manager of the German agricultural concession "Drusag" in the North Caucasus which the Soviet authorities "liquidated" last year (see N 6889/114/38). An account of Dr. Dietloff's work will be found in Mr. Cairns's report of his visit in 1932 (see N 4888/235/38 of that year).[89]

Dr. Amende said that he was over here on a purely humanitarian mission – to arouse public opinion to the true state of affairs in the famine areas of South Russia, so that pressure could be put on the Soviet Government either to allow relief to be sent or themselves to take measures to alleviate the conditions, which they could very well do if they chose, as the famine was entirely an artificial one caused by their own agricultural policy. He said he had had interviews with various prominent people in this country, including Lord Robert Cecil and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who had shown themselves sympathetic, but had been anxious to make sure that he was not contemplating a political movement against the Soviet government. He had assured them, and could assure me, that he had no such intention; indeed, when the Duchess of Atholl, (whom he had also interviewed), had suggested a boycott of Soviet grain imports into this country, which had been fairly considerable last year, he had rejected the idea, not because he did not think such a boycott would be completely justified on moral grounds, but because he knew that it would introduce political prejudice into the case.

Dr. Amende then asked Dr. Dietloff to give me an account of the situation as it was when he had left the Caucasus last year, adding that he could confirm from letters written by German colonists in the Volga region and elsewhere that it was still the same now. Dr. Dietloff then launched into a long account of the conditions, which for the most part confirmed what we already know. His main points were: (1) that there

would be no famine with a normal system of agriculture; (2) that the shortage of farm animals, due to the terrible mortality among them in the collective farms, was such that no considerable increase in the harvest could be expected for the next year; (3) that the harvest last year, in spite of Soviet statements, was no better than that of the year before, as regards the amount of grain actually collected, but that (4) it had been made to go further owing to the colossal reduction in the agricultural population throughout the South of Russia, brought about by the deliberate policy of the Government, which had ordered all "useless mouths" to leave the villages, either deporting them to Siberia, or, when the means of transport was overcrowded, simply driving them out into the wilderness to starve. He had evidence that this system of wholesale deportation and expulsion was still continuing on the same scale; and letters from the Volga Germans showed that it was used not only for economic reasons, but also to remove political suspects, clergy, etc. He estimated the total reduction in the population of the North Caucasus brought about in this manner for the last two years at two million persons, and the reduction in the Ukraine must have been proportionate. Before he left, he had seen whole villages dying of starvation; and he illustrated his statements by some gruesome photographs.

Dr. Amende said in conclusion that he had asked to see me not merely to lay the facts before His Majesty's Government, but also to ascertain whether they had any objection to the campaign he was now undertaking. He explained that he was a Baltic German, now an Estonian citizen, and had originally taken the matter up because he was a member of the Union of Minorities at Geneva, which was interested in the German minority in Russia; yet when he had attempted to start a similar campaign in Germany, the German Government had intimated to him that, though they sympathised with his objects, they would have to discourage the campaign in the interests of their relations with the Soviet Government, which they did not want to see any worse than they were already. I replied that in this country the Government did not take it upon themselves to encourage or to discourage any purely humanitarian movement. He could therefore be sure that His Majesty's Government would not "discourage" his movement if by that word he meant put obstacles in the way of his conducting meetings, publishing articles in the press, etc. On the other hand I feared that, being, rightly or wrongly, in normal relations with the Soviet Government, they could not give it any official encouragement. Dr. Amende said that he quite understood the position, which was satisfactory to him. (No doubt he appreciates the contrast between what is possible in this country and what is not possible in Hitlerite

Germany, though, with Dr. Dietloff present, he could not well have said so.)

Dr. Amende finally asked me whether I thought it possible that if the Soviet Government applied for membership of the League of Nations, His Majesty's Government, as a Member of the League Council, might not make their vote for Soviet admission conditional on some assurances on matters of humanitarian concern, such as famine relief. To this I replied that, as far as I could see, the question had no actuality at the present moment; that everything would depend upon the circumstances in which such an application were put forward, which it was impossible to foresee now; that if any Member of the League Council were to propose the admission of the Soviet Union, it would, as he would know from his contacts at Geneva, be most probably the French Government; that if and when that Government proposed the admission of the Soviet Government without conditions, it might well be difficult for His Majesty's Government to refuse to vote for it; and that, in short, he had better address his enquiry to a member of the French rather than of the British Foreign Office. Dr. Amende said that this was the answer he had expected; and he and Dr. Dietloff then took their leave, apparently much relieved that no obstacles were to be placed in the way of their campaign. (Dr. Dietloff went on to see Mr. Cairns, who now works for the International Wheat Commission, and gave him his agricultural information.)
[*sgd.*] L. Collier
17th May, 1934

Draft

Lord Chilston
Moscow

My Lord, 29th May 1934

I transmit herewith, for Y. L's information, a copy of records of conversations regarding the relief of famine in the Soviet Union, which have been held with Colonel Malone, with Miss Christie, the Hon Treasurer of the "Russian Assistance Fund," and with Dr. Amende, the secretary of a committee formed by the Archbishop of Vienna to interest public opinion in the famine.

Dr. Amende was received at the request of the Duchess of Atholl, M.P., and was accompanied by Dr. Dietloff, the former manager of the German agricultural concession "Drusag" in the North Caucasus.
L. C.
May 26th

Minutes

Please see also N.2997/127/38.[90]

Dr. Dietloff may be inclined to minimize the improvement which has undoubtedly taken place in agricultural conditions in comparison with last year. Nevertheless this improvement is liable to be exaggerated. His remarks on some of the ways in which it has been achieved are to the point[....]
M. Vyvyan
24/5

Dr. Amende seemed to me to be an "amende honorable"; and Dr. Dietloff is well-known as a trustworthy agricultural expert. But I fear they are unduly optimistic as to the prospects of their humanitarian campaign [....]
L. Collier
May 25th.

69

Kiev Food Trial
Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 15 June 1934

Sir, Moscow, June 15, 1934

I have the honour to report that recently the trial took place at Kiev of twenty-nine employees of the "Kievoblkhoz" (Kiev District Economical Directorate). The accused were charged with speculation in essential consumption goods; speculation in, and hoarding of, valuta; bribery; and maintaining on the books of Kiev co-operative societies a number of fictitious names, by which means they were able to receive considerable quantities of goods to which they were not entitled.

2. Information regarding this trial was first given in the *Pravda* of the 28th May, and subsequent articles in the same periodical, which curiously enough were strongly anti-Semitic in spirit, tried to prove that the accused were nearly all counter-revolutionaries. According to the *Pravda* of the 8th June six of the "Kievoblkhoz" accused were condemned to death by shooting, fourteen to varying sentences of imprisonment from two to ten years and nine to compulsory labour for one year. The death sentences have already been carried out.[91]

3. It is of interest to note that at approximately the same time as the arrests of the twenty-nine persons implicated in the "Kievoblkhoz" trial, nearly the whole of the organisation of the Kiev Ogpu was also arrested. The Kiev Ogpu and its chief, M. Petrov, ware accused of crimes similar to those of the officials of the Economic Directorate. Official information with regard to the arrest of the Ogpu officials has not appeared in the press, but according to statements from well-informed sources their crimes were as follows: Speculation in essential consumption goods, buying and hoarding of valuta, sale of confiscated contraband goods, and retention of part of the proceeds of the confiscated gold procured "from sufferers from gold disease" (*i.e.*, gold hoarders). The results of the Ogpu trial are not known.

I have, &c.
Chilston

Minutes

The reported manipulation of anti-semitism in the Soviet press is interesting.

Para 3 of this despatch confirms the report of arrests of members of the G.P.U. to which we drew the attention of the Embassy at Moscow in N.3291/18/38. The case is altogether a significant & noteworthy one [....]
M. Vyvyan
26/6

70

Situation in Russia

C. C. Garbett, Punjab Civil Secretariat, to Sir Robert Vansittart, 18 June 1934, Laurence Collier to C. C. Garbett, 23 July 1934, and C. C. Garbett to Laurence Collier, 16 August 1934

Air Mail
Punjab Civil Secretariat, Simla E,

My Dear Vansittart, 18th June 1934

You may remember that four years ago you very kindly helped me by permitting me to see the most recent despatches on the Russian situation then with the H.B.M's Minister at Tangier: and the Foreign Office kindly recommended me certain books to read. I bought and read those books and have done my best to keep up to date: but I find it difficult to lay hands on exact facts and figures. There are plenty of people who write that food, clothes, indeed everything that the human wants except literature, lipstick and face powder, are short in Russia. But there are no details e.g. so many perished in the famine of such and such year, the "wild" children number so many in the homes and so many are estimated not yet to have been caught, it takes X hours to travel 100 miles by railways, the amount of time wasted per family in the queue system, the cost of sugar, butter and tea compared with wages on the one hand and registration of relationships e.g. marriage and divorce on the other etc.

My point is that a determined effort is being made to subvert the peasants of the Punjab. Only last month a large number of meetings were held at which most of the speakers very cleverly kept within the limits of the law. I should like to suggest to Government that we should fight to some extent with propaganda: but the answer will certainly be – "please prepare some tracts." And for this I want material. I shall be very grateful if you will kindly turn this letter over to your Russian side and for any help that can be given me. I am not writing officially because at present I fully realise that if anything is to come out of this suggestion, I shall have to work up propaganda myself: and the stage has not yet

reached when I have anything to lay before Government. You will, however, accept my assurance that any suggestions made or information communicated will be treated with the same confidence that the Chief Secretary gives to official correspondence.
Yours sincerely,
C. C. Garbett

Minutes

There is rather a dearth of books containing valuable anti-Soviet propaganda material (except of an unsuitably sophisticated kind). I think the best help we can give is to send some Russian print of the past year or so, possibly marking passages containing appropriate facts or statistics. In a[*ny*] event we can explain that there is naturally an absence of unfavourable statistics on the particular points mentioned in this letter.
M. Vyvyan
2/7

There are despatches from H.M. Embassy giving W. Chamberlin's & W. Duranty's accounts of trips to the famine areas, & there is the despatch about the Soviet woman's budget, which we gave out to the press here. There are doubtless others of the same kind, & I think we can help Mr. Garbett best by sending him copies of such despatches.
T. A. Shone
July 2.

I presume there is no technical objection to our sending print to the Secretariat at Simla. (I can't imagine that there could be any as it is a confidential Govt. office and the print could be sent by the I.O. bag service). If not, please draft a letter (from me, explaining that Sir R. Vansittart has asked me to deal with the matter and give all possible help), enclosing a suitable selection of print.
L. C.
July 3rd

It must surely go through the I.O. and the Govt. of India, even if semi-officially. It is one thing for an Indian civil servant home on leave to come here and be shown some despatches, books etc., but quite another to send him copies of our documents: we do not want the Political Dept. of the Govt. of India to have cause to think that we are acting behind their backs.

Any other method of transmission would also have dangers as regards security.
[*illeg.*]
3.vii.34

I have now discussed this with Mr. Norton and Mr. Gaselee, and it has been agreed that we need not, at this stage, divulge Mr. Garbett's plans to the Government of India, who are apt to be rather unsympathetic to efforts of this sort [....] All we need to do is to send the letter to Mr. Garbett, and the print enclosed in it, over to the India Office (already sealed in an envelope) for transmission to him at Simla by their bag, with a covering letter from me to Mr. Walton, to the effect that Mr. Garbett has been in personal correspondence with Sir R. Vansittart about Russia, and that Sir R. Vansittart wants certain documents sent to him, which, being confidential, ought to go to Simla by bag.

Proceed accordingly.

L. C.

July 4th.

Draft

C. C. Garbett, Esq, C.M.G.C.I.E.
Punjab Civil Secretariat, Simla E.

Dear Mr. Garbett, 23rd July, 1934

Sir Robert Vansittart has asked me, as Head of the Northern Department here, which deals with Russia, to reply to your letter to him of June 18th about material for anti-Soviet propaganda.

I fear that there are good reasons for the absence of reliable statistics about anything in Russia, of which you complain. The Soviet Government, of course, do not publish any figures showing how many people have perished by famine, and they put every obstacle in the way of such figures being estimated by other people; while, as for the length of time it takes to travel a given distance by railway, the amount of time wasted in queues and the real value of wages, these things vary so much that it is almost impossible to lay down an average for any of them – wages, for instance, are not, as with us, expressible in sums of money which will buy a given amount of commodities at any place and regardless of the purchaser's personal status, but are partly given in money (itself of very fluctuating purchasing power) and partly in a number of privileges of various sorts, such as the right to buy in co-operative stores, which are almost impossible to estimate accurately in terms of money and vary from class to class and even from one individual to another.

I think however, that the attached copies of Foreign Office print, (which are of course highly confidential and should be kept in the safe used for similar confidential papers belonging to the Political Secretariat of the Government of India), may be of some assistance to you – in particular, Lord Chilston's despatches Nos. 655 of December 4th, 1933, and 263 of June 4th last, which throw a lurid light on the "cost of living"

question, and Mr. Strang's despatches Nos. 525 and 568 of September 26th and October 14th, 1933, respectively,[92] in which you will find estimates by two competent journalists of the numbers of people who had died in last year's famine in the south of Russia – and these estimates, as you will see, differ widely from each other). There is also a good deal of statistical material in two reports from the Consul-General at Leningrad on conditions in his consular district, enclosed in Mr. Strang's despatches Nos. 337 and 513 of June 19th and September 22nd, 1933. On the other hand, Mr. Coote's despatch No. 503 of Sept. 12th, 1933, shows the unreliability of Soviet statistics.[93]

I also enclose a copy of an unprinted letter from the translator at the Moscow Embassy to a member of my Department, which gives an insight into the vast network of privileges and preferences, both economic and social, in which all Soviet citizens are entangled and the wholesale "graft" which seems unseparable from the system, and without which indeed the urban population of the country could hardly exist at all.

I am afraid this is not entirely what you want; but I hope you will be able to make something out of it.

L. C.

July 23rd

Punjab Civil Secretariat, Simla E,

Dear Mr. Collier, 16th August 1934

I am most grateful to you for the courtesy of your demi-official letter No. 3789/G, dated the 23rd July 1934, forwarding blue prints and copy of a private letter; and also to Sir Robert Vansittart for having given his generous permission to this effect.

The documents have supplied exactly the information which I was seeking. Apart from the conflicting views expressed in various publications, my doubts in regard to conditions in the country in question had been fostered by the visit of an Indian Army Officer in the Political Department who travelled recently through it and came back somewhat favourably impressed. He had probably been "treated" with exceptional skill. Now, thanks to you, I have the facts and greater confidence in our own counter-measures.

The documents are being treated with the secrecy you desire: and there are only two persons to whom I may perhaps show them, His Excellency the Governor and the Private Secretary to the Viceroy [....]

I am not keeping any copy of this letter – merely the reference – and the shorthand notes will be burnt.

Yours sincerely,

[*sgd.*] Colin C. Garbett

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Famine Conditions in the Soviet Union
Foreign Office Notes for a Reply to Sir Waldron Smithers in the House of Commons, 2 July 1934

Parliamentary Question

12. Sir Waldron Smithers. – To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, whether he has any information concerning the economic position in the Soviet Union; what has been the extent of the famine in the past 12 months; and what is the present position.
2 July 1934

Sir W. Smithers cannot expect a *comprehensive** statement on that subject, especially on two days notice. As, however, we do not wish to suggest that such a statement, for which there is, of course, no material, will later be forthcoming, it seems undesirable to get the question postponed.
Draft reply submitted.
M. Vyvyan
30.6

The truth of the matter is, of course, that we have a certain amount of information about famine conditions in the south of Russia, similar to what has appeared in the press, and that there is no obligation on us not to make it public. We do not want to make it public, however, because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced.

We cannot give this explanation in public; nor would it deter Sir W. Smithers from asking his question if we gave it to him privately, judging by his attitude on relations with the Soviet Government – which he seems to think neither necessary nor desirable.

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*Note in margin: "but he might expect a short statement of a general sort. L. C. June 30th."

In the circumstances, the only possible reply seems something on the lines of the attached draft. It is of course open to the objection that it invites the supplementary questions: "Will not the Government help me to form a judgment by giving me their own information?", to which the only answer is that the Govt. do not think it expedient to do so; but sooner or later that is what Sir W. Smithers will have to be told, in any case.
L. Collier
June 30th

It wd. be easier to say that we have no recent information on the subject beyond what has already appeared in the press – if that can be correctly said. If pressed I do not see why we shd. be afraid of telling the truth as we have heard it for fear of hurting Soviet feelings. We are not their propaganda agency. I agree however that we shd. answer as unprovocatively as possible, & the reply I have suggested is a first attempt.
R July 2

Northern Dept. think it can – if "recently" is [*not*?] too broadly interpreted.
RMA

Draft Reply to
Sir W. Smithers
No. 12
Monday, July 2nd

~~I receive from H.M. Ambassador at Moscow, as from all H.M. Representatives abroad, periodical reports on the economic situation of the country in which he resides.~~

~~As regards the food supply in the Soviet Union, my hon. Friend can form his own judgment in the light of the information on this subject published in the press and elsewhere.~~

I have no recent information on the subject beyond what has already appeared in the press.
R.

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Conditions in the Soviet Union
The Duchess of Atholl to Sir John Simon, 2 July 1934, Forwarding a Memorandum by Fritz Dittloff

Dear Sir John, 2nd July 1934

May I send you herewith, in confidence, some statements in regard to the position in Russia? They are made by a certain Dr. Ditloff, who until three or four months ago had been head of a big German agricultural concession in the Northern Caucasus. Malcolm Muggeridge went to stay at the concession when he was in Russia last year, and has told me how splendidly it was managed and what a contrast it was to the surrounding area. It was feeding many people who could get no food elsewhere.

Dr. Ditloff has to keep his name private meanwhile, as several employees of the concession are still in the power of the Soviet Government.

The statements were made in reply to questions put to Dr. Ditloff when he was on a visit to this country recently. The statements show such a terrible condition of affairs and such a grave outlook for the future, that I have obtained leave to send them to you.

Yours sincerely
Katharine Atholl

Questions submitted to Dr. Dittloff

1. Give an exact account of the Cosak situation, indicating the precise manner in which the Cosaks have been expelled or wiped out.

2. Indicate and describe the various measures that have been adopted for systematically rooting out unwanted elements. State also which of the remoter areas besides Siberia receive the greatest influx of these elements.

3. Throw additional light on the question as to whether the falling off in the harvest yield is in any real sense due to the weak physical condition

of the people – i.e. explain why the harvests have got steadily worse from this cause.

4. Say a few words to illustrate the bad management of the Kolchos and Sovchos farms, in view of the fact that Herriot and others are particularly loud in their praises of these institutions. Give concrete examples. (It would be good to have some information about the big Russian "Drusag" farms.)

5. Give precise information as to the exploitation of the Kolchosniks by the system of assessment mentioned yesterday.

6. Give definite facts about the shortage of medicines and the unnecessary prevalence of death, diseases, and epidemics consequent thereupon. (Perhaps the reason is that the Soviet Government, realising that there is an excess of crude labour among the peasants as such, is not fond of drawing upon its resources for the purchase of medicines destined to maintain what is already there in superabundance.) To illustrate this concrete examples and dates are essential, the same applying to Malaria preparations.

7. Describe the treatment of the individual peasant. (This point was touched upon yesterday – more particularly in respect of the imposition of excessive taxes.)

8. Give some examples to illustrate the strong hold which Communism has taken on Russian youth. What are the reasons for this, and what grounds are there for supposing that a reaction will set in when conditions are altered?

9. Give some examples illustrating the overthrow of religious and family life.

10. Give definite information as to the ultimate aims and methods of the Soviet Union in the matter of mobilizing the eastern peoples – more especially against the British Empire.

11. Say a little about the employees of the "Drusag" and their lot (confidential, and for my own personal information).

12. Quote instances illustrating how the people have grown callous to famine.

13. Describe what happens to emigrants and outcasts, e.g. the case of the emigrants from Pyatigorsk, and other such cases.

14. What will happen if the next harvest fails from natural causes as well? What contingencies might then arise, and how serious might the catastrophe become at the worst?

15. Give examples showing the prevalence of bribery and theft among Government Officials and also among the population at large.

16. Describe or instance the way in which children are employed against their own parents to keep a look-out against the theft of corn.

Replies to the attached questions

1. In the district particularly under my observation (Kuban area) the systematic wiping out of the Cossacks began round about 1929. In the Cossack areas the inhabitants, Kulaks, were ruthlessly persecuted because, from their position of economic advantage, they had obtained a controlling influence in the villages. The Cossack stanitsas were systematically peopled with fresh drafts of anti-Cossack Russians. Nowhere was the policy of common informing carried to such lengths as in these areas, inhabited as they were by men skilled in the use of arms. Particularly significant is the fact that, not content with forbidding the Cossacks to carry sabres or Kinjals, the Government proceeded to deprive them of their horses as well. I have often heard Communists remark that the Cossacks must be made to plough and travel with the aid of oxen, so as to deny him permanently all practice in horsemanship. The distribution of taxes and the obligation to contribute crops to the State were factors which came down on the Cossacks with brutal force, for there was no doubt that their families had amassed considerable wealth. Then the famine of 1933 was harder on the Cossacks than on anybody, because they were left no reserve supplies for themselves. Revolts broke out in many stanitsas, and where Party Officials in the villages had been murdered the punishment was usually terribly cruel. A considerable number of stanitsas simply succumbed to the famine, while many others were transported for failing to contribute an adequate share of crops.

2. The policy of granting passports in all parts of European Russia only to such elements in the population as are officially recognized by the State has led to the formation of two quite new and mutually distinct groups. Hitherto, inferior status was confined to the Lishentsi, who had no vote and whose sons were generally forbidden the use of firearms. At the same time, however, the big economic concerns and authorities in the country were thoroughly purged of unwanted elements, and this soon made abundantly clear what sections of the population were hostile to the Soviet Government. To all such unfortunates, no passports were issued and they received strict instructions not to enter certain areas in future. Officially persons restricted in this way were usually branded "minus 3" or "minus 5" to infer that there were 3 or 5 areas respectively which they were not free to enter. In very many instances the whole of Russia in Europe was declared out of bounds. How in the majority of cases these people managed to get to these areas without funds, I have no notion. There can be no doubt that hundreds must have died on the journey alone. It may further be mentioned that the few small Siberian town[s] and villages, as well as out of the way areas like the Stavropol,

Kirgizen, and Kalmuk Steppes, all of which were appointed as halting places, were quite unable to cope with the influx of people and no accommodation was available. In such areas the local population had never enough to feed themselves, and were obviously unable to provide nourishment for any additional population.

3. The famine of 1933 naturally lowered the physical condition of the working population. The result was that people fell an easy prey to Malaria, Spotted Fever, and Influenza. Every successive year has shown a perceptible decline in the physical powers of the agricultural labouring sections of the community. Of this nothing could afford more striking proof than a consideration of the amount of grain contained in the sacks upon consignment. Up to 1929, 100 Kg. sacks were the usual thing, but every year since then the weight has been decreasing until it has reached a mere 50 Kg. per sack. At the same time one must allow for the rough treatment which the sacks receive when being loaded on to the trains on the railway stations. Up to 1930, a 16 H.P. steam threshing machine near Schoberdrusch normally required 25 persons for operation. In 1933, for the same job, twice the number of persons had to be employed, and a still greater number were sometimes necessary in order to allow for exchanges of labour after short shifts. The efficiency of the women employed in hoeing for sunflower and maize cultivation fell off in just the same way. Here again the amount of work done under given conditions fell to one half of what it had been during the normal period prior, say, to 1930. The same tragic story could be told of the horses and oxen. Three years of persistent under-nourishment, with their heavy toll of animal life, had left so many enfeebled creatures in harness that scarce one half the normal amount of work could be done. Nobody who has seen these wretched horses harnessed before the plough along with a few half-starved cows, can fail to understand why agriculture in the Black Soil lands come to such a sorry pass. Stalin's edict at the beginning of 1933 that "Weeds must be liquidated this Spring" was doomed from the first to prove abortive, if only from the physical weakness of man and beast. To be successful a campaign against weeds on the scale necessary on land that was once the granary of the world, can only be waged by extensive ploughing and by the timely use of the harrow to stir up the surface of the soil. During the seeding campaign at the beginning of 1933, it was no uncommon sight in the Ukraine and North Caucasus to see women dragging a harrow over the land. Very often a party of eight women would be employed to drag a harrow a couple of yards in width. This was in compliance with orders issued by the Politotdels of the various agricultural concerns.

4. The hopelessly bad management of the large scale farms in the Soviet Union was primarily due to the disastrous shortage of expert labour. All the noted heads of the village concerns, the Kulaks and the middle-class of peasants had long ago fallen victims to the campaign against enemies of the proletariat. Now there only remained the least capable rustic elements, and they were only too ready to denounce any proprietor, however competent he might be.

The management of the Collective Farms was as a rule placed in the hands of Party Officials. It is indeed a noteworthy fact that in the year 1931 the Headquarters of the red Trade Unions in Moscow selected no fewer that 30,000 young Moscow Factory workers, with an approved grasp of Trade Union methods, as suitable persons to take over the control of agricultural concerns. These young men were handed over to the Agricultural Commisariat for that purpose. What mischief these people wrought on the collective farms can only be attested by agricultural experts. The extent of it is proved by the way cultivation has receded and crops declined, and by the loss of almost half the live-stock in the Soviet Union. Faulty administration of the farms, and Stalin's mad-cap agrarian policy were likewise at the root of the catastrophic famine of 1933 – certainly the forerunner of other catastrophes on a similar scale during the next few years. Exactly the same state of affairs exists on the State Farms – Sovkhoz. The Shakhty case of 1928 dealt the final death blow to the authority of the old school of manager, with technical training on a specific basis. The expert's place at the head of a large scale agricultural concern was henceforth filled by a Red Director, with only a few political and agricultural catch-words in his vocabulary and no knowledge of agriculture, stock-farming, or the theory of farm management. Added to all this there came the extraordinary ambition of the Kremlin to introduce 100% mechanisation into Soviet agriculture – a policy which could only hasten its downfall. Such was their mania for "Americanisation" as they termed it, meaning the introduction of machines into agriculture, that these people branded horses and oxen as out of date in modern Soviet Agriculture, and aimed at replacing them with tractors and motor lorries. The prime fallacy of these notions on americanisation was precisely this: American labour is generally highly skilled, scarce and costly. In other words, the American Farmer, using the most up to date machines on a relatively large scale, can cultivate large tracts of land merely with the help of his own children and a few efficient labourers. All this is in complete contrast to conditions of agriculture in Russia, where labour is plentiful to excess, but is for the most part unskilled, and consequently cheap. Given such labour as this, agri-

culture can be carried on with horses and oxen, but not with machinery such as tractors and threshing machines.

5. With the introduction of Collective Farms under government control, the Kolchoz labourer became to all intents a field-hand in the service of the State. There was, however, one difference. The Sovkhoz labourer received a more or less regular daily wage, according to the rules of his farm. The Kolchoz labourer, on the other hand, had to wait until after the harvest. Yet, in compliance with Stalin's decree, he had to work from sunrise to sunset – that is as long as daylight lasted every day of the week, inclusive of Sundays and holidays. As soon as they had been threshed the crops were conveyed straight from the machine and deposited in the State granaries under the supervision of Party Officials. They were then State property. The price paid for the produce thus handed over was fixed by the State. Taking the average for the past six years it ranges from about 1.10 Roubles per Pud to about 1.20 Roubles per Pud, this being still the customary unit of weight for agricultural purposes and equal to about 16 Kg. The hopeless condition of the land thanks to the attempt to carry on a weeding campaign, and the scanty harvests consequent upon the spread of weeds, naturally meant that the prime costs, reckoned on a Pud basis, were considerably higher than this. Compared with the price paid by the customer, the compulsory price paid for the crop thus forcibly purchased from the producer was little more than a piece of appropriation. It is true, of course, that to preserve appearances, the price was given a formal basis, but in most cases this figure did not cover one-tenth, or even one-twentieth, of the prime cost of production. Most significant of all, however, is the fact that the Kolkhoznik (Collective farm labourer) was not even left the necessary cereals to make bread for himself and family during the ensuing economic year. The control of supplies for this purpose was left instead in the hands of the Party Courts, who could at any time use the bogey of starvation in order to get extra work out of the Kolchosnik and his family. Full use was made of this expedient, which provided the Party with the means, even in the smallest Kolchoz farms, of bringing undesirable elements to heel or letting them starve outright, as in 1934.

6. Medicinal remedies for the cure and treatment of disease, and in particular those needed for the great outbreak of Malaria, were nowhere to be had. Despite the levying of "sotsstrakh" a tax on industry amounting to 16% of the total wages of employees, hospital and ambulance equipment remained in a hopeless state. Everything was wanting. Thousands upon thousands of people were doomed to die, simply because what few Doctors there were could not come by the necessary remedies. And the same was true in the case of animals. It is true there were

laboratories in some places but they served no practical purposes, as the serums prepared in them proved harmful rather than beneficial. The best evidence of this is seen in the disastrous decrease in live-stock. Judging of the facts as they stand, one can only suppose that the Soviet Government did not care how many people died from epidemics, as it only meant so many fewer to feed.

7. Peasants who refused to become members of Collective Farms had an unenviable fate in store for them. Carting goods and mending roads were some of the commonest village tasks allotted to them in order to bring them to heel, and they were frequently made to help on the Collective Farms for long periods at a time. In addition to this an extortionate tax was imposed upon them, ruining their chances of business from the start. The [*illeg.*] of assessment, with its despotic methods, has long ago obliged the private peasant to dispose of his horse and cow to the Collective Farm. To-day he is forced to cultivate his small plot of land with the spade and must hand over his total crop to the State at the compulsory rate. Failure to carry out the duties allotted to him expose him to the charge of sabotaging Government action, indeed, there can hardly be a single private peasant alive to-day who has not, at one time or another, served a term of imprisonment. Compulsory sanctions of the property of private peasants and their eviction from house and home are matters of everyday occurrence in any village. More especially has this policy affected the German colonists, who, after 200 years of unbroken autonomy, have much resented the collectivisation of their farms. Nearly always an outstanding success as a farmer, the German Colonist has now lost his economic liberty for good and all. Now he has but two courses open to him. Either he must throw in his lot with the hated Collective and see the ultimate extinction of his family and religion; or he must tread the bitter path leading to imprisonment and starvation, or involving banishment to the most inhospitable parts of the country, there to come face to face with the most desperate struggle for existence.

8. Up to the age of about 20, Russian youth has grown up in an atmosphere of pure Communism. It has no critical faculty, its whole education having from first to last been dominated by Communist propaganda. As question 9 suggests, the subversion of the old Russian conception of the family can provide heart-breaking instances of the way in which the young generation has fallen into the hands of the Communists. There is a whole department of communist propaganda devoted to the extinction of the family spirit. It aims directly at segregating all who, unlike the children, remember the peaceful Russia of other days or are acquainted with the conditions in foreign countries. Such persons, while being denied any part in the education of the rising generation, have

been made the victims of strong political agitation. Thousands of instances are known, where parents, for criticising what had been taught at school, have been denounced to the Government by their own children, and upon the evidence of the latter suffered severe punishment at the hands of the Soviet authorities. As example to point. The 14 year old daughter of a certain peasant – actually, a "Reichsdeutsche" whose official papers were at the time not quite in order – was seduced by a member of the Young Communist League, and on several occasions spent the night with him. The poor parents were horrified when the news reached their ears, and one night the father brought his daughter home by force. For this he was cruelly set upon and beaten by this communist and his friends. On the following day, the daughter – an only child – was prevailed upon by her friend to lodge an official complaint against her own father, who was immediately arrested. Only by the intervention, backed up with full authority, of a German Specialist who had a practice of many years' standing in the Soviet Union, was it at last possible to get this man – a German subject – out of prison. It was still impressed upon him that German subjects in Russia came under Russian jurisdiction. The same informant can also vouch personally for the truth of the following occurrence, which he saw with his own eyes. It illustrates well the subversion of religious life in Russia. A highly competent and thorough-going German Colonist died. His large family, brought up to be strictly religious and now overcome with grief, assembled at the grave side with their few remaining friends and acquaintances. In the absence of any priest, the funeral ceremony was conducted by a peasant. They were in the midst of their religious proceeding when some members of the Young Communist Party, headed by a Constable and making free use of abusive language, broke in upon the gathering; and perceiving it to be a religious ceremony, tossed the flowers and wreaths on one side, and took away the body. This they proceeded to bury in unconsecrated ground, making interment in the churchyard an impossibility. With their grief turned to bitterness and indignation at this outrage, the members of the family were then called upon by the local authorities to account for their anti-Soviet and religious behaviour.

10. The Soviet Government – or as the Soviet Powers that be will probably be calling it when these lines are published – the "Komintern," is being very assiduous and systematic in its efforts to train foreigners in the practical methods of Bolshevism. The most intelligent and virulent types of unemployed communists from abroad are given special training in their own language at Communist Academies in Moscow and the Provinces. Here the curriculum is along lines cunningly adapted to the end in view. The Soviet Union sees that their visitors live on a level

compatible with their own standards of life at home. They are allowed to pick themselves girl friends from the ranks of the Young Communist Party to act as companions during their stay in Moscow, and the training they received under the guise of scientific education is intended to sow the seeds of Communism in other countries. This agitation work mostly goes on during the summer months, and Moscow then becomes the resort of the most ghastly mixture of nationalities on earth. People of every nationality and race may be seen going about in the khaki Communist uniform with the Hammer and Sickle displayed on the cap. The large number of French and English Colonials is particularly noticeable, but Americans are very numerous, especially those from South America. One of our informants was commissioned during 1931 and 1932 to keep an eye on the special exhibition by German Communists in the Soviet Union, and to report to his Government on the subject. He thus had an opportunity of ascertaining the methods used in training these people and of finding out the ultimate aims of an Agitation campaign which threatens the whole world. With cynical frankness a number of Communists, who were naturally unaware of his mission, confided in him that the surest and most terrible way of striking at the Great Powers was to increase systematically all the discontented and violent elements. These people, particularly the Chinese coolies, Indian porters, and Negroes, must look upon the Soviet Union as a veritable Heaven upon Earth, judging by the ease with which they are won over by the Kremlin. It behoves all Governments to keep closer watch on those of their subjects who visit Russia, lest they be engaged in this active poison campaign in the interests of Communism. Unless this is done, the world may get some nasty shocks one day. Practical training in the use of pistols and hand-granades, and instruction in the theory of mob street warfare are things which might one day prove disastrous to the world.

11. To be answered separately.

12. Even before 1933 the Russian people had become pretty apathetic, but the disastrous famine of that year, with its toll of *ten million** lives (nearly twice the number killed in the Great War) made them callous beyond belief to the sufferings of their fellow men. Instances of people dying of starvation in the streets and lying there, without anybody troubling about them were, of daily occurrence. Very often the corpses would remain for days on the pavement, and people would simply step over them, or turn aside with a look of horror. Nobody thought of removing the dead or helping the dying. Groups of people would often collect

*The italicized words were underlined, and a note was written in the margin: "? No one knows the real figure."

round a dying man out of sheer curiosity and never so much as offer a helping hand or a drink of water. In the villages the dead remained in the houses. The relatives were too weak to bury them, and simply waited for their own end in listless apathy. At the beginning of 1933 cases of cannibalism were reported from various parts of the Soviet Union, and in a number of instances people were slaughtered to make soap. Doubtless Moscow will take great pleasure in denying these facts, for they deprive the Soviet Union and its Rulers of any rightful place among the civilised nations of the world. And yet this same Government, which had held power during the events of the Spring of 1933, could at the end of July send Litvinov as its foreign representative to London, to distract the attention of all civilised countries from events in Russia by holding out prospects of Soviet orders. He could even return to Moscow boasting seven trade guarantees extracted from European countries, and this despite the fact that both in England and in other countries represented at the Conference he had doubtless had time to further his policy of Communist agitation. In November, this self-same Litvinov could cross to America – now the one country left which had not given formal recognition of the Soviet Union. With a complete disregard of the recent famine of 1933 and the imminent one of 1934, it now devolved upon no less a man than Roosevelt to assert his recognition of the Soviet Union as a civilised country.

13. Quite a number of localities were set apart for settlement by such, for example, as had failed to conform to Government regulations in the matter of sowing and contributing crops. The unfortunate inhabitants of these places were given a few hours only in which to vacate the premises with their wives and children, and were forthwith transported to other districts. In one such instance, the inhabitants of a certain village near Pyatigorsk were being transported in closed cattle trucks to a place on the other side of the Urals. The poor creatures never reached their destination. On the way the occupants of the trucks were found to have died of starvation, and were accordingly transported back again. Could such horrors as this be paralleled anywhere else in the whole world? Such exiles, or those of whom reached their destinations alive, are generally planted down without any kind of assistance in the most desolate parts of the country. Here they either die without trace, or are used up as forced labour in the rude Northern Forests, whence they never return.

14. The harvest prospects for the coming year can easily be predicted from the hopeless state of cultivation in the chief areas of production. Unless the campaign against weeds can be successfully carried through – and this according to experts would mean from five to eight years of intensive work – there can be no prospects of any more normal harvests

in the Soviet Union. The problem of providing food for man and beast, and the poor quality of agricultural machines and implements that persists despite all the desperate efforts of Soviet industry to improve it, make all hope of better conditions an illusion. Only the steady fall in the population and the diminishing excess of births over deaths can alleviate the situation.

Minutes

The questions asked by the Duchess of Atholl were well selected but I find Dr. Ditloff's memorandum of replies disappointing. He did not answer the last two questions relating to graft among Soviet officials or the practice of children spying on their parents. Dr. Ditloff has in general nothing new to say & I do not think his memo is worth copying out to send to Moscow. He writes in an unanalytical way like a casual visitor & not like an expert who has lived (if in an isolated island) in the middle of a Soviet agricultural district for several years.

I understand that Drusag was not in fact a paragon among farms though far superior to any but the more insignificant & quite uneconomic Soviet ones, & treating its employees far better than these do.

Mr. Muggeridge, to whom the Duchess refers, tells me that, although he is deeply concerned in anti-Soviet propaganda through all available channels, he has no doubt that Dr. Amende, whose protege Dr. Dietloff is, is financed as an agitator by the German Ministry of Propaganda.* I do not know if this is true, but from what I have heard from the non-Nazi members of the German Embassy at Moscow the M[*inistr*]y of Propaganda is very anxious to propagate unfavourable information about Soviet agriculture, & collects information for this purpose. Dr. Dietloff is not a professional propagandist himself but may of course be financed independently, with Dr. Amende, by the Interdenominational Relief Association at Vienna without any support from Berlin.

M. Vyvyan
9/7

This contains material that Lord Charnwood will probably use in the forthcoming debate in the House of Lords. Dr. Dietloff is a competent agriculturalist; and when he speaks of what he has seen with his own eyes in agricultural districts – for example, the instances given in paragraphs 2, 3, 12 and 13, I think his evidence can be relied upon. The rest is just generalised anti-Soviet propaganda.

*Note in margin: "Quite likely as regards Dr. Amende. I should doubt, however, if Dr. Dietloff were a paid propagandist. L.C. July 10th."

Dr. Dietloff has already given me much the same information, having called here with Dr. Amende, as described in N. 2988/127/38.*[94] No further action, therefore, seems required on this paper.
L. C.
July 10th

*Note in margin: "Sent to Lord Stanhope with Lord Charnwood's motion."

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Famine Conditions in the Soviet Union
Sir Waldron Smithers to Sir John Simon, 16 July 1934

Confirmatory Evidence of the Existence of Famine in the Soviet Union Particularly in Ukraine and the North Caucasus

The true sources of evidence are as follows:-

Reliable newspaper correspondents.
Refugees.
The Soviet Press and official Soviet statements.
Photographs taken by Foreigners.
The work of some fifteen Relief Organisations and Committees in Great Britain and Europe who are in constant communication with Soviet Russia.

The evidence shown below is classified between the years 1933 and 1934. As regards 1933, the existence of a serious famine resulting in widespread mortality is now confirmed beyond a shadow of a doubt. From the point of view of conditions today, it is desirable to re-state the facts about 1933, because they illustrate the terrible state in which 1934 began, and lead, apart from any evidence, to the conclusion that famine must be worse in 1934 than in 1933.

Evidence Concerning Conditions in 1933

The first indication of the grave situation in Soviet Ukraine appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* in a series of articles by their Special Correspondent* on March 25, 26, 27, 28 and 29th, 1933. These articles carried considerable weight, since the *Manchester Guardian* cannot be regarded as an anti-Soviet paper. It has indeed a well-earned reputation

*Mr. Malcom Muggeridge.

as a fearless seeker and revealer of the truth. These statements, therefore, were all the more startling. They indicated:-

1. That the peasant population, who even now number 124 millions out of a total of 165 millions, that is, about seventy-five per cent. of the people in Russia, were suffering famine, at that time.

2. That the famine is mainly due to the ruthless Moscow agricultural policy.

Space does not permit of extensive quotations from these articles on the state of affairs.

Here is a picture of one of the batches of peasants herded together for transportation at Rostov.

"On the platform a group of peasants were standing in military formation, five soldiers armed with rifles guarding them. There were men and women, each carrying a bundle. Somehow, lining them up in military formation made the thing grotesque – wretched-looking peasants, half-starved, tattered clothes, frightened faces, standing to attention. These may be kulaks, I thought, but if so they have made a mighty poor thing of exploiting their fellows." (*Manchester Guardian*, 27th March 1933.)

"A little market-town in the Kuban district of the North Caucasus suggested a military occupation; worse, active war. There were soldiers everywhere. They were well-fed, and the civilian population was obviously starving. I mean starving in its absolute sense, not under-nourished as, for instance, most Oriental peasants are under-nourished and some unemployed workers in Europe, but having had for weeks next to nothing to eat." (*Manchester Guardian*, 25th March 1933.)

Many other harrying accounts can be obtained from the above quoted issues of the *Manchester Guardian*.

These facts were confirmed by Mr. Gareth Jones, formerly Political Secretary and Research Advisor on Foreign Affairs to Mr. Lloyd George, who returned from Soviet Ukraine about the same time. His views were published in the *Evening Standard*, 31st March 1933, and various South Wales papers.

Corroborative statements appeared in a series of articles published in the *Daily Telegraph* on August 25, 28 and 30th, 1933.

Later in the year the Moscow Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* (not Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge this time but a fresh man) visited Soviet Ukraine and the North Caucasus, the results of his investigations being published in articles between October 17th and October 21st, 1933. Wherever he went, he visited the local Soviet officials, and he quotes their figures of deaths from starvation, exhaustion and allied

causes, while admitting that they are considerably lower than those given by unofficial persons.

The general impression which emerges from the official statement is that on many collective farms and in many villages, ten per cent of the population died during the previous winter. In some it may have been as low as five per cent, whereas in another village where "kulak resistance" had been strongest, fifteen per cent of the population perished, i.e. the Communist Government starved them to death.

Thus the collective farm "Dawn of Victory" near Poltava lost some 40 out of 425 working members. The mortality of a village of 2,000 persons near Belaya Tserkov in Ukraine was 250. Even the collective farm lost seventy out of six hundred members, or eleven per cent. 2,000 homeless children had been picked up and 6,000 collective farm members had been sent to the coal mines of the Donetz basin. The population of Kazanskaya in the North Caucasus had declined from 8,000 to 7,000 during the last year. Its ordeal had been terrible. In April 1933, alone according to the statistics supplied, 155 persons had died, 98 from "exhaustion."

Mr. Humphrey Mitchell, M.P., Hamilton East, Ontario, also spent several weeks in Russia. He said that he found thousands of people starving in the towns and villages of Ukraine. In a statement published in the *Canadian Gazette* of September 7th, 1933, he said: "They did not have even the traditional dried fish and cabbage soup: they were down to bread and water, and sometimes less than that."[95]

Dr. Adolf Ehrt, director of the Information Section of the "Evangelischer Presseverband fur Deutschland" (Berlin Steglitz) has gathered, in a book illustrated with photographs, the letters which have been sent to the "Bruder in Not" Bureau by starving German colonists in Ukraine, imploring help.[96]

It is stated therein that the workers fall in the streets on account of starvation. Every day hundreds of people who have died from hunger are buried by heaps in the same hole; half of the population of the villages die, houses are getting empty, the father, the mother, the children being swept off by plague. That is the account given by such letters, which, received from different regions of Russia, all agree in the description of the terrible famine spreading over the whole country.

Various reports have appeared from time to time in Polish, Rumanian and other papers, chiefly concerning refugees who have escaped from the Soviet Union. The following are a few typical examples:

The evidence of Czechoslovak workmen who had just returned from the U.S.S.R. was given to the Socialist Club at Prague and was published in *Czas*, Czernowitz, 19th August 1933:

"The famine at Kiev is terrible. People remain seated on the ground in the street, drinking water in an empty provision box. They remain there for several days not having strength to lift themselves up and end up by dying where they are. In the market-place at Kiev every night there are eight or ten bodies quickly stripped of their clothes. In the morning carts arrive and take them away to be buried. In the streets on the outskirts, bodies remain until they are completely decomposed."

The Berlin correspondent of the *Berlingske Tidende* one of the most reliable papers in Denmark, in its issue of August 24th, 1933, wrote as follows:-

"There can no longer be any doubt that a catastrophic famine is raging in Russia. Even the Soviet Press acknowledges that the situation is critical. The descriptions by reliable persons who have recently returned from various parts of Russia give us a terrible picture of the conditions of millions of people in Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus, and in the Volga districts, where many of the inhabitants, during the last five to eight months, have not even seen any bread."

The following facts are taken from an interview with Mrs. Martha Stebalo, which was published in *Le Matin* of August 29th, 1933.

Mrs. Martha Stebalo with her husband emigrated to the United States from Ukraine in 1913. In July 1933, they joined a party of tourists in order to visit the U.S.S.R., and investigate the conditions which they had heard about by letters from their families.

After visiting Kiev and villages in the neighbourhood where they found people suffering from shortage of food they went to Pysarivka where Mrs. Stebalo's mother and brothers were supposed to be living and from whom she had received a letter a month before leaving the United States. She was told that they had died of hunger and that in this village of 800 inhabitants 150 had died since last spring.

Letter from Kherson, dated November 6th, 1933, sent by M. Yakovliv, 39, rue Aviateur Theiffry, Brussels.

"We are passing through an extremely difficult time. The famine is making itself felt more and more. It is not only ourselves who are suffering but all the population. Our family is dispersed and we do not know where to find some of them. I have returned from living in a hospital where they told me that they had picked me up dying of hunger. X has not had any luck. His four children have died as a result of the famine."

Dilo, Lviv, December 3rd. 1933, in relating the experiences of a lady, who had just left Soviet Ukraine because she was a foreigner, describes the working people as receiving food which could not be compared with that given to the pigs before the war, and after picturing the skeleton-like appearance of the children, goes on to relate how she came across

the bodies of nine unfortunate persons who had died of famine and of cold in the street.

More recently considerable confirmation of the famine in 1933 has been given by the articles published by Mr. Whiting Williams in *Answers*, February 24th and March 3rd, 1934,[97] and by Mr. W. H. Chamberlin in the *Christian Science Monitor* of May 29th, 1934. (Both Mr. Whiting Williams and Mr. Chamberlin's articles have been reproduced in a pamphlet entitled *Famine in Ukraine* published by the United Ukrainian Organisations of the United States.)

Photographs are available taken by two independent travellers in Ukraine during 1933. Mr. Whiting Williams and Mr. Otto Wienerberger, an Austrian engineer.[98] These photographs show dead persons who are reported to have died of hunger lying in the street of Kharkiv, innumerable bread and milk queues, and mass graveyards for the victims of the famine.

Evidence Concerning Famine Conditions in 1934

The facts above quoted give some picture as to how the year 1934 began in the Soviet Ukraine and North Caucasus. When it is realised that these conditions were not the result of natural causes but arose from the policy of the Soviet government, it should be realised that, other things being equal, the famine conditions in 1934 would be just as bad, if not worse, than those of 1933, unless the policy is altered.

However, a mass of data is already available. Letters and reports have been issued from such organisations as:-

1. The European Central Office for Church Aid (note particularly the memorandum issued from Geneva of April 1934).
2. Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Berlin.
3. Bruder-in Not.

The following organisations operating in Great Britain can confidentially confirm the facts, although for obvious reasons they cannot be quoted.

1. British Subjects in Russia Relief Association.
2. Federation of Jewish Relief Organisations.
3. Society of Friends.
4. Russian Assistance Fund.

In addition there are many Committees on the Continent similarly engaged.

Many official decrees indicating considerable alarm on the part of the Soviet officials have been issued. Thus, according to the Soviet news-

paper *Visti* published in Kharkiv, April 9th, 1934, Postyshev* severely criticized the directors and reprimanded the secretaries of the District Committee in Ukraine, the directors and chief of the Political Party and the M.T.S. and Radhosps (State farms), the managers of the Radhosps and the Brigadiers of the Kolhosps (collective farms) and Radhosps, pointing out the backwardness of the grain sowing, etc.

The *Times* of May 28th, 1934,[99] said that:-

"The Soviet government has officially announced that the crops have been lost in some of the southern regions of Russia owing to drought. The government has therefore been obliged to raise the price of bread rations throughout the Soviet Union. In order to counteract the distress which this may cause, the government has decided to increase the wages of industrial workers and employees by about ten per cent."

The *Times* of May 29th, 1934, gave further details on the same questions (see also *Daily Telegraph* of May 23rd, 1934).[100]

Dr. Fritz Dittloff, who was in charge of the German Concession Drusag in the North Caucasus, who left Russia in February 1934, visited London in May of this year and to a number of persons confirmed the serious famine conditions.

Senator Kisilewska, a member of the Polish Senate, interviewed several refugees who left Soviet Ukraine this year and escaped into Poland. A report of her interview is published in Ukrainian Bureau Bulletin No. 18, pages 4 and 5. Numerous reports continue to be published in newspapers in Poland, Rumania and elsewhere, confirming the existence of famine conditions.

The *Times*, June 28th, 1934, reports the staging of the second series of demonstrative trials of food wreckers now proceeding in the U.S.S.R.[101] "The first series of trials was staged chiefly in the Ukraine, where the most important were concluded at the beginning of June with sentences of death on six high food officials, whom the Soviet Government have since announced to have been shot."

"The present series is organised in all the chief centres and has already produced numerous death sentences. Seven directors and other responsible officials of the Soviet Co-operatives in Leningrad yesterday were thus sentenced and another thirty were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment, most of them for ten years. The organisation of a similar trial of thirty-nine Moscow Food Trust officials is announced. The trial of twelve officials of the Kieff bread bakery trust and employees of the

*Postychev – the Moscow appointed secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and actually the dictator of Ukraine nominated by Stalin.

Ukrainian food department began at Kieff a week ago, but the sentences have not yet been reported."

Visti (Kharkiv) of June 22nd, 1934, publishes a statement by Mr. Liubchenko, Chairman of Commissars of the Ukrainian S.S.R. who said that the grain delivery this year will be much more difficult than last year.

"We have to remember that if only to a very slight degree we do not take care and do not energetically take matters into our hands, THE VERY SAD EXPERIENCE OF THE HARVEST OF LAST YEAR MAY REPEAT ITSELF. In order not to repeat last year's mistakes, the experiences of last year should be before our eyes." (According to the report of Mr. Chamberlin, between four and five million people, over and above the normal mortality rate, lost their lives from hunger and related causes last year.)

Berliner Tageblatt, July 4, 1934, reports as follows:-

"A Russian Air Force officer, who deserted his post, arrived in Berlin where he delivered an address on conditions in the Red Army. He declared that the moral pressure brought about by Moscow propaganda is becoming unbearable in many districts. Members of the Red Army regularly received food supplies, wherever they were stationed while witnessing dreadful scenes of starvation among the peasant population. Although official figures put the Red Army at 562,000 men, in reality it is over 1,000,000 strong. It consists of regular and territorial troops, the former being excellent, the latter of little military value. Military secrets are strongly guarded. Movements of troops are unknown to relatives of soldiers, who are compelled to address letters to the People's Commissariat for War, which forwards them."

Visti (the official Government organ of the Soviet Ukrainian Government whose publication has been removed with the change in the seat of Government from Kharkiv to Kiev), July 3rd, 1934, publishes a long official statement about the grain delivery. The article contains exhortations concerning the gathering of the crop and [*quarantining*?] it. It also points out that in certain collective farms the harvest is only one half of what it should be, and prohibits all further private trading in grain by individual farmers and Kolhosps and the buying of grain by Co-operative Associations in Ukraine until the delivery is completed.

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Famine Conditions in the Soviet Union
Notes by J.M.K. Vyvyan for a Reply to Lord Charnwood in the House of Lords, 25 July 1934

Parliamentary Question

The Lord Charnwood – To call attention to information circulated in this country upon apparently good authority according to which the systematic policy of the Russian Government has recently caused widespread starvation among the population of grain producing areas in Russia, and is likely to do so this year through the measures taken for the rapid introduction of collectivist cultivation and the enforcement of a law transferring property in the produce of agriculture to the State, and through the removal by the Government of grain for purposes of exportation, and for the supply of the Army, without regard to the needs of subsistence of the cultivators of the grain; To ask His Majesty's Government whether they have information which tends to confute this allegation against the Russian Government; and to move for Papers.

17 July 1934

I understand from an informant, Mr. Muggeridge, whom Lord Charnwood is seeing next week in order to acquire further material for use in putting his motion, that the motion is the result of information supplied by Dr. Amende, a representative of the [*I*]nterdenominational Relief Association at Geneva, who is conducting an anti-Soviet campaign in this country.

The motion tends to put His Majesty's Government in the position of either defending the internal policy of the Soviet Government, which we have no reasons for doing, or making unfavourable statements about conditions in the Soviet Union which are also open to objection, however richly they are deserved. It therefore seems desirable, in replying to Lord Charnwood to indicate, if possible, that it is not His Majesty's Govern-

ment's business to comment on the internal affairs of another country, and that the information at their disposal is not accumulated for this purpose, so that there are no papers suitable for laying. (Sir W. Smithers was informed in reply to a question in the House of Commons on July 2 that there was no suitable information on similar points.)

It is of course possible to criticise Lord Charnwood's judgments of cause and effect in Soviet policy and conditions, but it may be felt that to do so would be gratuitously making out a case for the Soviet Government, and it seems preferable to deal with the facts behind Lord Charnwood's arguments as little as possible. The measures and laws to which he refers are not very well chosen, e.g. the "rapid introduction of collectivist cultivation" is now an event of three to four years ago, and by the "law transferring the produce of agriculture to the State," he seems to be referring to a law of August, 1932, making collective farm property count as State property and to various other legislation emphasising the State's interest both in the production and disposal of agricultural produce which have no direct bearing on the creation of famine. Nevertheless it is true that (1) the policy of the Soviet Government has for some time past had a deplorable effect on conditions in the agricultural part of the Soviet Union by dislocating the former system of production and (2) grain has been collected for export from the Soviet Union when starvation existed in grain producing areas, and there seems no reason for implying a denial of these facts.

I submit a list of points that might be used in dealing with Lord Charnwood's motion.

M. Vyvyan
6/7

Mr. Vyvyan's notes should prove useful for dealing with specific points in Lord Charnwood's speech.

The main facts, however, cannot be disputed – that there has been general, and forcible, "collectivisation," and that there is now a condition of acute distress, amounting practically to famine in many cases, in the chief grain-growing regions of the Soviet Union. Lord Charnwood can judge for himself whether these two facts are cause and effect.

L. Collier
July 6th

I certainly think that we sd. walk delicately – especially at the present moment after M. Maiski's talk with Sir R. Vansittart etc. I agree in the notes.

L. O.
7 July

The moment wd. be ill-chosen for giving offence in Russia. But in no case wd. it do for HMG to appear to palliate Soviet policy and its disastrous consequences in this respect. The least said the soonest mended; but what is said must be in accordance with the facts. Mr. Vyvyan's notes appear to provide as good material as is possible in these delicate circumstances.
R July 8

I hope that Lord S will avoid anything which palliates without real justification. I agree that the passage noted by Sir R. Vansittart should not be used; my inference is that the dictators of Moscow *have* starved the country districts for ulterior purposes. There are passages in *Moscow in Winter* – apparently a sober account & well worth reading – which imply this.[102] Lord Charnwood will presumably base his case partly on this book. I like the reply that we have no independent information to contradict such allegations.
[*illeg.*] July 16

Note of points for use in reply to Lord Charnwood

1. It is not His Majesty's Government's business to enter into controversy on the subject of the internal affairs of foreign countries; their information is not collected for this purpose and there are, therefore, no papers suitable for laying which bear on Lord Charnwood's arguments on the subject of living conditions and food supplies in the Soviet Union.

2. His Majesty's Government are familiar with the information published about food supplies and conditions in the agricultural districts of the Soviet Union which have doubtless given rise to Lord Charnwood's question. As regards matters of fact, His Majesty's Government have no material for contradicting this information except what has been published through Soviet official sources which is generally available and upon which people can form their own opinions.

3. If it is unavoidable to enter into the substance of Lord Charnwood's allegations, it might be pointed out that apart from facts, Lord Charnwood has made judgments of cause and effect. His Majesty's Government have no reasons to defend Soviet economic policy, which, as a policy of control and planning, is presumably more responsible than any other Government's policy for conditions in the country in which it is practised, whatever people's judgment of those conditions may be. But there is no information to support Lord Charnwood's apparent suggestion that the Soviet Government have pursued a policy of deliberate

impoverishment of agricultural districts of their country, whether or not their policy is considered to have had that effect.*

4. The diversion of supplies from the countryside for whatever purpose naturally leaves less available for the producers, but His Majesty's Government have no information to bear out the argument of Lord Charnwood in which he emphasised the effect of particular measures in this respect.

i. The period of especially rapid collectivisation to which Lord Charnwood refers was some three or four years ago. If it is considered that collectivisation was responsible for the conditions which Lord Charnwood deplores, it would be rather the continued system of collectivisation (which His Majesty's Government have no cause to defend) than the process, which would cause impoverishment at present.

ii. As regards various legislation increasing State control of the production and distribution of agricultural produce, (not merely one law is involved), no recent legislation appears to be responsible for any change of policy or practice in this respect which could affect the situation in the present year.

iii. As regards diversion of grain from the producer in the specific directions mentioned by Lord Charnwood, the Soviet army is a large one and naturally has vast requirements. There is no information, however, to show that requirements are particularly great this year and will have a correspondingly more serious effect on the amount of grain available for agricultural districts.

iv. As regards grain exports, shipments during the present quarter of this year showed a slight increase over those of 1933, but were far less than in corresponding quarters of 1932 and 1931. Grain shipments have, in general, declined during the last two years[....]

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*A line was drawn in the margin beside this sentence and two notes were made: "This had better not be said. R."
"I fear there is reason to believe that, when they found there was a shortage, they deliberately reduced the population in the country districts & otherwise starved them to feed the towns (see N.2988/127/38).[10] L. C. July 6th."

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Famine in Soviet Union

The Duchess of Atholl to Sir John Simon, 25 August 1934, and Sir John Simon to the Duchess of Atholl, 8 September 1934

Dear Sir John, 25th August 1934

During the last three or four months I have been getting, from some well informed quarters, some particulars in regard to the famine last year in Russia, and of conditions pointing to the probability of an equally terrible famine – if not, indeed, a more terrible one – this coming autumn and winter. I and other friends, however, who are deeply concerned about this, have said nothing publicly, as we knew that leaders of the Churches were enquiring into the matter, and we felt that any move on the subject had better come from them. They have now made statements on the subject, as you know, – the Archbishop of Canterbury on the 25th July, in the House of Lords, and the leaders of the Free Churches, early in August, in a letter to the *Times*, but there does not appear to be any indication of their taking further steps.[104]

I, therefore, write to ask if it would be possible to make our consent to Russia's entry into the League conditional on the Soviet Government taking steps to mitigate the famine:

a. by keeping their food stuffs at home, and

b. by allowing famine relief, if such can be organised by the Churches or other bodies in other countries.

No doubt you know that for a year past there has been an Interdenominational Committee in Vienna, presided over by the Cardinal, sending parcels of food to individuals, and that there are other Committees of the same kind in this country working on the same lines, but something is needed for the benefit of the unhappy people whose names and addresses are not known outside Russia, and it seems terrible that the representatives of a Government, to whose action this frightful mortality is directly due, should be allowed to take their place in the League of Nations without a word being said.

It seems to me that, though the Soviet Government of course attempts to deny the famine, it is possible that, if pressed, they might be more willing to admit it now than they would have been a year or two ago. Hitler's declared aim of securing expansion in Eastern Europe and Russia must have a much greater chance of success than it otherwise would, with Russian agriculture largely in ruins and Russian peasants dying by the million, and it seems to me that for this reason, the Soviet Government might be willing to allow help to be sent.

As a matter of fact, the *Times* Riga correspondent, on August 4th or 6th, commented on the fact that, contrary to practice, the Soviet Government had admitted drought in several of the grain-growing areas at the end of May.[105]

No doubt the Foreign Office must have much information about the condition of agriculture, but in case it has not seen some notes recently made by a German agricultural expert, until the spring of this year in charge of a great agricultural concession in the North Caucasus, I venture to send them to you.[106]

The final paragraph in the Notes gives me, more than anything else I have read, an idea of how serious, from the political point of view as well as the humanitarian, the situation appears to be.

May these notes be returned and the name kept strictly private? It is my only copy. The questions were put by a committee of Quakers.
Yours sincerely
Katharine Atholl

Minutes

The Duchess of Atholl has already sent us Dr. Dittloff's notes (see N 3931/3789/38 Flag B),[107] which are not of conspicuous interest.

The suggestions in paragraph 3 of the Duchess's letter that the Soviet Government may now be more willing admit the existence of famine conditions and tolerate systematic relief work appear somewhat illogical and, in any case, there is of course no question of attaching conditions in favour of such toleration to Soviet candidature for the League or to our support of Soviet candidature.

We might reply regretting that the Duchess has such unfavourable accounts of the prospects of the agricultural population in the Soviet Union during the present year, but pointing out that we have no information to show that the Soviet Government are any more likely than before to provide facilities for comprehensive, organized relief work. It can be added that, as regards Soviet candidature for the League, our attitude is governed by the belief that the League would be strengthened

by the accession of the Soviet Union and so forth, but that it is to be feared that any attempt to attach conditions to Soviet membership, even if it were technically feasible, would merely result in the Soviet Government's abandonment of their candidature and the consequent sacrifice of the international objects which we believe that it will further, without any corresponding advantage accruing.
M. Vyvyan
31st August, 1934

Draft

The Duchess of Atholl
Blair Castle
Blair Atholl
(For the Secretary of State's signature)
Private

Dear Duchess, 8th September, 1934

Very many thanks for your letter of the 25th of August under cover of which you sent me the enclosed notes by Dr. Dietloff on agricultural conditions in the Soviet Union. As a matter of fact you had already been so kind as to send me a copy of these notes in your letter of July 2nd.

I regret to learn from your letter that you have received such unfavourable accounts of the prospects of the agricultural population in the Soviet Union during the present year. But whatever turn conditions may take my information does not, I am afraid, confirm the view, which you express in your letter, that the Soviet Government are any more disposed to provide facilities for comprehensive and organised relief work than they have been hitherto.

You suggest in your letter that it might be possible to use the occasion of the Soviet Union's probable candidature for membership of the League of Nations to persuade the Soviet Government to relax their objections to the organisation of relief. I fear, however, that it is not possible to relate the question of Soviet candidature for the League with any questions of internal Soviet policy. There is little doubt that any attempt to attach conditions to Soviet membership of the League of Nations, even if it were technically possible, would result in the abandonment by the Soviet Government of their candidature and the consequent sacrifice of the international objects which we believe that Soviet membership would serve, without any advantage being secured.
Yours very sincerely
(Sd) John Simon

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Famine in Soviet Union
Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 8 September 1934

Sir, Moscow, 8th September, 1934

With reference to your despatches No. 356 of the 29th May and No. 309 of the 28th June (N 3415/127/38) I venture to say, in the first place, that I do not consider that the amount of food sent out to Russia by the "Russian Assistance Fund" can possibly succeed in materially alleviating the conditions of famine where they really exist.

2. It is difficult to gauge to what extent the genuine humanitarian feelings of the charitable have been influenced by the anti-Soviet aims of the propagandists, and although I realise that individuals are at liberty to do what they like with their money I am in favour of discouraging any diversion of British charity into Russian channels.

3. In the past six months the U.S.S.R. has exported 472,068 tons of grain, 123,000 tons of which went to the United Kingdom, which in addition has taken large quantities of butter, eggs, poultry, bacon and fish.

4. There may be an impression that Russia is short of grain because some shiploads from Canada and the Argentine went to Vladivostok. That, however, was merely a transport-saving arrangement and amounted to only some 10,000 tons or so. As regards this year's harvest, while there may be one or two bad spots, general report says that the harvest will not be a bad one on the whole.

5. I am not confident that all the food parcels reach their destination, and even though it is possible that the Soviet Government may put up with the scheme on account of their need of foreign exchange it is also possible that they may regard it as an insult to their powers of organisation and distribution. I am tempted to ask what the organisers of the Charity Fund would say if the U.S.S.R. returned the compliment by sending parcels of food for "the starving poor" in England?

I have, &c.
Chilston

Minutes

I think the general view that no encouragement should be given to organised relief work or the sending of relief parcels or funds to the Soviet Union is sound, but no such encouragement has been contemplated. As is pointed out in the last para. of this despatch, the Soviet Govt. can always return the insult – and it is more of an insult than a serious alleviation of distress.

I do not however see that the scale of Soviet exports affect the question, & I do not believe the continual yearly reports that the "harvest will be a fair one." What does one mean by a fair harvest? It is immaterial whether a certain amount of fields are well cropped if all the population, or a good part of it, go hungry.
M. Vyvyan
15/9

This is an odd despatch. Does Lord Chilston really think that there is now no famine, or no prospect of famine, in the Soviet Union, because grain is being exported?

Certainly, we have no illusions here about relief schemes for Russia; but what was interesting in the visits of Dr. Amende, etc., was not their relief schemes but their information on conditions in the Ukraine, etc. Lord Chilston, however, makes no comment on that – presumably because he has no means of checking it.
L. C.
Sept. 15th.

77

Conditions in U.S.S.R.
Noel Charles (Moscow) to J. M. K. Vyvyan, 11 September 1934, Forwarding Notes by L. E. Hubbard on a Conversation with Walter Duranty

Confidential

Dear Michal, Moscow, 11th September, 1934

I enclose extracts from notes made by L. E. Hubbard, who has been out here on behalf of the Bank of England enquiring into the Soviet banking system. The notes are of certain interest and may appear later on in the *Slavonic Review* but all the same please do not pass on any of the information as Hubbard got into serious trouble with his chiefs four years ago (see Seymour's letter to Strang of 28th November and Strang's reply of the 9th December 1930) when his opinions appeared in the F.O. print and got back to the Bank. H. does not know that the notes have been copied and it would be unpleasant if by any chance there should be a repetition of the previous Geschichte.

It is quite pleasant to be back home again. Everything is just the same so there is nothing to tell you about.

Yours
Noel Charles

Enclosure in No. 77

[....]

Sept. 1. Yesterday evening dined at Hotel National with Carson, Walter Duranty and Grey. Duranty very amusing and interesting. Described his interview with Stalin on Christmas Day, 1933.[108] He had asked for an interview to get a message to the American people on the occasion of recognition. He was rung up at an evening party about 6 o'clock and told Stalin would see him at 7. More or less successfully recovering sobriety he repaired to the Kremlin. Stalin did not want to give a definite message as Kalinin had already done that, but was inclined to talk on

general subjects. The interview was not prepared but quite spontaneous [....]

The harvest this year will be about 70 million tons, *about the same as 1931*.* He [*Duranty*] admitted that the enormous estimate last year was false because allowance was not made for losses. The exact net harvest he did not give. The death rate from starvation and disease during the past 3 years has been very heavy and he is sure the total population is less than it was 3 years ago. The incidence of disease, especially typhus, is a very good indication of general conditions and this year disease is much less than last year [....]

Duranty is rather persona grata at the Kremlin, which is another way of saying that he has been more favourable to Russia than most of the foreign correspondents. Possibly he originally tried to see the best side in order to facilitate his work and has gradually trained himself to make the best case automatically.† While perhaps he foresees a more rapid development than the average foreign observer can believe in he has often proved right.

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*The italicized words were underlined and a note was written in the margin: "No one knows what it was in 1931. [*Five illeg. words.*]"

†Note in margin: "I think he is a conscious humbug & always was."

78

Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 31 December 1934

Sir, Moscow, December 31, 1934

In correspondence ending with my despatch No. 691 of the 18th December, 1933,[109] I reported to you on the efforts which the central authorities had been making in the Ukraine to clear up and eradicate hostile elements there. The Ukraine has nevertheless continued to cause uneasiness in Moscow. The Ukrainian mentality – as protagonists of interventionist plans have realised – has not taken altogether kindly to Marxist doctrines, and the country has continually afforded cover for "remnants of kulakdom," "local nationalists," "opportunists," and other variations of that amorphous group which Communist jargon labels as the "class enemy."

2. As instance of "individual opportunism' may be cited the recent financial scandals in the Kharkov Knitted Goods Trust and in the Ukraine branch organisation of the State Bank, which have been reported in recent despatches. In a further case, the details of which are as yet unknown to me, the Collegium of the Commissariat of Finance was involved. A "central fund" was, it appears, formed within the Commissariat and utilised for purposes which were not over-carefully scrutinised; as a result some 3 million roubles were appropriated for private purposes and two high officials of the Commissariat are being held for trial.

3. These cases were concerned simply with theft and were in no sense political crimes: though it is significant that party committees were also involved. But at the same time there has been evidence that counter-revolutionary activity continues to be a source of anxiety to the central authorities. Last October M. Postyshev, the secretary of the Communist party of the Ukraine and M. Stalin's staunchest supporter there, issued the warning, at a meeting of the Kiev Executive Committee, that though there was no longer any question of the hostile elements in the Ukraine pursuing any effective, concrete struggle against the party line, as their influence on the broad toiling masses was now insignificant, yet there

remained some who might continue to stir up trouble. Recently, more concrete evidence of counter-revolutionary activity has been produced, this time at Dniepropetrovsk. The Central Committee of the party in the Ukraine has established that "the Dniepropetrovsk Party Committee, and especially its secretary, Levitin, notwithstanding continual warnings that the Dniepropetrovsk University was becoming fouled by nationalist and Trotskist elements, not only failed to take the necessary measures for their eradication, but even ... openly defended these elements." The Central Committee has therefore had to take action, and has dismissed the leaders of the town soviet and of the local party committee. The *Pravda* states, in a leading article, that the carelessness and indifference of the local organisations has enabled "enemies of the party, opportunists and local nationalists" to adopt new methods in the fight against the régime. To gain further power, they joined forces with the Trotskists in carrying on their destructive work. This consisted particularly in influencing students, and went so far that "sermons on nationalism" were held in the university's lecture theatres. The Trotskists, "who admittedly have otherwise no connexion with Ukrainian nationalism," were, in this case, prepared to afford support as the work was directed against the party and the Government. This state of affairs could only have arisen, states the *Pravda*, because "true Bolshevik watchfulness" in the responsible party organisations had completely died down.

4. The rest of the *Pravda* article, however, seeks to allay any great uneasiness that might be caused by these revelations. The Nationalists and Trotskists form, it reassures us, no more than small groups, the remains of the disrupted Opposition, which can now only carry on its work in odd corners. This statement is probably true. In fact, it is possibly only the call for "increased revolutionary watchfulness" evoked by the murder of M. Kirov that has led to the discovery of this latest instance of anti-Soviet activity. The control of the G.P.U., party and Government is too thorough for any serious opposition to develop. In the Ukraine, as, and perhaps more than, in other parts of the Union, there is considerable hostility to the régime. There are Autonomists and Nationalists, there is religious feeling, and there is a large class of industrious opeasants, all of whom have no reason to love the Soviet's system. There is also, to judge by the financial scandals, a considerable class of those enterprising individualists which Mr. Wells calls the "smart Alec" type. But it is probably only the Marxist habit of broad, simplified and inaccurate classification that could detect an element of identity in these groups, or could impute political significance to mere general discontent.
I have, &c.
Chilston

79

Famine in Soviet Union

J. H. Rushbrooke, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, to Sir John Simon, 6 February 1935, and Sir John Simon to Lord Chilston, 14 February 1935

Private

Dear Sir John, 6th February 1935

An informal meeting was held yesterday at the Memorial Hall under my own chairmanship as president of the Free Church Council. The purpose was to hear a statement from Dr. Ammende, who represents the Inter-Confessional Committee of Vienna, whose Chairman is Cardinal Innitzer, regarding the situation in Russia. You will probably have seen in yesterday's *Times* a document which that Organisation and two others, one representing the Continental Protestants and the other the Jews, have drawn up.[110]

Dr. Ammende's statements as to the present position in Russia left a very serious impression upon all our minds, but we could arrive at no clear judgment as to possibilities of action. It was finally decided that we should ask you if possible to grant an interview to a group including representatives of the Roman Catholics, the Society of Friends, the Jewish Organisation, the Free Church Council, Canon Douglas, the Rev. A. C. Don (who was present as representing the Archbishop of Canterbury) and Lord Dickinson, and that I as Chairman of the informal meeting should approach you as to time and place, provided you would be willing to meet the group.

It was emphasised that such a conversation should be *entirely private, and that no communication of any sort should be made to the press*. The purpose would not be to make any proposals to you, but to express our concern and to ask your counsel if you are able to give it.

Unfortunately public engagements on behalf of the National Free Church Council compel me to go North today, and I cannot be back until mid-day on Friday, but if it is possible for you in your extremely busy

life to spare me five minutes after mid-day on Friday to explain the suggestion, I should be extremely indebted to you. I would keep an appointment anywhere that you might name on Friday or Saturday, but I should be deeply indebted to you if before the end of the week it is possible thus to meet you.

Forgive please the brevity of this letter (dictated as I am hurrying to catch my train for the North).

Yours very faithfully,

[*sgd.*] J. H. Rushbrooke

My dear Chilston, 14th February, 1935

I had an interview to-day with the Reverend Doctor Rushbrooke, who is the leading Minister of the Baptist Denomination and a man of wide sympathies and practical mind. He is this year President of the National Free Church Council and is concerned with many people of different sorts here and abroad in all kinds of good work. He came because he had been receiving very disturbing information about the spread of famine actual and prospective in South Russia. I gathered that one principal source of his information is Doctor Amende, of whom you will have heard. He took an extremely sensible line about his information, saying that he realised that it was difficult to contend that it established the grave facts alleged and further admitting that it was difficult to see what could be done. I told him that we had not received from you reports which would confirm in their full gravity his fears, but that I gathered that the harvest of '34 was worse than '33 and that those who were most suffering were probably the individual farmers, who had not gone into the collective farms and upon whom indirect pressure was thus being exercised. All this he thoroughly understood, observing however, that these people, although perhaps only 20% of the whole, were none the less a great number and that they tended to be people who were holding out partly because of their religious feelings.

I dissuaded him from bringing a deputation to see me on the ground, which he readily accepted, that there was nothing more which the deputation could say to me or I to the deputation than what had already passed between us. But I told him that I would write a private letter asking you if you had more information which you could give.

Doctor Rushbrooke thoroughly understands that in any case there would be great difficulty in doing anything effective. Even if money could be collected from the charitable, it would not go far. And moreover, the Soviet Government, I imagine, would be very unlikely to facil-

itate such relief and more likely to regard the offer of it as an unwarranted impertinence.
(sd.) John Simon

Minutes

We were ourselves rather surprised to see the *Times* report (copy attached) about a possible famine in Russia, to which Dr. Rushbrooke alludes. The White Russian Press has, it is true, recently published reports, in some cases alleged to have come from eye-witnesses, of famine conditions in the Ukraine and the Caucasus. Nothing that we have received from the Embassy at Moscow, however, suggests that there is likely to be a famine this year. Indeed, as is shown below, the authorities seem to be taking steps to prevent a repetition of last year's disaster.

The 1934 harvest is admitted by the Soviet authorities to have been less good than that of 1933, largely on account of the drought in the Spring in the southern grain-growing areas. Nevertheless Lord Chilston reports that it was on the whole satisfactory, and it appears that the effects of the drought were to a large extent overcome by the increased efficiency with which the grain quotas were collected. By the end of the year, all districts had fulfilled their quotas, and there is no doubt that, in the towns at least, supplies will be more abundant than they have been for many years. The abolition of bread rationing is in itself evidence of an improvement in the general situation.

There is probably some truth in the reports of grain shortage in the southern districts. As a result of the drought the quotas for many districts in the Ukraine, the Crimea and the Caucasus had to be reduced; but the fact that special grain loans have had to be made from the State reserves to the collective farms in those districts for seed, consumption and fodder purposes shows that they must have been fairly well cleared out after the quotas had been collected.

At the same time the Soviet authorities seem to be taking care that the collective farmers, even in the worst affected districts, shall not be reduced to desperate straits. Some 1,100,000 tons of grain have been distributed among them in the form of loans, and in addition to the grain loans several measures have been passed in the last few weeks relieving them of their debt burdens and decreasing their taxation. This care for the peasants is a new departure, and it would be well to emphasize it in any conversation with Dr. Rushbrooke.

No such relief, however, has been given to individual farmers, who indeed, have recently had to suffer further increases of taxation. The authorities are doing their best to drive them into the collective farms,

and according to Soviet statistics, by the end of 1934 they only constituted 20% of the peasant population. It is thus probable that in the districts affected by the drought this comparatively small minority is faced with serious food shortage, in which case the authorities would be unlikely to do much to assist them.

As regards the activities of Dr. Amende, to whom Dr. Rushbrooke refers in his letter, please see the account of his visit to Mr. Collier in N.2988/127/38, of 1934 (attached).[1] As will be seen from N.3308/127/38, Dr. Rushbrooke himself also came to see Mr. Collier last year to discuss the famine situation.

R. L. Speaight
7th February 1935

I agree. I don't think we can say that we have evidence of a danger of famine this year, such as there was last year.

L. Collier
February 8th

Seen by the S[*ecretary*] of S[*tate*].

The Secretary of State decided to see Dr. Rushbrooke alone; and the attached copy of a letter from him to Lord Chilston gives the result of the interview.

L. C.
Feb. 15th.

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Famine in Soviet Union
Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, 20 February 1935, and Sir John Simon to J. H. Rushbrooke, 8 March 1935

Dear Sir John, Moscow, 20th February, 1935

Thank you for your letter of the 14th telling me of Dr. Rushbrooke's interview with you.

I had recently read in the Press, notably in the *Times* of the 5th February, that certain Relief Organisations had stated their conviction that a considerable part of the population of Russia was again in imminent danger of famine.

Although certainty is impossible and it is most difficult to obtain correct impressions, I think it most improbable that a famine on the scale of 1933, or anything like it, is to be expected. The 1934 harvest was probably about the same as that of 1933; and grain exports were 16% less than in 1933, in which year they were small enough.

Harvests in the whole of this country always were "patchy" and last year's may also have been so. But distribution is now better than it was.

As to the reaction of the Soviet Government to any relief, I am still of the opinion expressed in my despatch of the 8th September last,[112] that they might regard any offer as an insult to their internal organisation. They certainly, in any case, would not facilitate relief. I think the very offensive article on Cardinal Innitzer in the *Journal de Moscou*, which I venture to attach,[113] shows clearly enough the reception which any proposal of relief is likely to have.

Yours sincerely
Chilston

Draft

The Revd. J. H. Rushbrooke
Baptist World Alliance
4, Southampton Row, W.C. 1

Confidential

Dear Dr. Rushbrooke, 8th March, 1935

You will recollect that I told you at our interview on February 14th that I would write privately to Lord Chilston asking him if he had any more information about the possibility of famine recurring in Russia.

I have now received from Lord Chilston a letter in which he expresses the opinion that, although certainty is impossible and it is most difficult to obtain correct impressions, it is most improbable that a famine on the scale of 1933 or anything like it is to be expected. The 1934 harvest was probably about the same as that of 1933; and grain exports were 16% less than in 1933, in which year they were small enough. Harvests in the whole of Russia, he adds, always were "patchy" and last year's may also have been so; but distribution is now better than it was.

As to the reaction of the Soviet Government to any relief, Lord Chilston still holds the view that they might regard any offer as an insult to their internal organisation, and that they certainly would not facilitate relief in any case.

[*sgd.*] John Simon

Minutes

I cannot help feeling that Lord Chilston is perhaps a little over-optimistic.* The main point, however, is that the Soviet Govt. are no longer deliberately allowing peasants to starve (in order to force them into collective farms) as there is little doubt that they did in 1933. Since I wrote my minutes in N 777/777/38[114] we have had a despatch from Moscow showing that even the individual farmers are now being induced to collectivize themselves by kindness rather than by brutality.

R. L. Speaight

5/3

"Famine" is a relative term; but this confirms our view that there is not likely to be a famine, by Soviet standards, this year.

L. C.

March 5th.

This is very much on the lines of what the Sec. of State has already told Dr. Rushbrooke: but we must send him a further conf[*identia*]l letter giving some inf[*ormatio*]n from L[*or*]d Chilston's letter.

M. V. Mar 6

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*Note at bottom of page: "I agree. L. C. March 5th."

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Famine Relief in Soviet Union
J. H. Rushbrooke to Sir John Simon, 9 and 11 March 1935

Dear Sir John, 9th March 1935

The Conference of members of Relief and other Societies met on Thursday of this week.

I informed them of my informal talk with you and of your feeling that nothing would be gained by receiving a deputation. The position was fully understood, and the hope was expressed that some definite information as to the situation in Russia might ere long be forthcoming.

Those present expressed however a desire that in view of the possibility of a visit by a British Minister to Moscow in the immediate future, I should send you information regarding the difficulties experienced by those who are undertaking relief work for Russia. I strongly deprecated putting forward definite requests, seeing that the visit would have a special purpose and only confusion could result from the introduction of other topics than the subjects of conversation planned in advance. The Conference accepted my view, but very emphatically asked that I should inform you of the particular difficulties and needs that are encountered, and should add the suggestion that if no more could be done, Mr. Eden might perhaps be able to speak with the British Ambassador in Moscow.

Please therefore regard me as in this instance merely the reporter of certain points which others have formulated. The points are:-

1. That customs ought to be abolished or reduced on parcels of special food and medicaments sent from abroad to children, the sick, and persons over 55 years of age. These goods, it is stated, are not satisfactorily obtainable from Torgsin shops, even in large towns.

2. That persons detained in prisons, labour camps, in exile, and otherwise suffering legal disability, should be allowed to receive parcels, money or clothing, and to give receipts for same.

3. That entry should be allowed duty free for warm clothing and blankets to the same classes referred to in "1" and "2."

4. That the persons in any of these classes should be allowed to leave Russia if their relatives or friends abroad are willing and able to take charge of them, and that the permit to leave should not cost more than £25 beyond the expense of travel.

5. That a reception of a parcel or cheque should not be looked upon as a counter-revolutionary act, the more so as the recipient has often not asked for it and has with difficulty been traced. It is known that arrest has followed the receipt of a foreign parcel.

The groups represented were the Society of Friends, the Catholic Relief Committee for Russia, the Federation of Jewish Religious Organisations, the "Save the Children" Fund, and the Russian Assistance Fund. I was in the Chair as President of the National Free Church Council, but it is right again to emphasise the fact that I definitely stated, in consenting to report to you the views of those present, that nothing should be put to you in the form of a request for action, but merely as information respecting the feelings and desires of those actively seeking to help Russians in need.

I am,
Yours very sincerely,
[*sgd.*] J. H. Rushbrooke

Personal

Dear Sir John, 11th March 1935

Already a letter has been sent to you from the Memorial Hall in which I give a number of points which the representatives of those engaged in relief work for Russia desired should be known to you.

I have now to thank you warmly for your letter of the 8th marked "Confidential," in which the views of Lord Chilston are expressed. You do not say whether he makes any comment on the conditions of the country people outside the Collectives; probably, since you mention the difficulty of obtaining correct impressions, one could not expect him to be closely informed about this. I am sorry to read that the Soviet Government could not in any case facilitate relief. Apparently those who are already helping are in dread that the continuance of the work may at any moment be made impossible.

With every good wish,
Yours very sincerely
[*sgd.*] J. H. Rushbrooke

Minutes

Dr. Rushbrooke called on me yesterday with reference to his letter of March 9th within, which I had not seen then, as the papers had been

called for by the Private Secretary on receipt of Dr. Rushbrooke's further letter of March 11th (now also attached within).

Dr. Rushbrooke told me that the Societies represented at the conference referred to in this letter – particularly the Roman Catholic group – were very anxious to have a reply to it before Mr. Eden left for Berlin and Moscow, and that as he thought it quite likely that the Secretary of State would not be able to deal with it soon in present circumstances, he had come to ask me what he could tell them verbally as to the probable nature of the eventual reply.

I told Mr. Rushbrooke that, as he would be aware, the primary object of Mr. Eden's visit was to discuss the problem of European security. It was now possible that, in view of recent developments, the discussions might deal more with Anglo-Soviet relations in general; but this question was not even one of Anglo-Soviet relations, but one of Soviet internal administration, and I very much doubted whether it would be thought suitable for mentioning on such an occasion. (If I had then been aware of the contents of the letter I would have expressed even graver doubt.) The utmost that could be done, I thought, would be to let Mr. Eden take the papers with him and give him discretion to bring the matter up if circumstances were favourable, and after consultation with Lord Chilston; but he would realise that even a reply in such terms would probably mean very little in practice.

Dr. Rushbrooke assured me that he quite realised the position and had expected some such answer as that which I had given him. He was only anxious to be able to keep the Relief Societies quiet and not to have to confront them with a complete negative.

L. Collier
20th March 1935

I agree.
L.O. 20 March

A copy of this has been taken & will be shown to Mr. Eden in the train.
R. M. A. Hankey
March 21st

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Famine in Soviet Union
Sir Waldron Smithers to the War Office, 1 April 1935, and Foreign Office Reply to Enquiry from the War Office, 11 April 1935

House of Commons

Dear Lord Hailsham, April 1, 1935

I have been told that the War Office has certain information concerning the number of deaths in Russia in the famine of 1931-1932.

The number was given to me as 15,000,000.

I do not know to what extent this information is confidential and I do not want to ask "awkward" questions but I should be grateful if you could and would give me such information as you feel you can and if a question in the House would not be unwelcome is it asking your advisors too much to suggest the form it should take. I should like to have the information as to deaths from famine for all the years since the end of the War regime.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) Waldron Smithers

Dear Hoyer Millar, 4th April, 1935

I spoke to you about the letter (of which I enclose a copy) from Sir Waldron Smithers, asking for information about the number of deaths from famine in Russia. Is there anything which you would like us to embody in the reply to him?

Yours sincerely,
A. Rowlands

Draft

Mr. A. Rowlands
(War Office)
(For Mr. Hoyer Millar's signature)

Dear Rowlands, 11 April, 1935

Thank you for your letter of the 4th April enclosing a copy of an enquiry from Sir Waldron Smithers about deaths due to famine in the Soviet Union.

There are three points in his letter. In the first place Sir Waldron asks whether you have statistics, confidential or otherwise, of famine deaths in the Soviet Union from 1931-1932; the figure which has been mentioned to him as in your possession being 15,000,000. Secondly he suggests asking a Parliamentary Question on the subject. Thirdly he would like statistics of famine deaths in each year during the "war régime." By this he may mean since the revolution or since the civil war period which included the admitted famine of 1921-1922.

As regards Sir Waldron's first point, whether he is referring to the winter of 1931-1932 or to that winter as well as the next (the latter of which was most severe), the figure of 15,000,000 deaths which he has been given is greater than any we have seen among reasonably impartial estimates. For 1932-1933 they vary from 1,000,000 to 10,000,000, which shews how much they are worth. Beyond these estimates, which are generally accessible, we have no information; and this fact was indicated in Lord Stanhope's reply to a debate in the House of Lords on the 25th July of last year. I am afraid, however, that it is not much use referring to that reply because what was actually disclaimed on that occasion was the possession of information bearing on the contention that famine conditions were created by the Soviet Government.

In any case I presume that you will reply that the War Office do not, in fact, possess confidential statistics regarding deaths from famine in the Soviet Union as Sir Waldron has apparently been informed. We would suggest that you might then go on to say that His Majesty's Government are familiar with published accounts of conditions in the Soviet Union by various observers, some of which contain widely varying estimates of deaths as a result of famine, a case in point being the recent work by Mr. Chamberlin, *Russia's Iron Age*.[115] An explanation is added to Mr. Chamberlin's estimate, and, we believe, to certain other estimates, of the basis on which they were arrived at, so that readers are free to judge of their accuracy. It is obvious that no reliable estimates of deaths from under-nourishment in the Soviet Union or in any other country can be derived from any other source than the vital statistics issued by the Government concerned, since such estimates depend on a detailed and complex system of registration; and we are not aware that any published Soviet vital statistics contain a classification of deaths under this heading. I may add as a matter of fact, though I do not suggest that Sir W. Smithers should be told this, that we doubt whether the Soviet Govern-

ment themselves have accurate statistics in the matter; they doubtless have secret estimates and these may always reach outside sources but we are fairly confident that there is no systematic registration of deaths from starvation. The authorities responsible for compiling such statistics would be in a very difficult position.

As regards the second point in Sir Waldron Smithers' letter, I suggest that you should tell him, if you see no objection, that he will see from the foregoing that there is no information which would be helpful to him that could be given in reply to a Parliamentary Question if he decides to ask one. As regards the last sentence of his letter, he might perhaps be told that, if he likes, we will ascertain whether there is any record of Soviet vital statistics, including deaths from under-nourishment, or special statistics of the kind, having been issued during the admitted famine in the early years of the regime.

[*sgd.*] F. R. Hoyer Millar

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Famine Relief in the Soviet Union
Memorandum by Laurence Collier, 24 June 1935

Famine Relief in the Soviet Union

In 1933, the Soviet Government's policy of ruthless agricultural collectivisation created famine conditions in many parts of the Soviet Union, particularly in the Ukraine and the North Caucasus; and in the following year, when convincing evidence of these conditions had become known abroad and it was expected that similar conditions would prevail in the future, an organisation, known as the "Russian Assistance Fund," was formed in this country, with the support of a number of well-known people interested in humanitarian causes, for the purpose of collecting money to be used for the purchase of goods at the "Torgsin" shops (Soviet State shops where food-stuffs and other goods can be purchased for gold or foreign currency), for their distribution to destitute individuals. This system had been employed with success by the Quaker Relief Organisation, who had worked in the Soviet Union until expelled in 1932, and one of whose workers, a Mrs. Christie, is on the Committee of the Fund; and it is described as follows in the appeal, issued by the Fund:-"In many cases, a cheque on "Torgsin" is sent, which can be cashed in goods by the recipient at the "Torgsin" indicated. If they live at some distance from a large town, an order for a parcel of food-stuffs is sent by us to "Torgsin" in Moscow, whence it is despatched to any address in the U.S.S.R. We have found "Torgsin" accurate and expeditious in carrying on this business, and where persons have died or could not be traced, cheques and parcels have been returned to us without delay." It is, indeed, to the advantage of the Soviet Government to encourage this procedure, since they thereby acquire much-needed foreign currency.

2. At the same time the matter was taken up by other agencies abroad, in particular by the Inter-denominational Relief Committee presided over

by Cardinal Innitzer of Vienna, on whose behalf a certain Dr. Amende, an Estonian citizen of German-Baltic origin came to London with the double object of co-ordinating the relief work and of arousing public opinion in this country to the famine conditions which made it necessary, so that pressure could be exerted on the Soviet Government either to allow relief to be organised from other countries, or themselves to take measures to alleviate the conditions for which their agricultural policy was responsible. Dr. Amende succeeded in arousing the interest of several prominent people, such as the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duchess of Atholl, Sir Waldron Smithers, M.P., and Lord Charnwood, who drew attention to the matter in the House of Lords. He also had an interview at the Foreign Office, where he was told that His Majesty's Government would place no obstacles in the way of his humanitarian campaign, as he had apparently feared that they might do, but that, being in normal relations with the Soviet Government, they could not give it any official encouragement.

3. The agitation on behalf of the famine sufferers continued throughout 1934, although conditions in the Soviet Union appeared to have improved in the course of that year, and His Majesty's Ambassador in Moscow, who had been asked for his views on the subject, reported that there was then no definite evidence of the continuance of actual famine conditions, and deprecated any diversion of British charity into Russian channels; and in March last Dr. Rushbrook [*sic*], the General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, who had also been approached by Dr. Amende, wrote to the then Secretary of State on behalf of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, suggesting that the opportunity of Mr. Eden's visit to Moscow should be taken to raise with the Soviet Government the question of introducing certain improvements into the relief system, such as:-

1. "that customs duties should be abolished and reduced on parcels of special food and medicaments sent from abroad to children, the sick and persons over fifty-five years of age.

2. "that persons detained in prisons, labour camps, in exile and otherwise suffering legal disability should be allowed to receive parcels.

3. "that entry should be allowed duty free for warm clothing and blankets.

4. "that the persons in any of the categories mentioned above should be allowed to leave Russia if their relatives or friends abroad were willing and able to take charge of them, and that permit to leave should not cost more than twenty-five pounds."

Mr. Eden took Dr. Rushbrooke's letter with him to Moscow, but found it impossible to discuss the question there.

4. The question of famine relief has since become connected with that of religious persecution, since it is now certain that there is no general famine, the process of collectivisation having been practically completed by the absorption of most of the individual peasant proprietors into the collective farms and the elimination of the rest by starvation or deportation, so that those in need of relief are now chiefly individuals who have been exiled, disfranchised, or otherwise penalised on suspicion of "counter-revolutionary sympathies"; and these are mainly clergy or those connected with them. The churches have accordingly interested themselves in the question of relief for members of their respective faiths; and, on 6th June of this year, a conference, called by the National Free Church Council, and attended by representatives of other churches and of the Russian Relief Fund, resulted in the deputation to the Foreign Office, whose representations are recorded in N.2954/777/38.

5. The deputation furnished evidence of the arrest, imprisonment, and even execution of priests and other persons to whom parcels had been sent by relief organisations, and urged that the Secretary of State should intervene with the Soviet Government to endeavour to put a stop to this state of affairs; as, however, the recipients of the parcels are all Soviet citizens, the only conceivable *locus standi*, which His Majesty's Government might claim in such a matter, would be their interest as the Government of those who sent the parcels, in seeing the latter, being British subjects, were not deceived by the Soviet authorities, who had told them that they could safely and legally send parcels by the "Torgsin" procedure; and to representations on such lines the Soviet Government would probably reply, if at all, that the Soviet citizens concerned had been punished, not merely for receiving parcels, but for receiving them from particular people or organisations suspected of anti-Soviet activities. Mrs. Christie, indeed, stated, at the interview accorded to the deputation, that the Russian Relief Fund had not heard of cases of the persecution of their beneficiaries, probably because, unlike the denominational organisations, their money and orders on "Torgsin" were sent direct from this country, and nominally from a private individual in each case, whereas some of the other organisations worked through an agency at Geneva, with a German name, which had perhaps aroused Soviet suspicions. It is indeed likely enough that the Soviet Government have these suspicions, since they must be aware of Dr. Amende's activities, and must know that, as he himself has stated, he originally took up the question of relief because he was a member of the Union of Minorities at Geneva, which was interested in the German Minority in Russia.

It is therefore recommended that the deputation should be told that the Secretary of State, while fully sympathising with their position, could

not, in any case, consider representations to the Soviet Government until he had definite evidence that Soviet citizens had been punished for receiving parcels from this country and not because of their alleged connection with anti-Soviet individuals and organisations. It is not, of course, for His Majesty's Government to suggest how the relief organisations should conduct their work, but experienced relief workers, like Mrs. Christie, have already stated that the work needs reorganisation; and, in present circumstances, Soviet fear of Germany is naturally so strong that, so long as the relief organisations are open to any suspicion of German connections, representation on their behalf would not only be fruitless, but would probably even aggravate the existing situation, and perhaps cause the Soviet authorities to put an end to the whole system of relief through "Torgsin." A reply in the sense suggested would, therefore, be not merely a means of evading a difficult decision, but might lead to changes which would deprive the Soviet authorities of any excuse for action against the recipients of relief. If, for example, the denominational organisations were merged in the Russian Relief Fund, and the system of despatching parcels in the names of individuals were universally adopted, it would be difficult for the Soviet authorities to justify the persecution of any individual merely for receiving parcels from such a source; and if there were nevertheless evidence that they did so, representations could be considered with much greater technical justification and greater hope of success.

[*sgd.*] L. Collier
Foreign Office,
June 24th, 1935.

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Lord Chilston (Moscow) to Sir Samuel Hoare, 12 August 1935

Sir, Moscow, August 12, 1935

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copies of a report on agricultural conditions in Soviet Russia, sent to the counsellor of this Embassy by Mr. C. A. S. Hawker, a former Minister for Commerce in the Commonwealth of Australia, and an expert on agricultural problems.[116]

2. This report is of considerable length; but I venture to transmit it to you in full because it seems to me an extremely interesting and valuable account by an expert of one of the most important features of Soviet life. Mr. Hawker's conclusions as regards the organisation of Soviet farming, including such matters as grain deliveries and other charges, the working of the machine-tractor stations, local Soviet districts, and rates of pay, agree with the reports, mainly drawn from official sources, which I have had the honour to make to you from time to time. The most important passages of the report, to my mind, are those in which Mr. Hawker describes actual conditions and farming methods. There are two points to which I would draw particular attention.

3. The first is Mr. Hawker's discussion of the problem presented by the excess of weeds in the fields, a problem to which very frequent allusion is made in the Soviet press. Mr. Hawker's estimate of the extent of the problem, and the prospect of its solution, will be found on pages 26 and 27 of his report.

4. The second point of interest is Mr. Hawker's frequent allusions to ruined houses in the villages. I have never previously seen attention drawn to the subject, and those members of my staff who have recently travelled in the districts concerned did not notice anything like the numbers he mentions. But it must be borne in mind that Mr. Hawker did not make this observation until he had had an opportunity of seeing the country from the air, and that no member of my staff has recently availed

himself of this form of travel. Mr. Hawker's observations on this point must certainly be accepted as authentic. The existence of these deserted houses, and even deserted hamlets, is probably due in part to the famine of 1932-33 and the accompanying epidemics, which were at their worst in the districts in question. To what extent, in addition, peasants discontented with farming under the new conditions, have deserted the village for the town it would be impossible to say, but industry has certainly absorbed a certain percentage in recent years. The population of town and countryside is reported to have changed as follows: –

	1929	1933
Towns	27,630,200	39,739,200
Countryside	126,657,500	126,009,200

The numbers that have arrived in, departed from, and settled in towns are given as follows (the figures can, of course, only be approximate): –

Movement of Population to and from Towns

	Arrivals	Departures	Settlement
1929	6,958,000	5,566,000	1,392,000
1930	9,534,000	6,901,000	2,633,000
1931	10,810,000	6,710,000	4,100,000
1932	10,605,000	7,886,000	2,719,000
1933	7,416,000	6,644,000	772,000

These figures are instructive. They indicate a rush to the towns during the worst years of collectivisation, with a falling off in 1933, the year in which the laws governing this form of migration became stricter. Unfortunately, the figures for 1934 are not yet available.

5. As for the general conditions of the peasants, on which Mr. Hawker has some interesting observations to make, it must be borne in mind that Russian villages have always been ramshackle, and Russian peasants always looked the most miserable on earth. They are probably no worse off now than they were, and some of them are no doubt better, as Mr. Hawker indicates. Life in the "good old days" of the individual peasant was probably none too gay; he was, for example, usually heavily in debt to someone. It will be a long time before even a small proportion of the peasants are, as M. Stalin says they will become, "well-to-do." Comparison with conditions in Australia is, of course, out of the question: a

few years ago, 80 per cent. or more of the peasants were still illiterate. It is too early to judge what the final effect of collectivisation will be on the living conditions of the peasants; but it is difficult not to feel that it will ultimately be a good one.

6. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Department of Overseas Trade.

I have, &c.

Chilston

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Noel Charles (Moscow) to Sir Samuel Hoare, 22 October 1935

Sir, Moscow, October 22, 1935

On the 15th October an inconspicuous paragraph in the *Izvestiya* announced the result of the trial, at Kiev, of twenty-four counter-revolutionaries under the leadership of a man who had formerly served as an officer with Petliura. The leader and his lieutenant, also an ex-Petliurist officer, were sentenced to "the highest measure of social defence – shooting," while the remainder received sentences of imprisonment of between three and ten years, their property being confiscated. The accused persons, it was announced, had travelled about the Ukraine in the guise of itinerant musicians, inciting the workers in collective farms to destroy communal property and to refuse to work. Their principal tools were the older and "out-of-date" peasants, among whom rumours were spread "of the approaching collapse of the Soviet régime, of the end of the world, and so on." The counter-revolutionary band possessed a secret printing press and a library of counter-revolutionary literature.

2. To-day the Moscow newspapers announce the arrest of another so-called "counter-revolutionary" band, whose headquarters were situated in the railway station at Kharkov and whose activities are stated to have been directed towards the disorganisation of the railway services by methods which did not, apparently, include actual train-wrecking. The members of the gang are described as a mixed bag of "Trotskists, speculators, White Guards [*sic*], kulaks and ordinary criminal elements."

3. It is a comparatively rare occurrence nowadays for the Soviet press to announce the arrest of definite counter-revolutionaries, as opposed to persons whose politics do not altogether conform to the strict (and inconstant) standards of the Communist party. The military attaché to this Embassy, who recently visited South Russia to attend manoeuvres, a description of which is contained in another despatch, derived the general impression that all is not well in the Ukraine. It is, of course, cus-

tomary for all foreign representatives in this country to be segregated as far as possible, but the precautions taken on this occasion to preserve the military attachés from any contact with the population were particularly noticeable. At Zaporozhe people were warned off that part of the platform at which the attachés' special coach was drawn up. On Colonel Skaife entering the second-class waiting room in company with another attaché, he was followed by a policeman. A Russian who had been a prisoner of war in Japan at the time of the Russo-Japanese War spoke covertly to the Japanese attaché as they walked up and down somewhere in the station, but at the first opportunity an Ogpu agent sent him away. At Kharkov the attachés' carriage was guarded by no less than six Ogpu agents, three in uniform and three in "disguise." At Dniepropetrovsk a taxi-driver refused to take the attachés to see the river, saying that it would be no use to go there, since Red Army soldiers barred the only interesting part of it. What is even more significant, the air attaché noticed that food and clothing stores were guarded by civilians who sat outside them with rifles, there being as many as six of these people on guard on one side of the street. The general standard of clothing and bodily condition in Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk and Zaporozhe appeared to Colonel Skaife to be distinctly lower than it is in Moscow; and although, in the time at his disposal, the military attaché could naturally gain only a fleeting general impression, it is worth noting that members of this Embassy who visited Kiev early in the summer were, on the contrary, struck by the better standard of clothing and general appearance of the people as compared with Moscow. Kiev, it is true, is once again the capital of the Ukraine and visited by many foreigners; but busy industrial centres like Zaporozhe and Dniepropetrovsk are hardly less important as "show places," and are inhabited to a considerably greater extent than is Kiev by the type of proletarian worker who, under the present régime, is most favoured in material things.

I have, &c.

Noel Charles

Notes

1. Not printed.

2. Okhrana: the secret police department in tsarist Russia.

3. The words in boldface type here and on pp. 49, 55, 73, 74, 75 and 76 were deleted from the version of Cairns's report published by the Empire Marketing Board.

4. In the winter of 1929-1930 rumours spread that peasants of German origin would be permitted to emigrate to the New World, and about thirteen thousand Mennonites gathered near Moscow in makeshift camps and demanded their release. They were visited by Otto Auhagen, the agricultural attaché of the German embassy, who reported their plight and aroused the German public to support their desire to emigrate. He was then designated *persona non grata* and recalled to Berlin. After much pressure Moscow agreed to allow the German farmers to emigrate. The German cabinet voted funds for their care in transit and urged Canada to accept the emigrants. At this point Moscow became impatient to get rid of the German peasants and threatened to send them back to Siberia if they were not taken away. Some were actually shipped back, but the majority succeeded in going to Canada. After his expulsion from the Soviet Union Auhagen became director of the Ost-Europa Institut in Breslau. In June 1933 he interviewed German refugees from Ukraine who were being held at a refugee camp at Schneidemühl. An excerpt from his report appeared in a publication of Cardinal Innitzer's relief committee, *Hungersnot! Authentische Dokumente über das Massensterben in der Sowjetunion* (Vienna: Willy Jakoby, [1934?]).

5. Izvoshchik: cab-driver.

6. The article by Schiller on Soviet agriculture in 1931 was not found in the file. There is a copy in FO.371/16335 N 3569.

7. Document 2 in this collection. Sir Esmond may have made a slip of the pen when he referred to the letter as "my despatch" because it is signed by William Strang.

8. Sir Esmond probably had in mind an incident in the Drabiv district, which was then part of the Poltava region and is now within the Cherkasy region. In

early 1932 complaints about state expropriations in the district reached such catastrophic proportions that a government commission was sent in to conduct an enquiry. The commission concluded that local officials had "conspired with the kulaks," tolerated the rule of force and lawlessness and used criminals to terrorize and plunder the villages. Although the practices in the district were also common in other parts of the country, thirty officials were made into scapegoats and were sentenced after a public trial to two- and three-year terms. See Hryhory Kostiuk, *Stalinist Rule in the Ukraine: A Study of the Decade of Mass Terror (1929-39)* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1960), 13-15.

9. Not printed.

10. Document 8 in this collection.

11. Cairns was probably referring to a polemic between Katharine Atholl and E. F. Wise, economic advisor to the Soviet co-operative union Centrosoyuz, in the letters-to-the-editor columns of the *Economist*, which began on 23 January 1932 with the publication by the Duchess of a letter in which she argued that Britain's economic troubles were caused by cheap Soviet exports, particularly of agricultural products, timber and oil. Wise replied on 30 January that Soviet exports were too small to have a significant effect and that the "exchange disorganisation" in Britain had come about because North and South America had monopolized European markets but had failed to increase their purchases from Europe. Further letters from Wise and the Duchess were published on 6, 13, 20 and 27 February and 19 March 1932.

12. This is no doubt the Molochansk district, a German autonomous district then within the Dnipropetrovsk region and now incorporated into the Zaporizhia region.

13. Askaniia-Nova, a town in the Kherson region near which is located the Askaniia-Nova Nature Reserve.

14. Cairns probably saw Nikolai Ekk's *Putevka v zhizn* (*Road to Life*), which was released in June 1931 and which deals with the rehabilitation of a group of wild children who lost their families during the civil war and famine of 1921-1922.

15. Jerome Davis, a theologian at the Yale Divinity School and a fervent Soviet sympathizer, frequently organized seminars for the appreciation of the Soviet system and group tours of the Soviet Union. The delegation of American social scientists that he led in the summer of 1932 produced the reports in Jerome Davis, ed., *The New Russia: Between the First and Second Five Year Plans* (New York: John Day, 1933).

16. Document 5 in this collection.

17. Carlo Scarfoglio, "New Issues in Russia," *Times*, 5 August 1932: 11; 6 August 1932: 9-10.

18. The Russian word *pop* is the colloquial term for a priest.

19. Rispolkom is an acronym for the Russian phrase *raionnyi ispolnitelnyi komitet*, or district executive committee.

20. A group of British journalists visited the USSR as guests of the Soviet government in the summer of 1932. Among them were Hamilton Fyfe, representing

Reynolds Illustrated News, Jules Menken, editor of the *Economist*, Kingsley Martin, editor of the *New Statesman and Nation*, Emrys Hughes of *Forward*, Iverach McDonald of the *Yorkshire Post*, Hubert Griffith, H. W. Smith, foreign editor of the *News-Chronicle*, and Francis Yeats-Brown of the *Spectator*.

21. Many members of the group of journalists that visited the USSR in the summer of 1932 wrote about the critical food situation and the approaching famine. H. W. Smith reported in the *News-Chronicle* on 6 September 1932 that "the food queues are characteristic of the situation in the Russian cities and you cannot escape them. Sometimes they are long and they stretch down the pavement, sometimes no more than an irregular cluster round a bread store, but women and children pass many hours of the day in the dreary wait for food which, except for the bread ration, is often disappointing." According to an editorial note in the *New Statesman and Nation* on 17 September 1932, "the serious nature of the food situation has produced in many districts not efficiency, but chaos." Hubert Griffith stated in a speech (quoted in the *Manchester Guardian* on 19 October 1932) that "the rural population in the south are not getting enough food." F. Yeats-Brown observed in the *Spectator* on 8 October 1932 that "food is scarce and goods scarcer.... Practically the majority of our unemployed have more material comforts than these 'prosperous' Russian workers, and have more done for them by the State." And the *Economist* wrote on 8 October 1932 that "peasants are said to be complaining more and more openly. During August a decree was passed penalising theft of corn from the fields with death; and even during our short stay the decree was executed. Nevertheless, stealing continues, and one traveller returning from the relatively prosperous Crimea reported a grim encounter with hungry peasants, who were kept from molesting his party only because it was armed.... The coming winter will be hard and hungry." Similar reports appeared in *Reynolds Illustrated News* (4 September 1932), the *Yorkshire Post* (9 September 1932) and *Forward* (1 October 1932).

22. Not printed.

23. Document 15 in this collection.

24. Document 14 in this collection.

25. Maurice Hindus (1891-1969), an American correspondent born in Belorussia, made yearly visits to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s and published numerous books about his experiences, one of which was *Humanity Uprooted* (New York: Jonathan Cape and Harrison Smith, 1929).

26. Document 17 in this collection.

27. Jules Menken, the editor of the *Economist* and one of the British journalists who toured the USSR in the summer of 1932, gave an account of his trip in "Russian Impressions," *Economist*, 1, 8 and 15 October 1932.

28. Document 17 in this collection.

29. Duranty's series on "the serious food situation in Soviet Russia" was published in the *New York Times* as "All Russia Suffers Shortage of Food; Supplies Dwindling," 25 November 1932: 1, 9; "Food Shortage Laid to Soviet Peasants," 26 November 1932: 9; "Soviet Press Lays Shortages to Foes," 27 November 1932: 30; "Soviet Not Alarmed over Food Shortage," 28 November 1932: 6; "Soviet Industries Hurt Agriculture," 29 November 1932: 6; and "Bolsheviki United on Socialist Goal," 30 November 1932: 4. See also the *New York Times*

editorial comments "Soviet Food Scarcity," 26 November 1932: 14, and "Dangerous Planning," 27 November 1932: 1E.

30. Paul Scheffer was the Moscow correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* from 1921 until his expulsion in 1928. A collection of his Soviet reports was published as *Seven Years in Soviet Russia* (London: Putnam, 1931; New York: Macmillan, 1932).

31. Not printed.

32. Document 22 in this collection.

33. Document 22 in this collection.

34. A young Welshman who had studied Russian history under Sir Bernard Pares and served as an aide to Lloyd George, Gareth Jones went to the Soviet Union in early 1933 to investigate reports of the famine. Packing a knapsack with tinned food, he travelled by train from Moscow to Kharkiv and then set out on foot to explore the villages in the Kharkiv region. On his return from the Soviet Union, Jones announced his findings at a press conference in Berlin and a lecture at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. (See Reuter, "Famine in Russia. Englishman's Story. What He Saw on a Walking Tour," *Manchester Guardian*, 30 March 1933: 12.) Jones also wrote letters to editors to corroborate Malcolm Muggeridge's reports ("The Peasants in Russia. Exhausted Supplies," *Manchester Guardian*, 8 May 1933: 18) and to rebutt Walter Duranty's denials of the famine ("Mr. Jones Replies," *New York Times*, 13 May 1933: 12). Jones's most detailed accounts of the situation in Ukraine appeared in the *Daily Express* and the *New York American* ("'Bread, We Are Starving!' Is Cry Heard Throughout Russia, Finds Gareth Jones," *New York American*, 4 June 1933: L15; "Soviet Collective Farm Move Caused Famine in Russia, Says Gareth Jones," 11 June 1933: E5). Jones may have also visited the USSR in 1931. See his preface to the anonymous *Experiences in Russia – 1931: A Diary* (Pittsburgh: Alton Press, [1932]), which discusses food shortages in the Donbas and on collective farms near the Dniprelstan dam.

35. Document 24 in this collection.

36. Documents 24 and 26 in this collection.

37. Document 27 in this collection.

38. This probably a reference to Zlatopil, which was at that time a district centre in the Kiev region and is now incorporated into the town of Novomyrhorod in the Kirovohrad region.

39. Document 27 in this collection.

40. In August 1921, shortly after Maksim Gorkii appealed to the world to alleviate the famine that had broken out in Soviet Russia, the American Relief Administration, a private organization headed by Herbert Hoover, concluded an agreement with the Soviet government to provide aid to the stricken areas. Over the next twenty-two months the ARA supplied $66 million in relief supplies. The standard histories are H. H. Fisher, *The Famine in Soviet Russia, 1919-1923: The Operations of the American Relief Administration* (New York: Macmillan, 1927. Reprint. Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1971) and Benjamin M. Weissman, *Herbert Hoover and Famine Relief to Soviet Russia, 1921-1923* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, [1974]). For an account of the

ARA's activities in Ukraine and the Soviet government's manipulation of the famine to promote its political ends, see Roman Serbyn, "The Famine of 1921-1923: A Model for 1932-1933?" in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, eds., *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), 147-78.

41. Not printed.

42. Not printed.

43. Not printed.

44. Document 32 in this collection.

45. Document 33 in this collection.

46. Not printed.

47. According to minutes by T. A. Shone in FO.371/17251 N 6565, the report was written by Schiller himself. An edited version was published, under the pseudonym "Expert Observer," as "Famine's Return to Russia," *Daily Telegraph*, 25 August 1933: 10; "Russia's Starving Peasants," 28 August 1933: 8; and "Famine's Aftermath in Russia," 30 August 1933: 10.

48. Document 33 in this collection.

49. Mykola Khvylovyi (pen name of Mykola Fitilov, 1893-1933): Ukrainian writer who achieved fame with stories about the Revolution. A Communist by conviction, he satirized Soviet reality and advocated a cultural orientation towards Europe and away from Russia. This brought on a party campaign against him and his numerous followers. On 13 May 1933, shortly after one of his close associates was arrested and he himself had visited the famine-stricken countryside with an assignment to write about "socialist construction" in the villages, Khvylovyi committed suicide. Although many of his associates have been at least partly rehabilitated, Khvylovyi remains on the Soviet blacklist. See Mykola Khvylovy, *Stories from the Ukraine*, translated and with an introduction by George S. N. Luckyj (New York: Philosophical Library, 1960); and Mykola Khvylovy, *The Cultural Renaissance in Ukraine: Polemical Pamphlets, 1925-1926*, translated, edited and introduced by Myroslav Shkandrij (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986).

50. The Borotbists, who took their name from their party newspaper *Borotba* (Struggle), were Ukrainian Communists who stood on a platform of an independent Ukrainian state and a separate Ukrainian Communist party. Their opposition to the policies of the rival Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine, which was subordinated to the Russian Communist Party, led to the dissolution of the party by the Comintern on an order from Lenin in March 1920. Most of the Borotbists then joined the CP(B)U, in which they played an important part in the Ukrainization campaign of the 1920s. They became primary targets of the purges that began in 1933. In autumn 1935 four thousand of them were executed after being charged with attempting to organize a "counter-revolutionary all-Ukrainian Borotbist Centre." One of the leading Borotbists, Oleksander Shumskyi, served as Ukrainian commissar of education from 1924 to 1927. He frequently criticized the CP(B)U for moving too slowly towards full Ukrainization and for eroding the independence of the republic in financial matters. After heated debate within the party Shumskyi was declared a "deviationist" who had

concealed Khvylovyi's "mistakes," dismissed from his post and removed to Leningrad. In 1933 he was arrested and deported to a forced labour camp on the Solovetsky Islands. He was last heard of in 1934. For a history of the Borotbists, see Iwan Majstrenko, *Borot'bism: A Chapter in the History of Ukrainian Communism* (New York: Research Program on the U.S.S.R., 1954).

51. Not printed. "Soviet Harvest Difficulties. Deficient Crops. Foreign Observers Restricted," *Times*, 22 August 1933: 10.

52. Document 29 in this collection.

53. Document 28 in this collection.

54. This is probably a reference to Otto Schiller's articles in the *Daily Telegraph* on 25, 28 and 30 August 1933.

55. Document 42 in this collection.

56. Document 28 in this collection.

57. The article is not in the file, but it is probably A. S., "V SSSR naselenie gibnet ot goloda" (The population of the USSR is perishing of hunger), *Segodnia* (Riga), 20 August 1933: 1.

58. Not printed.

59. Not printed.

60. Not printed.

61. Document 42 in this collection.

62. Otto Schiller, *Die Krise der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft in der Sowjetunion* (Berlin: Paul Parey, 1933). For a Soviet attack on the book see O. Targulian, "Gospodin Otto Shiller kleveshchet" (Mr. Otto Schiller goes in for slander), *Pravda*, 2 October 1933: 4. Andrew Cairns, *Agricultural Production in Soviet Russia: A Preliminary Report as at May 1st, 1933* [London: Empire Marketing Board, 1933].

63. Not printed.

64. Not printed.

65. Not printed.

66. Not printed.

67. Not printed.

68. Document 49 in this collection.

69. Document 50 in this collection.

70. Document 40 in this collection.

71. Document 52 in this collection.

72. Document 44 in this collection.

73. Document 50 in this collection.

74. An account of Chamberlin's trip to Ukraine and the North Caucasus appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* as "The Soviet Countryside: A Tour of Inquiry," 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 October 1933. No such account appeared in the *Monitor*,

but after his departure from Moscow Chamberlin published in the *Monitor* from 28 May to 18 June 1934 a long series in which he devoted much attention to the famine.

75. Document 50 in this collection.

76. Document 53 in this collection.

77. In September 1933 Ukrainian farmers in Western Canada offered to donate part of their harvest to the victims of the famine through the Canadian Red Cross. According to a reply conveyed by the Canadian Red Cross, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the USSR refused the relief, arguing that "the carrying out of the Canadian citizens' proposals is not necessary in the absence of real need." See "Dokument z 'Ukrainskoho holosu' za 13.IX.1933," *Ukrainskyi holos*, 21 March 1973.

78. Document 54 in this collection.

79. Not printed.

80. Document 49 in this collection.

81. Document 60 in this collection.

82. Not printed.

83. Document 59 in this collection.

84. Not printed. Edouard Herriot, "Etudes Russes," *Information*, 1 and 19 November 1933.

85. Document 60 in this collection.

86. Document 54 in this collection.

87. Not printed.

88. Document 68 in this collection.

89. Document 10 in this collection.

90. Document 67 in this collection.

91. Like the Drabiv case (see note 8 on p. 453), the trial of the Kiev Region Economic Directorate employees was an attempt by the authorities to shift responsibility for the famine onto scapegoats. The unsigned reports cited by Lord Chilston were neutral in tone, but two articles by David Zaslavskii (himself a Jew and a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee during the Second World War) identified the accused as Jews by employing an arsenal of anti-Semitic stereotypes: their Jewish-sounding names were spelled out in full; they were called "small-town bourgeois" who before the Revolution had served the landlords as agents and procurors and who in the Soviet period collaborated with their kinsmen in speculating in currency, selling scarce rationed goods on the open market and corrupting good Communists of "peasant" (i.e., gentile) origin. See "Nachalsia protsess kievskogo oblkhozo" (The trial of the Kiev District Economic Directorate has begun), *Pravda*, 8 May 1934: 6; D. Zaslavskii, "Nasledstvo starogo mestechka" (The legacy of an old small town), *Pravda*, 31 May 1934: 6; D. Zaslavskii, "Bolshogo masshtaba 'blat'" (Graft on a large scale), *Pravda*, 2 June 1934: 6; "Delo kievskogo oblkhozo" (The case of the Kiev District Economic Directorate), *Pravda*, 5 June 1934: 6; and "Prigovor po delu

kievskogo oblkhozo'' (The verdict in the case of the Kiev District Economic Directorate), *Pravda*, 8 June 1934: 6.

92. Strang's despatches 525 and 568 are documents 50 and 55 in this collection.

93. Document 49 in this collection.

94. Document 68 in this collection.

95. Humphrey Mitchell, a Labour (and later Liberal) Member of Parliament for Hamilton East, visited the Soviet Union in September 1932 and in the summer of 1933. For a copy of the diary that he kept during his first trip see FO.371/16339 N 6741. Stopping in London after completing his second visit, Mitchell told the *Toronto Star* that ''in the towns and villages of the Ukraine thousands of people were starving, in full view of the most casual visitor; that millions were down to a rock bottom subsistence of bread and water.... Worst of all, is the shortage of food. It's not too bad in Moscow; it's a little worse in Leningrad. But out in the country, it's terrible – especially in the south, where much of the food is grown. I saw I don't know how many hundreds of people starving, in Kharkov and Kiev.... They didn't even have the traditional dried fish and cabbage soup. They were down to bread and water – and sometimes less than that.'' See M. H. Halton, ''Russia Faces Crisis Year Many Near Starvation,'' *Toronto Star*, 31 July 1933: 1, 5.

96. Adolf Ehrt, *Brüder in Not! Dokumente der Hungersnot unter den deutschen Volksgenossen in Russland* (Berlin: Brüder in Not, 1934).

97. Whiting Williams, an American educator and economic investigator, visited Ukraine in August 1933. On leaving the Soviet Union he stopped at the American consulate general in Warsaw, where he was interviewed by the consul general. ''With respect to reports regarding conditions of famine,'' the consul wrote to the State Department, ''Mr. Williams confirms these in no uncertain terms.... He says that he has seen during only the period of his two weeks' visit and has acquired personal knowledge of scores of deaths of laborers and peasants as a result of starvation. He has seen people dying in the streets from this cause.... He has gained the idea that during the past year not hundreds, not hundreds of thousands, but actually millions of Russians have died from starvation and diseases occasioned by the lack of food. He states that he saw villages completely depopulated and many others reduced to one-half their previous population from this cause.'' (National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 59, Decimal File, 1910-44, 861.5017-Living Conditions/706.) In addition to his articles in *Answers*, which were illustrated with nine photographs he had taken during his trip, Williams published a report on the famine entitled ''The Workers' View of Europe,'' *Nation's Business*, December 1933: 19-20, 53.

98. Otto Wienerberger's photographs are probably the ones reproduced in Ewald Ammende, *Muss Russland hungern? Menschen- und Völkerschicksale in der Sowjetunion* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1935). The book included twenty-one photographs which Ammende said had been taken by an Austrian engineer in Kharkiv in the summer of 1933. They are for the most part shots of streets and show shops that did not exist before the 1930s. Unless evidence to the contrary is presented, these twenty-one pictures may be accepted as genuine and authentic. When Ammende's book was translated into English as *Human Life in Russia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1936. Reprint. Cleveland: John T.

Zubal, 1984), however, only twelve of these pictures were reprinted, and fourteen others were added. Ammende asserted that the second group of pictures had been taken in the summer of 1933 by the manager of a German agricultural concession in the North Caucasus (Fritz Dittloff?), but it can be shown that most of them were taken during the famine of 1921-1922. Nevertheless, they have often been inadvertently reproduced as evidence of the famine of 1932-1933.

99. "Drought in Russia," *Times*, 28 May 1934: 13.

100. "Crop Failures in Russia," *Times*, 29 May 1934: 13; and "Great Soviet Drought," *Daily Telegraph*, 23 May 1934: 13.

101. "'Food Wreckers' on Trial," *Times*, 28 June 1934: 13.

102. Malcolm Muggeridge's novel *Winter in Moscow* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1934. Reprint. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987) deals at length with the famine.

103. Document 68 in this collection.

104. See the letter to the editor by J. H. Rushbrooke and W. Lewis Robertson, "Famine in Russia," *Times*, 1 August 1934: 13.

105. The *Times* correspondent in Riga gave an assessment of the state of Soviet agriculture in "The Russian Harvest. I. Martial Law for Peasants," 4 August 1934: 9; and "II. A Lack of Seed," 6 August 1934: 9.

106. Printed in document 72.

107. Document 72 in this collection.

108. Duranty's interview with Stalin was published as "Stalin Says Japan Is 'Grave Danger'; Hopes for Peace," *New York Times*, 28 December 1933: 1, 8. A Russian version appeared in *Pravda*, 4 January 1934: 3; and *Izvestiia*, 4 January 1934: 2. This was translated in *Soviet's Foreign Policy* (London: Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee, 1934), 9-13.

109. Document 64 in this collection.

110. Not printed. "Fear of Famine in Russia," *Times*, 5 February 1935: 13.

111. Document 68 in this collection.

112. Document 76 in this collection.

113. Not printed. A. Stepanoff, "Un génie financier en soutane," *Journal de Moscou*, 16 February 1935. The *Journal de Moscou* was the fortnightly, and later weekly, organ of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs.

114. Document 79 in this collection.

115. Chamberlin's *Russia's Iron Age* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1934) is an account of his years in the Soviet Union.

116. Not printed. See also Hawker's *An Australian Looks at Russian Farms* (Adelaide: Advertiser Newspapers, 1936), in which he writes about seeing from the air "villages with many ruined cottages, and other evidence of hard times" and observes that "the full effect of the famine" was felt in the villages that had resisted collectivization and that "at least 3 ½ to 4 millions" died of "want of food" by the summer of 1933.

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The famine that swept Ukraine, the North Cau[illegible] Asia in 1932-33 claimed, according to contemporary observers, the lives of between five and ten million people, most of them Ukrainians. Collected here are eighty-five British documents, which include firsthand reports – by diplomats, journalists and agricultural experts, as well as by the victims themselves – of that cataclysm. The documents reveal that even at the height of the famine the Soviet authorities denied that there was starvation, rejected foreign aid, and exported food, and that senior British officials refused to alert the public and discouraged private relief. This collection thus furnishes evidence about the causes, course and consequences of one of the great politically engineered famines of the twentieth century.

"It is hardly necessary to confirm the notorious fact that on the eve of the harvest conditions of semi-famine still continue to obtain over large areas of the Soviet Union. Unauthorised estimates of the number of people who have died, either directly or indirectly, from malnutrition in the past year vary up to as much as the fantastic figure of 10 million.... One of the erectors employed by Metropolitan-Vickers in the Ukraine says that people died of starvation in the block of apartments in which he lived, one of them outside his door. He says that he refused to believe the stories he heard of conditions in the villages outside and walked out to see for himself; he found, as he had been told, that some villages were completely deserted, the population having died or fled, and that corpses were lying about the houses and streets."

The British Embassy in Moscow to the Foreign Office, July 1933

"The truth of the matter is, of course, that we have a certain amount of information about famine conditions... and that there is no obligation on us not to make it public. We do not want to make it public, however, because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced."

Laurence Collier, a Foreign Office official, June 1934

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