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THE SOVIET FAMINE 1932-33:
AN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT OF
CONDITIONS IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER
OF 1932
BY ANDREW CAIRNS

Edited by Tony Kuz

Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
University of Alberta

Edmonton

1989

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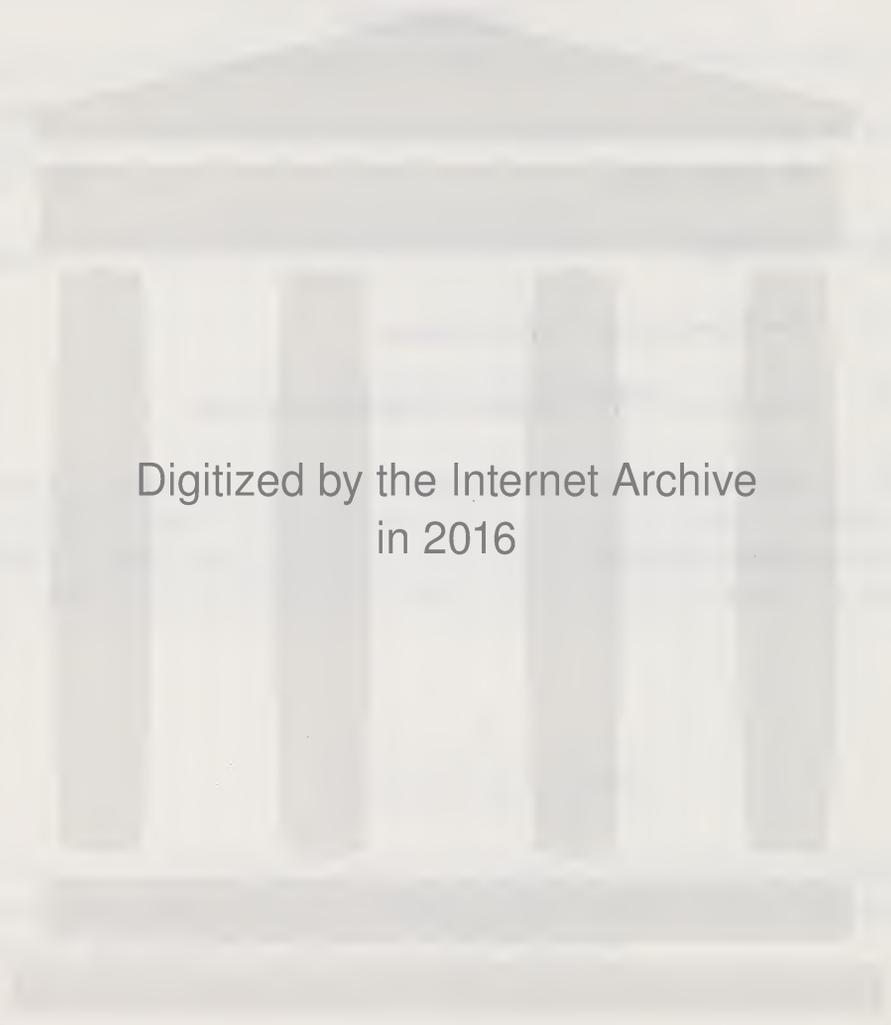
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CONTENTS

	Page
I Dr. Andrew Cairns	v
II Introduction	vii
III Description of a Tour in Western Siberia	1
IV Description of a Tour in Ukraine, Crimea and N. Caucasus	47
V Description of a Tour in the Volga Region	103
VI Selected Bibliography	123



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DR. ANDREW CAIRNS

Born in Scotland, Dr. Cairns was raised at Islay, Alberta, Canada and educated at the Vermilion School of Agriculture and the University of Alberta where he took a Bachelor of Science Degree and a gold medal in agriculture in 1923. He took his Master of Arts degree at the University of Minnesota and then joined the Alberta Wheat Pool.

He went to Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada in 1927 as director of statistics and research for Canadian Wheat Pools and on October 1, 1931 became director of the grain department of the Empire Marketing Board in London, England.

In 1934, he became permanent secretary of the World Wheat Advisory Commission in London and in 1941-42 was secretary of the Washington Wheat Conference. From 1942 to 1949 he served as secretary of the International Wheat Council.

After World War II he became director of food for UNRRA, an official of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, and secretary-general of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers.

While touring India for the American Soy Beans Export Association to encourage soy bean oil sales, Dr. Cairns was killed in an airliner crash near India's New Delhi airport on Thursday, May 15, 1958.

Dr. Cairns's primary responsibility to the Empire Marketing Board in 1931 was to set up a market intelligence bureau and develop an agricultural economic programme which involved the collection and distribution of statistical information concerning agriculture throughout the British Empire. The outstanding need at the time was fuller and more up-to-date information about the Soviet wheat situation. Cairns was ideally suited for the job because in 1930 he had made a five month study of agricultural conditions in Europe on behalf of the Canadian Wheat Pools visiting seventeen countries and spending considerable time in the Soviet Union.

In 1932 Dr. Cairns spent over four months travelling and studying agriculture in the Soviet Union. From May 10 to June 5 he covered Western Siberia as far east as Novosibirsk, from June 15 to July 30 he toured Ukraine, Crimea and Northern Caucasus, and from August 12 to August 22 he surveyed the Volga region travelling to Moscow, Voronezh, Volgograd, Saratov, and then back to Moscow. Dr. Cairns's reports focus on the social, economic and political situation in the Soviet Union in the spring and summer of 1932 and describe in detail the plight of the people caught in the middle of the emerging famine. The reports are eyewitness accounts of conditions that led to a famine described as one of the worst in recorded history.

Cairns's work was highly thought of in official circles, and publication of the final report was supported. An official at the British Embassy in Moscow stated, ". . . it is probably the most accurate statistical survey of soviet agriculture in existence . . ." PRO (CO 758/95/1). Another official commented, "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." The reports were also given wide official circulation. The report on Western Siberia was circulated to the Ministry of Agriculture, the Board of Trade, the Department of Overseas Trade, Export Credits, the Dominions Office and the Treasury. It was also suggested that it should be made available at the Ottawa Economic Conference.

Introduction

The Soviet famine of 1932-1933 is an event in human history which is still little understood. While there is a consensus among Western scholars that such an event took place, the causes, geographical extent, and severity in terms of excess mortality are today still being extensively debated. One reason for the debate stems from the lack of hard demographic and economic evidence that would conclusively define the event, particularly from the Soviet Union before 1987.

Any information about the famine that brings us closer to the truth becomes an invaluable source. The Cairns' reports on Soviet agriculture to the Empire Marketing Board in London, England in 1932 constitutes such a source. The Cairns' reports meticulously record information on conditions in Western Siberia, Ukraine, Northern Caucasus, Crimea and the Volga region in the spring and summer of 1932. While these reports are descriptions of the conditions in the pre-famine period, they describe explicitly the pathetic living conditions of the peasant and urban worker alike. During his travels, Cairns witnessed extensive dislocation of the population, many severe cases of malnutrition, peasant discontent with collectivization and living conditions and gross mismanagement of the rural economy.

To fully appreciate the content and significance of the Cairns' reports, they must be placed within an historical context. The task is to broadly outline what took place in the Soviet countryside over fifty years ago. To accomplish this, the following topics are addressed: collectivization of Soviet agriculture; Soviet agriculture during the First Five-Year Plan 1928-1932, and the famine of 1932-1933. Corroborative evidence of famine conditions are then provided by the Cairns reports.

Conditions leading to Collectivization

The First Five-Year Plan (1928-32) had as its primary objective the rapid socialization of all economic enterprises. Industrialization between 1921 and 1927 proceeded at a very rapid pace and achieved pre-World War I levels as many plants that had been shut down during the war came back into production. However, there was concern that a marked slowdown in output would occur as old factories reached capacity and increased output would only be achieved by new plants. The Soviets coined the phrase "the extinguishing curve" to describe this condition, and they were determined that

this condition was not to become a reality.

The Party found itself on the horns of a dilemma. Its power base was the urban proletariat, a small minority, surrounded by a sea of individual peasants all of whom were small producers largely of the self-sufficient type. The distrust of the peasant is clearly indicated by statements made by both Lenin and Stalin.

The small enterprise creates capitalism and the bourgeoisie permanently, daily, hourly, unescapably, and on a mass scale. (Lenin)¹

The Soviet power cannot long be based on two contrasting foundations - on large-scale socialist industry which eliminates the capitalist elements, and on small-scale individual peasant economy which creates capitalistic elements (Stalin)²

"A most rapid socialization of all economic enterprise appeared the only means of building a strong foundation for the Party."³ This was the state of affairs in 1927 when both agriculture and industry had regained the prewar level, industry was rapidly expanding while agriculture was moving very slowly. It appears that there was little incentive for the peasant farmer to expand production beyond the immediate family needs because of the low price of farm output when compared to manufactured goods. Yet increased agricultural output was desperately needed to meet the demands of an increasing urban population, a rapidly expanding industry, and foreign exchange to finance the purchase of machinery from the West.

To continue a programme of rapid industrialization, the Party had to make some hard and fast decisions about the role and structure of agriculture in the economy. It realized that continued emphasis on industry would simply exacerbate the price differential between manufactured and agricultural goods and the "surprise free" scenario was one where experts forecasted decreases in agricultural output. This the party could not tolerate! The solution was the socialization of Soviet agriculture. Two types of structures were envisaged: the Soviet or state farms (sovkhozy) and collective farms (kolkhozy).

Socialized agriculture was expected to increase output at greatly reduced costs. The system of distribution was to guarantee food for the urban population, raw materials for the quickly expanding industry and foreign currency for the purchase of tractors, combines and many other industrial tools. The state of rapid industrialization implied that the socialization of agriculture had to proceed with the same level of urgency.

The Collectivization Drive

The XV Party Congress in December, 1927 "declared war" on the kulaks⁴ (relatively well-to-do and

efficient peasants) and took steps to "restrict the development of capitalism in the countryside and guide peasant farming toward socialism." To pursue these policies courts were empowered to confiscate grain surpluses from kulaks who refused to sell them at fixed low prices, exempt the poor peasants from the land tax and place 25 per cent of the grain confiscated from the kulaks into the hands of the poor. Instructions were also issued for an increase in the number of sovkhozy and kolkhozy through the consolidation of small-scale holdings.⁵

Between June 1, 1927 and June 1, 1928 the number of kolkhozy increased from 14,832 to 33,258 and the household membership from 194,700 to 416,700.⁶ The rural population at that time was approximately 100 million and the task was to collectivize it as quickly as possible. This process occurred at incredible speed. The actual rate far surpassed even the very optimistic targets envisioned in the First Five-Year Plan. To quote Svetlov, editor of the Economic Review:

To characterize the rate it is sufficient to point out the rapidity with which the prospects of collectivization changed. Thus, in May 1929, in projections as to the rate of collectivization, we assumed the possibility of having, in the spring of 1932, 14.5 million hectares of cropped plowland collectivized. In September, 1929, however, it became possible to count on the fulfillment of that plan two years earlier, i.e., in the spring of 1930. But even this "daring" plan also proved a great underestimate. As early as December, 1929 a decision of the Council of People's Commissars ordered that a minimum of 32 million hectares of spring sowings, or one-third of the total, be collectivized the following spring. But events outran these projections as well.⁷

This momentum was briefly interrupted after Stalin's famous "Dizziness from Success" speech (Pravda, March 2, 1930), in which he reaffirmed the "voluntary" nature of joining the kolkhozy. The peasant reaction was swift and the proportion of collectivized households declined from 60 per cent to 23.4 per cent within a matter of two months. However, the XVI Party Congress in March 1931 reaffirmed that the decision to join a kolkhoz was not voluntary but obligatory and the numbers who had rushed out were soon back. By the middle of 1931 official statistics indicated that thirteen million households or 52.7 per cent of the total and two-thirds of the total cropland at that time were collectivized.

Regional Variations in the Rate of Collectivization

The Central Committee of the Party on August 1, 1931 specified that "basic accomplishment of collectivization" meant not an "obligatory collectivization of 100 per cent of the poor and average peasants but the joining of not less than 68-70 per cent of the peasant households and not less than 75 to 80 per cent of the peasants' cropped plowland."⁸ Employing these limits, as of August, 1931

collectivization was basically completed in North Caucasus, Middle Volga, Lower Volga, steppe Ukraine, Ukraine east of the Dniro, the Crimea, and the grain areas of the Urals.

Liquidation of the Kulaks

Open warfare with the kulaks and other peasants who resisted collectivization resulted in mass deportation of households to Siberia and the Far North. Vladimir Tikhanov, a member of the Soviet Academy of Agricultural Science, has claimed in Argumenty I Fakty that more than ten million Soviet peasants were repressed under Stalin's collectivization drive. Although Tikhanov did not say ten million peasants died, he said "dekulakization" or the expropriation and exile of kulaks, liquidated the Soviet peasantry as a class and turned farmers into workers deprived of rights. Tikhanov made it clear that those repressed during the intensive collectivization period of 1929-33 included many more farmers than the supposedly wealthy kulaks. Citing official statistics, Tikhanov indicated dekulakization liquidated 11-12 per cent of the 26.5 million to 26.7 million farm households at the start of collectivization in 1929, ending with only 23.3 million farm households in 1933.⁹

This liquidation of the kulaks had disastrous consequences on Soviet agriculture. The most successful farmers were no longer available to give leadership to the restructured agricultural economy. This role was now mainly in the hands of urban born and raised managers and poor peasants who had little experience in agricultural management. As we shall see, for this period, Soviet agriculture was in a state of turmoil which resulted in much lower agricultural production and massive famine as the final consequence.

Collectivization and the state procurement system went hand-in-hand. The peasants had no say in how much of their produce they could retain. The state independently determined state needs to sustain economic development, reserves, exports, etc. and then enforced these quotas on the newly formed sovkhozy, kolkhozy and the remaining individual farms. The new organization, in theory, was a model of efficiency. Instead of promoting growth through the market mechanism, the new agricultural organization ensured that state needs would be met and that industrialization could proceed at an accelerated pace.

Collectivization had disastrous short-term consequences for the Soviet peasant. Rather than allow personal possessions to be collectivized the peasants slaughtered livestock in the millions. This act virtually devastated the livestock industry and severely restricted it as a food source. The disorganization in agriculture along with other closely related factors caused grain production to plummet. In the early thirties millions of people died for want of food and millions more severely suffered. These two factors—the state of Soviet agriculture in the early thirties and the Soviet famine of 1932-1933—need to be developed in greater detail as the famine, its causes and its geographical extent are still extensively studied today.

Soviet Agriculture During the First Five-Year Plan 1928-1932

Livestock

During the First Five-Year Plan the Soviet animal stocks were depleted (Table 1). At the national level the horse population declined by over 50 per cent, cattle declined by over 45 per cent, hogs declined by over 53 per cent, and sheep and goats by over 65 per cent.¹⁰ The animal husbandry sector suffered for a variety of reasons; the most important that peasants preferred to slaughter animals rather than give them up in the collectivization drive; inadequate feed and shelter for the animals once collectivized; disease epidemics when the animals were grouped; and a general lack of caring for the horses because the government had promised tractors to mechanize agriculture. The most significant losses occurred with the horse, the backbone of Soviet agriculture, whose loss meant a great decline in animal draft power. In 1928 the Soviet Union had 29.4 million horse power equivalent which declined to 20.6 million horsepower equivalent by 1933, a relative decline of almost 30 per cent.¹¹ This decline severely affected the ability of the peasants to maintain agricultural production.

Regionally, Kazakhstan experienced the greatest losses in livestock. Between 1928 and 1933 the horse population declined by over 87 per cent, cattle over 78 per cent, hogs over 54 per cent and sheep and goats over 89 per cent. The natural result of this devastation was extensive famine and death.¹² The census in 1939 shows about a million fewer Kazakhs than in the 1926 census.

Ukraine provides another example where livestock numbers were severely depleted during the collectivization drive. Ukraine's losses were over 52 per cent for horses, over 48 per cent for cattle, almost 70 per cent for hogs and over 75 per cent for sheep and goats. In absolute numbers, more horses, cattle, and hogs were lost in Ukraine than any other specified area in the Soviet Union. This too had immediate and devastating effects as millions of Ukrainians died because of famine between 1932 and 1933.

Grain Production and Procurement

Collectivization and the system of grain procurement developed simultaneously. The state, through an elaborate hierarchical structure, directed every phase of the production process. In turn, the state demanded a proportionate share of the total output. Quotas for grain to be delivered to the state were set, while the entire production of cotton and sugar beets went to the state. Meeting the state

grain obligation was the first priority of the kolkhozy, and this constituted the "First Commandment" of collectivized agriculture. This obligation had to be met from the first harvest returns. The "Second Commandment" directed the fulfilment of requirements for seed, feed, and other purposes, such as reserve funds, to ensure the smooth and continued operation of the kolkhoz. Lastly, the "residual" grain (what was left) went to the kolkhozy peasants.

Table 1.
Livestock in Specified Areas and Specified Years,
(Thousand Head)

Year	USSR Total	Kazakhstan	West Siberia	Ukraine
HORSES				
1928	33,537	3,735	3,530	5,487
1933	16,575	459	1,341	2,601
% change	-50.57	-87.71	-62.01	-52.59
CATTLE				
1928	70,541	7,379	6,739	8,605
1933	38,380	1,594	3,038	4,446
% change	-45.59	-78.39	-54.92	-48.33
HOGS				
1928	25,989	304	2,422	6,963
1933	12,068	139	950	2,089
% change	-53.56	-54.27	-60.77	-69.99
SHEEP AND GOATS				
1928	146,699	25,916	10,664	8,112
1933	50,206	2,725	3,041	1,987
% change	-65.77	-89.48	-71.48	-75.50

Source: Jasny, N. The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), p. 634.

During the early thirties the government's grain procuring program was haphazard and subject to sudden change. Cairns writes:

The districts and farms with fair or good crops have had very heavy levies placed upon them to make up for the anticipated decline in deliveries to the Government from districts with poor crops. Nevertheless, in many districts attempts have been made in most cases all too successfully, to force the collection of the Government quota (set in many cases before the results of the harvest were known) regardless of how poor the crops were. The result has been complaints from the districts with fair to good crops that the Government's quota were being arbitrarily and unjustifiably increased and much more bitter complaints from the areas with poor crops that the Government were enforcing the collection of an unjust and very heavy quota which had little or no relation to the actual harvest, as it was based on "planned" yield.¹³

In addition to the basic quotas, the Government also collected in kind for services rendered the milling tax and educational levy. The state also collected 20 per cent of the gross grain harvest of all collective farms served by the machinery and tractor stations. Cairns estimated that the state collected 37.7 per cent of the total harvest in 1932, 36.1 in 1931, 26.6 in 1930, 22.4 in 1929 and 14.7 in 1928.¹⁴

The remuneration for the grain deliveries to the state and the impact of this income on the individual peasant is further discussed by Cairns.

The state pays a nominal price for the grain delivered to it. The payment was of some importance prior to the food crisis of 1931 as it could be used to purchase at low state-fixed prices what goods were available in the co-operative and state shops. Since the summer of 1931, however, the price paid by the State for grain has been only an insignificant fraction of the open market price. Moreover, the co-operative and state shops in the villages have been almost empty since the winter of 1931-32. For all practical purposes therefore, the money payments made by the State for grain and other farm products delivered to it may be considered as practically nothing and the produce collected looked upon as the rent charged by the state landlord. In the spring and summer of 1932 (prior to the new harvest) the open market price of grain was about one hundred times greater than the price paid by the state for its share of the harvest.¹⁵

Total grain production varied from a high of 83.50 million tons in 1930 to a low of 66.10 millions

tons in 1931 (Table 2). It is interesting to note that the average yearly production for the period 1909-1913 was 78.5 million tons, a production level that was only surpassed three times during the 1930s - 1930, 1937, and 1939.¹⁶

Grain procurement was increased substantially between 1929 and 1930 showing a 37.2 per cent increase. These levels once set were fairly well maintained although procurement during the poor harvest years of 1931 and 1932 was down to 18.8 million tons. Proportionately this still represented a procurement rate of over 28 per cent.

Grain exports reached maximum levels during 1930 and 1931 with exports of 4.84 million and 5.18 million tons. This level declined to 840,000 tons in 1934.

Table 2.
Gross Harvest, Procurement and Exports of Soviet Grain Crops
1928 - 1934
(Millions Tons)

Year	*Grain Production	*Grain Procurement	**Grain Exports
1934	72.20	26.20	.84
1933	70.10	23.30	1.76
1932	66.40	18.80	1.81
1931	66.10	22.80	5.18
1930	83.50	22.10	4.84
1929	71.70	16.10	.26
1928	73.30	10.80	.34
Average 1909-1913 = 78.50			

*Jasny, N. The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), pp. 792, 794.

**Holubnychy, V. "The Causes of the Famine of 1932-33," Meta, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1979, p.22. Figures for 1930 and 1931 are also found in Radziejowski, J. "Collectivization in Ukraine in Light of Soviet Historiography," Journal of Ukrainian Studies, Vol. 9, 1980, p.12.

Grain Procurement in Ukraine

To appreciate better the regional impact of state grain procurement a more detailed look at the Ukrainian experience is warranted. Ukraine's grain production and procurement quotas are presented in Table 3. Ukraine was particularly hard-hit in that the procurement ratios exceeded the production ratios between 1930 and 1933. As an example, in 1932 Ukraine produced 22 per cent of the total Soviet grain harvested but was compelled to deliver almost 35 per cent of the state grain purchased. After applying extraordinary means to ensure fulfillment of the 1932 quota, the government was only able to achieve 72 per cent of its objective. The amount of "residual" grain left for peasant consumption after the 1932 harvest was extremely small.¹⁷

Table 3.
Gross Harvest, Procurement Quota and Deliveries of Ukrainian
Grain Crops 1930 - 1932
(Millions of Tonnes)

Year	Grain Production	Procurement Quota	Grain Delivery
1930	23.1	7.7	7.7
1931	18.3	7.7	7.0
1932	14.6	6.5 (6.2)	4.7

These figures are obtained from James E. Mace "The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine," in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (eds.) Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), p. 7, and Bohdan Krawchenko, "The Man-Made Famine of 1932-1933 and Collectivization in Soviet Ukraine," in Serbyn and Krawchenko, op. cit., pp. 20-21. The two sources show a discrepancy in the 1933 procurement quota - Mace, 6.5 and Krawchenko, 6.2. These figures differ from those presented by Janusz Radziejowski, "Collectivization in Ukraine in Light of Soviet Historiography," Journal of Ukrainian Studies Vol. 9, 1980, p.12.

In summary, the best description of Soviet agriculture during the First Five-Year Plan is presented by James Millar,¹⁸ who wrote:

...mass collectivization of Soviet agriculture must be reckoned as an unmitigated economic policy disaster. Agricultural output increased only marginally over the entire period of the 1930s, while labour productivity, yields, and rural and urban consumption per capita declined. Despite considerable state investment in state farms and the MTS, tractive power available to agriculture declined precipitously between 1928 and 1933, thanks to the slaughter of livestock by the peasants. The Soviet official history of World War II explicitly singles out Stalin's agricultural policies for criticism, for agriculture was one of the least developed sectors of the economy and thus a major handicap at the outbreak of war.

The Famine 1932-1933

G.B. Masefield defines famine as "a lack of food over a large geographical area sufficiently long and severe to cause widespread disease and death from starvation."¹⁹ The causes of famine may be natural (drought, floods, crop disease, etc.) and/or man-made (war, civil commotion and strife, rapid changes in the pattern of agrarian production, etc.). Having determined the definition there is still the problem of determining mortality from famine. Famine exacerbates the death rate but the causes of death (pneumonia, typhus, tuberculosis, etc.) remain the same whether famine is present or not. "Since every community has a death-rate from ordinary causes whether or not a famine is present, the effect of famine is sometimes best measured...by the 'excess mortality' over the normal figure."²⁰

Confirmatory Evidence of the Existence of Famine

The true sources of evidence of the existence of the famine in the Soviet Union were: reports of reliable newspaper correspondents,²¹ refugees,²² the Soviet Press and official Soviet statements,²³ photographs taken by foreigners,²⁴ and the work of relief organizations in Britain and continental Europe who were in constant touch with Soviet Russia.²⁵ As many of these accounts have been published elsewhere it is not necessary to repeat them here. However, to date, little has been published on the Andrew Cairns reports and what he saw in the Soviet Union in the spring and summer of 1932.²⁶

In his tour of Western Siberia he describes the conditions of the Kazakhs.

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).... The reason for the sad fate of the poor natives of Kazakhstan was, of course the government collections of livestock.²⁷

From Western Siberia Cairns then toured Ukraine and the North Caucasus. While in the Ukraine, Cairns wrote, "Every station had its crowd - from scores to several hundred, depending on the size of 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."²⁸ While walking in a street bazaar in Kiev he was able to interview one of the women. "She said there was practically no bread..., 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."²⁹ Cairns continued to witness the same scenes wherever he travelled—Dnipropetrovsk in eastern Ukraine, Salsk in North Caucasus, Rostov, etc.—hundred of thousands of "miserable, hungry people" who were in search of food, fleeing the famine.

Yet what Cairns witnessed were conditions in the pre-famine stage. The most severe portion of the famine occurred during the fall and winter of 1932 and winter and spring of 1933.

Mortality Estimates

The Soviet famine of 1932-1933, based on estimated mortality figures, has the dubious distinction of being the third worst in recorded human history.³⁰ Estimates of mortality range between 4 and 10 million.³¹

No complete official Soviet figures are available on the loss in human lives caused by the famine. After 1930 statistics on births and deaths were no longer published. For 1931 and 1932 only net growth figures were provided (birth-deaths) and later shown to be false. For 1933 and 1934 no figures were published on the natural population changes. The census taken in 1937 was not released after the results were tabulated. Only a comparison of the censuses of 1926 and 1939 and scattered data on births and deaths give an indication of the magnitude of the disaster.

Between the census of 1926 and that of 1939 the USSR population grew from 147,027,915 to 170,467,186.³² This represented an absolute increase of 23,436,272 for an average yearly increase of 1.325 per cent and an exponential rate of 1.23 per cent.³³ Kulischer's³⁴ explanation of the population change for this period is divided into three periods: 1927-30 where the previous trends are sustained -- slight decline in birth rate and marked decline in death rate. The population growth

for this period is estimated at around 12 million. For the period 1935-38, an upward trend of births was noted. The estimated population growth for this period is roughly 11 million. Adding the increase for 1927-30, a total population increase of 23 million is obtained leaving only a 0.4 million increase for the 1931-34 period. The gains in population by births were almost completely wiped out by deaths. Considering the usually large differences in birth and death rates (1927 - 45.0 births vs 27.0 deaths, 1938 - 38.3 births vs 17.8 deaths) it is improbable that the two rates were approximately equal in the 1931-34 period, rather a substantial increase in the death rate occurred and a population loss of several million took place -- at least 5 million USSR population.

Frank Lorimer, in an effort to arrive at more specific figures (for this inter-census period) reconstructed birth and death rate figures.³⁵ On the basis of adjusted vital statistics and extrapolation of life tables, Lorimer projected population forward from 1926 to 1934 and backward from 1939 to 1934. The discrepancy for 1934 between the two projections indicated a population difference of 5.5 million—a discrepancy that can be accounted for almost entirely by "excess deaths." Lorimer notes in reconstructing population totals between 1927 and 1939, "This is a highly arbitrary series, but it may represent as close an approximation to the actual change as can be obtained in the absence of more explicit information."³⁶

Other mortality estimates were generally made by newspaper correspondents who travelled through the famine affected areas. These estimates were made on the basis of interviews with local officials and residents. Taking sample situations as a general situation, estimates of death because of famine were made. William H. Chamberlin, a Moscow correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor, estimated a total mortality of 4-5 million from the famine.³⁷ He writes,

I crossed Ukraina from the south-east to the north-west by train and at every station where I made inquiries the peasants told the same story of major famine during the winter and spring of 1932-33. If one considers that the population of Ukraina is about thirty-five million and that of the North Caucasus about 10 million, and that credible reports of similar famine came from parts of the country which I did not visit, some regions of the Middle and Lower Volga and Kazakstan, in Central Asia, it would seem highly probable that between four and five million people over and above the normal mortality rate, lost their lives from hunger and related causes.

Geographical Extent of the Famine

Maksudov analyzed the age structure of rural females by oblast using the 1959 census figures.³⁸ By comparing the number of female survivors born before collectivization (1924-28), during collectivization (1929-33), and after collectivization (1934-38), the oblasts which suffered the greatest famine mortality were identified.³⁹ The geography of the 1929-33 cohort shortfall "moves across the territory of Ukraine from northwest to southeast. The adjacent Russian oblasts bordering Ukraine on

the north...and Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine...all have normal age-group ratios. Beyond Ukraine, the demographic loss zone extends, with a marked deterioration, through the Kuban, passes through Volgograd and Saratov oblasts, covers a portion of the South Urals...and spreads, decreasing along the way, over the territory of Kazakhstan."⁴⁰ The increased mortality between 1929 and 1933 in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, northern Caucasus and the Volga region, coincides with areas of rapid collectivization, and areas of numerous eyewitness accounts of starvation and famine deaths.

The regional impact of the famine on ethnic mortality may be appreciated by comparing the 1926 and 1939 censuses.⁴¹ In 1926 there were over 31 million Ukrainians. By 1939 there were only 28 million for an absolute decline of 3.1 million (Table 4). The Kazakhs declined relatively even more sharply with an absolute decrease of almost 900,000. Exceeding the national rate of growth were Russians, Uzbeks and Tatars.

Ukraine's Population Losses

It has been noted that Ukraine was particularly hard-hit by unrealistic grain procurement quotas in the early thirties. The outcome was an extensive famine in 1932 and 1933 which resulted in the death of millions of Ukrainians. By comparing the 1926 and 1939 Soviet censuses for Ukraine, Maksudov has affirmed that "between 1927 and 1938 not less than 4.4. million people perished."⁴² This is a net figure and indicates the mortality over and above natural mortality. On a cohort level all were severely affected. Males showed the largest losses particularly in the age categories 20-29, 50-59, and 60+.⁴³ When cohort population losses were expressed as a percentage of total mortality, the age groups 15-19, 20-29, and 40-49 showed the largest losses. Whichever figures are used, they do indicate the magnitude of the famine in 1932 and 1933 in Ukraine.⁴⁴ Millions starved to death, millions more suffered extreme malnutrition.

Table 4.
 USSR: Population by Selected Nationality, 1939,
 Compared with Population by Ethnic Group, 1926.

Designated in 1939	Number, 1926, in Possible Corresponding Group	Number 1939	Ratio of 1939 to 1926
Russian	77,791,124	99,019,929	1.273
Ukrainian	31,194,976	28,070,404	0.900
Belorussian	4,738,923	5,267,431	1.112
Uzbek	3,954,701	4,844,021	1.225
Tatar	3,477,507	4,300,336	1.237
Kazakh	3,968,289	3,098,764	0.781
Others	21,902,395	25,866,301	
Total	147,027,915	170,467,186	1.159

Source: F. Lorimer, The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects (Geneva: League of Nations, 1946), p.138.

Cairns' Tour of the Soviet Union, 1932

Purpose of Visit

The reason for Cairns' official tour of the Soviet Union is clearly defined in a speech he made in Western Siberia to the Omsk Agricultural Research and Teaching Institute on May 27, 1932. He writes, "...I told them I had been sent by the Empire Marketing Board to make a study of their agriculture.... 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 discover what, if any, readjustments our farmers should make."

Areas Visited

Cairns travelled extensively and spent over four months making his assessment of Soviet agriculture. From May 10 to June 5, 1932 he travelled by train from Moscow to Novosibirsk in Western Siberia; from June 15 to July 30 he toured Ukraine, Crimea, and Northern Caucasus and from August 12 to 22 he surveyed the Volga region travelling from Moscow to Voronezh, Volgograd, Saratov and then back to Moscow. He surveyed all the major agricultural regions in the Soviet Union. While in the Soviet Union Cairns was not attached to the British Embassy in Moscow. Nevertheless he had full Soviet permission to travel widely and meet and discuss Soviet agriculture with directors of collectives, machine tractor stations, etc. It is evident from the reports that Cairns was openly welcomed, treated as a high visiting official, and provided with whatever agricultural production and livestock figures the Soviets had available.

Content of the Reports

It becomes immediately apparent upon reading the reports that Cairns's mandate was not only to assess the state of Soviet agriculture but also to observe and comment on the social, economic, and political situation. Here, the reports become an invaluable source of information on the Soviet famine of 1932-33. The reports document at first hand evidence of widespread hunger in all parts of the Soviet union; swollen-bellied children, carcass-eating Kirgizians, and farm and industrial workers, all begging for food.

The reports constitute a cross-sectional appraisal of Soviet agriculture in the spring and summer of 1932. Local characteristics with respect to size of collectives, work force, level and condition of mechanization, types and quality of crops, livestock numbers, daily food rations, and food prices in

bazaars are meticulously recorded. The coverage extends to all the major agricultural regions in the Soviet Union.

Cairns is very conscious of his role on behalf of the Empire Marketing Board and is reluctant to state directly his reservations about collectivized Soviet agriculture to Soviet officials. While visiting the Omsk Agricultural Research and Teaching Institute and after touring the mechanization section he is asked to write his impressions in a book: Cairns writes:

I wanted to write the following: In a country like Russia, suffering from acute over agricultural population, I cannot understand why you have such a mania for mechanizing 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 organizations 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 properly use? 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 railroads? 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 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 pile heats and spoils, before you built that enormous stooker. But, of course, I wrote something polite.

Causes of the Famine

What insights are provided in the Cairns's reports which enhance our understanding of the causes of the Soviet famine? Upon his return to London, Cairns prepared an extensive summary report.⁴⁵ It addressed what he understood to be the chief causes of low yields in 1931 and 1932.

The principal reason for the low yield of cereals, particularly wheat, in 1931 was the serious drought in many important regions, including all the chief spring wheat areas. Important additional causes were poor cultivation, late seeding and in a number of important areas unfavourable harvesting weather.

The conditions responsible for the poor grain crop of 1932 were both climatic and nonclimatic,

but the latter were more detrimental than the former.

The alternate freezing and thawing in the winter of 1931-32 caused very heavy losses of autumn sown crops, particularly wheat, especially in the Northern Caucasus and the Ukraine. Lack of precipitation, high temperatures and hot winds at the critical period of plant development severely damaged the crops, excepting rye, in some south-eastern regions, especially on the left bank of the Volga River. Hot and humid weather (very favourable for the development and multiplication of rust spores) greatly accentuated the losses due to the epidemic of stem rust, especially in practically the whole of the Northern Caucasus and important parts of the Ukraine.⁴⁶

The more important of the non-climatic conditions which were chiefly responsible for the poor harvest in 1932 follow roughly in the order of the magnitude of their effects.

1. Inadequate and late cultivation (due to the catastrophic losses of draught power) which resulted in the land being infested with weeds of both annual and perennial sorts.⁴⁷
2. Late to very late seeding of both autumn and spring grains which greatly accentuated the losses directly caused by winter killing, drought, and hot winds.
3. Inadequate food, dissatisfaction about living and working conditions, lack of proper organization, uncertainties about future food supplies and other sources of income, and many other causes all of which combined accounted for the widespread discontent and passive resistance of the peasants (both individual and collectivised) and the extremely low productivity of agricultural labour.
4. Insufficient seed, the bulk of which was untreated for disease.
5. Inefficient harvesting with inadequate power and equipment.

Most researchers today would agree with Cairns's conclusions about the reasons for the poor grain yields of 1931 and 1932, but blame the Soviet leadership for the famine. In fact, many classify the famine as man-made and others as genocide.⁴⁸ Most would argue that it was true that the grain crop yields were below normal but had the Soviet leadership shown some compassion for the peasant by setting realistic grain procurement quotas, the famine would have been averted. However, the procurement quotas were used as a political instrument to demoralize and subdue the peasants so they could no longer resist collectivization and the Soviet leadership.

NOTES

1. Lenin, V.I., Works, XXV, 173; quoted by Joseph Stalin, Problems of Leninism (9th ed., Moscow, 1931), p. 349.
2. Stalin, op. cit., p. 362.
3. Naum Jasny, The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR: Plans and Performance (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949), p.25.
4. The official definition of an entrepreneur was as follows:

As entrepreneurs are classed all household heads, connected with rural economy, reporting rural economy as their principal source of money income who (a) possess means of production valued at more than 1,600 roubles and let on lease means of production or hire labor for over 50 days during the year; (b) possess means of production valued at more than 800 roubles and hire labor for more than 75 days during the year; or (c) possess means of production valued at more than 400 roubles and hire labor for more than 150 days per year. Statistical Handbook USSR, 1928 (Moscow: Central Statistical Board, 1929), p. 940, as cited in Jasny, p. 162.

While no official definition of a kulak was made the term was made synonymous with entrepreneur and the statistics were used by the government to target households for land and property confiscation.

In the 1926-1927 period 3.9 per cent of all households were classified as entrepreneur representing 5.2 per cent of the total population.

5. Frederick L. Schuman, Soviet Politics: At Home and Abroad (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p.215.
6. Jasny, op. cit., p.304.
7. F. Svetlov, "A Bolshevist Sowing Campaign", Economic Review, Jan. 1930, p.3, as cited in Jasny, op. cit., pp. 305-6.
8. Most Important Decisions on Agriculture (Moscow: State Publishing Office of Kolkhoz and Kolkhoz Literature, 2nd ed., 1935), p. 427, as cited in Jasny, op. cit., p.309.
9. Winnipeg Free Press, "Peasant Repression Admitted," Tuesday, April 5, 1988, p.23.
10. Jasny, op. cit., p. 634.
11. Ibid., p. 458.
12. M. Olcott, "The Collectivization Drive in Kazakhstan", Russian Review, No. 2, 1981, pp. 121-42.
13. Andrew Cairns, Agricultural Production in Soviet Russia (London: Public Record Office, F0371/17252, 1933), pp. 7-8.
14. Ibid., p.9.
15. Ibid.
16. Jasny, op. cit., p. 793.
17. There is considerable variation in estimates of food availability for the peasants once all other needs were met. For the Soviet Union in 1932 Jasny indicated the following grain utilization in millions of tons: food, 33.6; seed, 14.0; feed, 12.0; technical uses, 1.5; exports, 1.4; and loss, 2.0; for a total of 64.5 (p.751). With an estimated population of 165.7 million by the end of 1932, the grain available for food on a per capita basis was 226 kilograms or a kilocalorie equivalent of 2229. (The energy content of all grains with 11-15 per cent moisture is 3600 kilocalories per kilogram). Correcting this figure by a 10 per cent overestimate, Jasny thinks a more realistic estimate of consumption was 209 kilograms or an equivalent of 2061 kilocalories per capita per day.

To place these food values into perspective Jasny compared these consumption amounts with those during the Soviet famine years of 1921-1922. During this period the food intake was approximately 50 per cent of normal or about 2000 kilocalories per capita per day.

Maksudov estimated grain availability for human consumption during this period at 440 grammes or approximately 1584 kilocalories per capita per day. (M. Maksudov, "Ukraine's Demographic Losses 1927-1938," in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (eds.) Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933, (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, 1986), p. 31). He does not indicate how he arrived at this figure.

On a regional basis, Ukraine has been a focus of study. Holubnychy estimated for 1932 that a peasant was left for consumption an average of 112 kilograms (1105 kilocalories per capita per day) and for 1933 only 83 kilograms (818 kilocalories per capita per day) of grain. Vsevolod Holubnychy, "The Causes of the Famine of 1932-33" Meta, Vol. 2, No. 2, 1979, pp. 23, 24. He does not indicate how he arrived at these figures. These values are also used by Krawchenko but incorrectly. He expresses these figures per household rather than per capita. (Bohdan Krawchenko, "The Man-made Famine of 1932-1933 and Collectivization in Soviet Ukraine," in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, (eds.) Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933, op. cit., p.21).

18. James R. Millar, "Mass Collectivization and the Contribution of Soviet Agriculture to the First Five-Year Plan," Slavic Review, Vol. 33, No. 4, 1974, pp. 764-5.
19. G.B. Masfield, Famine: Its Prevention and Relief (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p.2.
20. Ibid., p.3.
21. One of the first indications of the grave situation in the Soviet Union appeared in the Manchester Guardian in a series of articles by Malcolm Muggeridge on March 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29, 1933. Other accounts appeared in the Evening Standard, March 31, 1933, Le Matin, August 19, 1933, Canadian Gazette, Sept. 7, 1933.
22. See Olexa Woropay, The Ninth Circle (Cambridge: Harvard University, Ukrainian Studies Fund, 1983), Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine 1932-33 (Washington: Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Government Printing Office, 1987), Harvard University Refugee Interview Project (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University, 1950s).
23. Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 in Post-Stalinist Soviet Historiography (Washington, D.C.: Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Working paper No. 1, In press), Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, Soviet Press Sources on the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33 (Washington, D.C.: Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Working paper No. 2, In press).
24. Photographs were taken by two independent travellers in Ukraine during 1933, Mr. Whiting Williams and Mr. Otto Wienerberger, an Austrian engineer. These photographs show dead persons who were reported to have died of hunger lying in the streets of Kharkov, many bread and milk line ups, and mass graveyards for the victims of the famine (FO 371/18321), p. 90. Similar photos were also taken by Andrew Cairns but they have not been located at this time.
25. Some of the relief agencies cited in FO 371/18321 are
 - i) The European Central Office for Church Aid
 - ii) Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Berlin
 - iii) British Subjects in Russian Relief Association
 - iv) Federation of Jewish Relief Organizations
 - v) Society of Friends
 - vi) Russian Assistance Fund
 - vii) Russian Clergy and Church Aid Fund
26. A short treatment of the Cairns' reports is found in Marco Carynyk, "Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, the United States and the Ukrainian Famine of 1933," in Serbyn and Krawchenko, op. cit., pp. 113-115. The reports in question are:
 - Description of a Tour in Western Siberia, FO 371/16329
 - Description of a Tour in Ukraine, Crimea, and N. Caucasus,

F0 371/16329, and Description of a Tour in the Volga Region,
F0 371/16329.

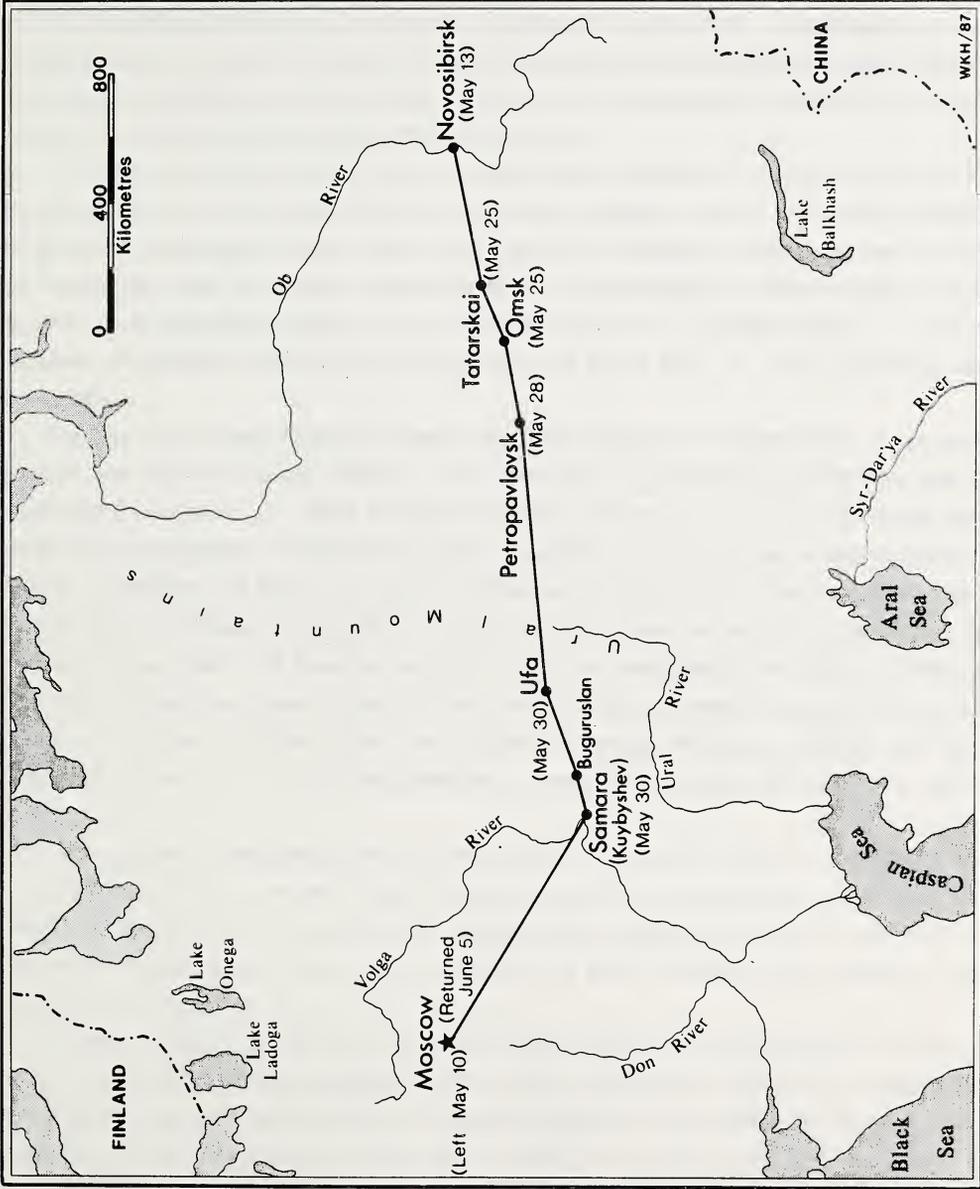
27. Andrew Cairns, Description of a Tour in Western Siberia, op. cit.
28. Andrew Cairns, Description of a Tour in Ukraine, Crimea and N. Caucasus, op. cit.
29. ibid.
30. The two other famines with larger mortality were Bengal (1769-70) with 10 million dead and North China (1877-78) with 9.5 million dead. The Encyclopedia Britannica, IX, 1968, p. 58.
31. For a listing of authors and their estimates of mortality see Anna Bolubash, "The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933" Ukrainian Review, Vol. 26, No. 4, 1978, p.18; Dana Dalrymple, "The Soviet Famine of 1932-1934" Soviet Studies, Vol. XV, 1964, pp. 259-260; and for a scholarly treatment of the subject, see Frank Lorimer, The Population of the Soviet Union: History and Prospects (Geneva: League of Nations, 1946), pp. 112-144.
32. Lorimer, op. cit., p. 138.
33. The exponential formula is:

$$dx = do e^{bx}$$

where dx is population in time x
do is population at the beginning period
x is time in years
e base of the natural logarithm
b rate of change
34. Eugene Kulischer, Europe on the Move (New York: Columbia University PRes, 1948), pp. 94-99.
35. Lorimer, op. cit., pp. 123-133.
36. ibid., p. 135.
37. "Confirmatory Evidence of the Existence of Famine in the Soviet Union Particularly in Ukraine and the North Caucasus" (London: Public Record Office, F0 371/18320, 1934), p. 325.
38. S. Maksudov, "The Geography of the Soviet Famine of 1933," Journal of Ukrainian Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2, 1983, p. 52-58.
39. Maksudov's rationale for only using female demographic data is based on the assumption that females were the least mobile and suffered the least mortality from unnatural causes. Therefore significant differences in female cohort numbers during the defined three time periods would be attributed to excessive mortality cause by famine. A typical population pyramid would indicate each younger cohort to be more numerous than the immediately older cohort. Based on this assumption, Maksudov would expect the 1934-38 cohort to be more numerous than the 1929-33 cohort and the latter more numerous than the 1924-28 cohort. The ratio of these generations is an indicator of population loss due to famine.
40. M. Maksudov, "Ukraine's Demographic Losses 1927-1938," in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
41. The comparison of different ethnic groups between 1926 and 1939 is made very difficult by definitional changes. The definition of "nationality" in the 1939 census differs radically from the "group ethnic" definition in the 1926 census. For a fuller discussion, see Lorimer, op. cit., p.137.
42. Maksudov "Ukraine's Demographic Losses 1927-1938," op. cit., p.37.
43. ibid., p. 39.

44. Ukraine's demographic losses during collectivization, famine and the Great Terror of 1926-1938 have been variously estimated. These estimated losses most often range between 5 to 7 million with the average around 6 million. In most instances these are "guesstimates" and do not display the scientific integrity of the work done by Lorimer, op. cit., or Maksudov, op. cit. Even the last two authors mentioned disagree about Ukraine's population in 1926 and 1939. Lorimer used the official census and indicated the population to be in 1926 - 31,194,976 and in 1939 - 28,070,404 while Maksudov's estimates are in 1926 - 29,189,000 and in 1939 - 30,947,000.
45. Andrew Cairns, *Agricultural Production in Soviet Russia*, op. cit., pp. 264-278.
46. This observation by Cairns is at variance with the one made by Jasny, op. cit., p. 551. Jasny writes, "Since weather conditions were normal for the 1932 crop, the famine was correctly characterized as man-made." Cairns does not view the Soviet weather conditions in 1931-1932 as normal. He states "The 1932 wheat crop was under average partly owing to unfavourable climatic conditions, but more largely due to other causes." Ibid., p. 227.
47. The loss of draught power in the Soviet Union is fully addressed by Cairns, ibid., pp. 11-12. He writes, "Between 1928 and 1932 Russia lost over 12 million work horses and over 3 million work cattle. Disregarding the loss of about 13 million cows Russia has lost over 15 million natural horse power since 1928, against which can be placed a gain of less than 2 million tractor horse power. In other words, up to date only 13 per cent of the loss of animal draught power between 1928 and 1932 has been made good by the provision of mechanical draught power. Moreover, in making this comparison it is assumed that all the tractors are useable, whereas in actual fact owing to constant breakdowns a high proportion of them are always idle."
48. See sources already noted for use of the term "man-made Famine". Other titles are Vasyi Plushch, "Genocide of the Ukrainian People" The Ukrainian Review, Vol. XX, No. 2/3, 1973, Vasyi Hryshko, The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933 (Toronto: DOBRUS, 1983). Even though the word genocide is not used in the title, most articles on the Ukrainian famine conclude that the deaths were a result of Soviet genocide policy.

**DESCRIPTION OF A TOUR IN
WESTERN SIBERIA
by
ANDREW CAIRNS**



Tour in Western Siberia

MOSCOW

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.

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 emphasizing agricultural problems and a brief one for the Embassy emphasizing more general topics, and giving what little information I picked up about manufacturing and other subjects, I have decided to give 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.

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 dispatches 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 Kuznetzk 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.

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—omelette 1.5 roubles as compared with 7 roubles in the Grand, Russian tea 15 kopeks (50 in grand), coffee—made out of burnt barley—65 kopeks (1.75 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.

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").¹ During the first day, May 11th, the prices were very high (0.5 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 Kotelneya, 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 as 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.

On the 12th 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 was 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, mechanization and agrotechnical measures, etc., etc. They asked me what salary I received² 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!

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.³ 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.

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 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' love for complicated formula, how they worked out a plan 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.

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.

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 (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 2.5 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 1.33 roubles, eggs 10 for 6 roubles. There must have been 1,500 to 2,000 people in the bazaar.

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, specialization, 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 (New Economic Policy) 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.

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 today 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 livestock.

(3) Only one-third of the suitable land was now under cultivation and by 1937 they would double the area under grain and export 65 per cent 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 assurance 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.

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 was 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 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 had made during the past 15 she could face the world at war single-handed, etc., etc.

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 children 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. Schiller⁴ 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 out and although it was rather dark I thought something was the matter so I went into the pen and discovered first that its legs were made of iron bolted to the floor, then that its mouth was odd, 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 boar'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 boar 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.

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. When I enquired why they went to such enormous expense for pig feed, the director replied that my criticism was a valid one, but last year their crop (350 hectares) was 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 food) 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 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.

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 Fordston 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.

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 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 statistics of seeding on the individual farms (the official figures show 65 per cent 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 1.5 to 10 centners per hectare (centner 220 metric pounds and a hectare 2.47 acres).⁵

(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 percent of the land and 60 per cent of the agricultural population had been socialized. 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.

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, specialization 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.

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.⁶ to "rename Kuznetz Stalinsk⁷ has 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 step up production". I should have mentioned previously that Munroe 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.⁸ 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.

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.⁹ 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 liked 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!

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 Kazakhstan from where he had just returned), as elsewhere in Russia, organizing 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:

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 Kazakhstan. In 1925 he had taken a long trip with camels through the central and southern part of Kazakhstan and the plains were thickly dotted everywhere 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 Kazakhstan was 5 million, 3.5 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 North to Siberia in search of food. I can personally vouch for the accuracy of his statement about the suffering and starvation of many natives of Kazakhstan 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 catastrophic 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 today and he thinks Russia has lost from one-half to two-thirds of her livestock since 1928.¹⁰ 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 Kazakhstan was, of course, the government collections 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.

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 28th—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 workers, 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.

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 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 sliver of white bread 2 roubles, and free of charge, the remarks 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 6.5 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 paiful.

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.

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 a lot of 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 analyzed and scientifically balanced each day in the big laboratory they were just finishing. I wondered 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.

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 organization 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.

We arrived in a place called Tatarskia 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.

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 in 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.

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 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 skirt displaying thighs only about 3 or 4 inches thick. As Schiller took a photograph of him, two women with tears streaming down their face, 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.

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 percent 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 we had seen enormous stretches of such land for 10 hours on both sides of the rail road, said from time to time: "The peasants are wandering and the land is 'growing only weeds'."

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 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) and 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 an 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 all of it was one mass of weeds—and 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, 73 working horses and 21 young ones, 295 cattle and 70 calves—92 cows milking and 30 not milking. The 92 cows which were milked three times per day, were then (the peak of the milk season) giving per day only 553 litres, and 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 0.5 a litre. As on many other farms we visited, there were three types of cattle on the farm. First those fully socialized (i.e. 85 per cent of the milk to the Government and 15 percent to the calves); second, those collectivized but for the use of the members; and third, those belonging to individual members.

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 would 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 per cent—of the peasants in Western Siberia, he was told that all the peasants around Slavgorod were in collective farms.

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 today 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 Kazakhstan). 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 per cent of the work and 40 percent was done by horses) and acted as the Government's agent for collecting the grain from the collective farms.

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 only 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 and said, "Shut your mouth or get out of here". 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.

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 Auhagen, 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) 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 and healthy, hard-working women and had intelligent faces.

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 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.

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 could 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 percent 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 per cent of the rayon was collectivised, in 1931 80 per cent, and now 96 per cent. 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 7000 (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 percent 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 our 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 human feces, 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 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 had very swollen tummies—in a few groups which I photographed there were children with enormous, hunger-swelled stomachs.

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 collectivized, 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 south wind was coming from the dry plains of Kazakhstan, and perhaps from the arid deserts of Central Asia, and that I did not see how it could bring rain. But he would not agree, so I told him that in the southern part 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 .010 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.

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 "bugger" 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 mouldboard 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, 1,000 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.

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.

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 Germans 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.

We arrived in Tatarskai 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 gotten 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.

In the evening of May 25th we arrived in Omsk (at all the stations along the line we saw much 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 office of the 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.

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 1.5 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 percent of the 1,200 students were workers, 35 percent children of poor peasants, and 25 percent all other types. Ninety percent of the students' expenses were paid by the Government, or by factory and other types of scholarships, and 46 percent 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.

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, I cannot understand why you have such a mania for mechanizing 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 percent? 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 properly use? 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 railroads? 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.

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.

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 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 mechanization 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 40 percent, 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 Kazakhstan. 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.

On May 27th we had a typical example of Russian organization. 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 subsoil 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); 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 2.5 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 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 today, 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, and 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 the annual depreciation of the machinery would be, but whatever the true figure may be it must be extremely high. The farm is sub-divided, 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, 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.

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.

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 0.1 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 2.5 last year, and as in Western Siberia (as in the Lower and Middle Volga, the eastern part of North Caucasus, the Urals and Kazakhstan) 10 years usually give roughly 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 7.5 (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 7.5 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 grains. The price of wheat at country stations in Western Canada today 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 of \$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 15 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, and 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.

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 consumers goods.

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.

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 we had to go through to see 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 forty-five minutes 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 innumerable 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.

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 Agriculture

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.

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 \$3.00 U.S. for three packages of cigarettes, 0.5 kilos 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.

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 crop, 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.

Before we left Omsk we were glad to say goodbye to our permanent guide. He produced from his book the following statistics regarding Western Siberia 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.

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 0.5 litre

of milk, and 3 roubles for a large bun of soggy black bread with a high percentage of fibrous material. At Petropavlovsk, in Kazakhstan, late at night, the prices were still very high. A peasant at the depot told us they had no rain all spring, but the grain had germinated, and if they got rain soon they would still have a fair crop.

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.

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, 2.5 roubles for a slice of chicken, 2 roubles for 4 very small pieces of home made cheese, and 1.5 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 0.75 to 1 rouble per 0.5 litre, black bread 2.5 to 3.5 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 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.

On the train we talked to a woman from Karaganda (Middle Kazakhstan) who had a sorry story 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 Kazakhstan, 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.

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 weeds. 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.

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 izvozshchik 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, 1 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 and that 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 meetings, 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.

In the afternoon we went to the Department of Agriculture to get them to organize 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 8,893,000 in 1931 (State farms 1,112,000 collective farms 8,626,000) 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 enquired 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 791,770 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 3.5 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 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 4.5 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 2.5 centners of spring wheat per hectare, but this year they were going to get 7.5. 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!

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.

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 2.5 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 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!

I forgot to mention that the conductor on our train from Omsk to Samara told us 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.

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, 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 tons of extra grain would be produced in the U.S.S.R. and by 1933 twelve 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 airport 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 percent 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.

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 method 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) and 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 had 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.

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.

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.

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, along 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 for 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 as 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.

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 suggestion 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.

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 McCormic-Deering) and served 17 collective farms with an area of 65,000 hectares, 98 percent 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.

The first farm we stopped at was a commune organized 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 percent 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.

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.

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—0.25 of a rouble.

We left in the evening for Samara. As usual, we had no sooner got into the train when 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 peasant's last cow was not to be collectivised, that on her collective farm, and others she knew of, the members had decollectivised 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.

We were supposed to leave Samara for Moscow early on the morning of June 3rd. I got up very early, looked for an *izvozshchik* 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 2.5 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, 5 roubles for what looked like about 0.75 of a pound, eggs 4.5 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, 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 America 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, we tried to get bread, but there was none for sale—yet we were passing through an area which had a good crop last year.

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.

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 and that a number of the officials thought that to expect even 82 percent was insane optimism, and that not more than 70 percent 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 percent no matter what the truth might be. I argued that the figures recently published were serious and that to have sown only 75 percent 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 the part of the Central Black Earth area I have seen (I would not risk generalizing about the others 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 year, and that 300 new factories 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.

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.

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.

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.¹¹ 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. 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 mechanized agriculture.

(3) Schiller told me that, having been 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.

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 to 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 study of Russian flooding the markets of the world with dirt cheap wheat for more than it is worth; to let some Canadian and U.S. newspapers who gave 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, OK, 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 good deal to prick the bubble of propoganda about the terrible competitive menace of Bolshevik agriculture.

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 per cent increase in the area planted to sugar beets, the production (based on an estimate made 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 percent of the beets were spoiled 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 million 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 has 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.

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 & Nation" in a special supplement on the U.S.S.R. states that, Soviet agriculture "had turned the backward peasant into a modern mechanic".

I fully realize 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,

A. Cairns.

NOTES

1. Cairns in another report entitled "Prices in Russia, 1932" extensively develops the salary rates of Russian workers, the daily rations allotted to workers and the prices of various food commodities on the open market (CO 758/95/2). He writes:

"The only Russian prices which can be reasonably compared with prices in [England] are those of the open (bazaar) market. To the Russians the value of the rouble in the bazaar is what it will fetch in the form of goods. At the present time it is necessary to go to the bazaar for nearly everything except the daily ration of bread which, when received, is at the very nominal cost of a few kopeks per kilo.

Factory workers can get very coarse simple meals (usually soup, supplemented by the worker's bread ration which they bring with them) in the canteens attached to their factories for comparatively small sums, but their dependants are not admitted to these canteens and food for them (other than their bread ration) must be bought in the bazaar if it is not available in the co-operative societies' store. (These societies have recently been deprived of all their rights and the control of food is now exclusively in the hands of the factory director and is doled out in accordance with the quantity and quality of work done, and ration cards are immediately withdrawn from workers who play truant etc.). A few examples of observations made during the summer of 1932 will show the extent to which in the existing shortage members of the co-operative societies are thrown back on the bazaar for the necessities of life. It is usual for a ration to be assigned to a worker and another to the members of his or her family. In the examples here quoted the term "members" means members of the worker's family.

In May a farm worker obtained 500 grams of bread daily, 200 for each of four members of the worker's family. At the same place and time town workers were getting 700 grams of bread with 400 for members; and office workers 500 grams with 300 for members.

In June a worker on a collective farm was getting 4 kilos of milk a month but no meat and no butter.

A third category worker whose wages were 100 roubles a month, was getting 200 grams of black bread daily and 200 for members, but everything else had to be bought in the bazaar.

A street car conductor got 400 grams of bread a day and nothing else on his ration-card.

A third category worker whose wages were 150 roubles a month got 300 grams of bread daily, 568 grams (1.25 lbs.) sugar and one cake of soap a month, but had to buy everything else in the bazaar.

A train conductor was getting a total of 2,270 grams (5 lbs.) of bread daily for himself, his wife and his six children, and 2,270 grams (5 lbs.) of sugar monthly but nothing beyond this.

A third category worker whose wages were 150 roubles a month got 200 grams of black bread a day and nothing else. The same ration was available for a chambermaid in a hotel.

Other examples could be given but all have the same qualification. Beyond bread and sometimes a small ration of sugar or milk, according to circumstances, nearly everything has to be bought in the bazaar.

The wages from which these purchases have to be made are not directly comparable with the wages paid in capitalist countries. All are subject to "voluntary" deductions for the purposes of the State Loans, lotteries, etc., and the rates paid to the different categories of workers do not correspond to those paid in other countries. Some examples will give an idea of the amounts at the disposal of Russians for transactions in the open market:

Examples of Wages in Russia. Summer of 1932.
All gross amounts in Roubles per mensem,
no account being taken of "voluntary" deductions.

Train Conductors	60	Third Category Workers	100
	67		125
	80		150
			180
<u>Agricultural Workers</u>		<u>Industrial Workers</u>	
Unskilled State Farm Workers		Women	50
(Winter)	30		75
(Summer)	50		120
	65		
	75	Unskilled	60
	90		77
Skilled Sovhoz Workers	120	Skilled	120
	150		180
	300		
Tractor Drivers	180		
	200		
	210		
Book-keeper	120		
	200		
Sovhoz "Specialists"	200 - 500		
"Agronom"	300		
	350	Foreman	320
"Engineer"	400	Engineer	800

It is difficult to estimate the general level of wages in Russia, however, a table showing the earnings of industrial workers appears from time to time in the Narodnoe Khoziaistva. In the spring of 1932 the average monthly earnings of workers (excluding apprentices) amounted to about 105 roubles a month. The value of this sum in terms of sterling is uncertain. In theory the rouble is still a gold standard currency and the official rate of exchange for sterling is now a little under 6.5 roubles to the pound. There is an active "black bourse" however, and here rates as high as 100-120 roubles may be obtained. As the "black bourse" is a much more realistic place of exchange than the official bank, the illicit rate corresponds fairly nearly to the relative values of the two currencies measured in terms of goods in their respective home markets. There is indeed a system of special shops for foreigners and for certain Russians who have access to foreign currency, in which only valuta may be used. The prices in these Torgsin establishments are, however, quite artificial and cannot be taken as representative of the local purchasing power of the currencies concerned.

Some examples of bazaar prices which were observed in different parts of Russia during the past summer, will give an idea what the rouble means in terms of goods. In this connection it should be remembered that conditions vary in different parts of so great a country as Russia, and that the supplies of foodstuffs, particularly in a self-supplying country, vary not only with the region but also with the season—dairy products are more plentiful with the spring flush of milk, and cereals are scarce just before the harvest and more abundant when the grain has been gathered in. Subject to this caution, the average of the prices reported during the early summer may be taken as giving a general indication of how much the rouble will buy in the open market. Thus:

Black bread	per pound	2.34 roubles.
Brown bread	" "	3.00 "
Whole wheat bread	" "	3.50 "
White bread	" "	5.00 "
Fish	" "	9.00 "
Butter	" "	8.70 "

Potatoes	" "	1.30	"
Eggs	each	0.55	"
Milk	per litre	1.90	"

- Cairns was receiving a salary of £900 per year plus an allowance in lieu of subsistence of £200 per annum (CO 758/ 95/2).
- See Table 1 in the Introduction.
- Dr. Schiller—Agricultural Attaché of the German Embassy.
- Yield of Produce per Unit of Land

Yield Centners*/ Hectares**	Pounds/ Hectare	Wheat	Bushel/Acre*** Rye/Corn	Barley	Oats
1	220.40	1.48	1.59	1.85	2.62
5	1102.00	7.43	7.96	9.29	13.12
10	2204.00	14.87	15.93	18.58	26.24
15	3306.00	22.29	23.88	27.87	39.36
20	4408.00	29.72	31.84	37.16	52.48

* 1 centner = 100 kilograms = 220.4 lbs

** 1 hectare = 2.47 acres

*** wheat 1 bus = 60 lbs., Rye/Corn 1 bus = 56 lbs.,
Barley 1 bus = 48 lbs., Oats 1 bus = 34 lbs.

- Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R)
- The table below lists the Soviet cities that have had name changes since 1945

LIST OF SOVIET CITIES THAT HAVE CHANGED THEIR NAMES SINCE WORLD WAR II

Present Name (1974)	Former Name	Year of Change
Donetsk	Stalino	1961
Dushanbe	Stalinbad	1961
Kaliningrad	Königsberg (Germany)	1945
Klaypeda	Memel (Lithuania)	1945
Kommunarsk	Voroshilovsk	1959
Lugansk	Voroshilovgrad	1958
Voroshilovgrad	Lugansk	1970
Novokuznetsk	Stalinsk	1961
Novomoskovsk	Stalinogorsk	1961
Orenburg	Chkalov	1957
Ordzhonikidze	Dzardzhikau	1954
Pechenga	Petsamo (Finland)	1945
Perm'	Molotov	1957
Severodvinsk	Molotovsk	1957
Tallin	Revel (Estonia)	1945
To'lyatti	Stavropol' (Kuybyshev Ob.)	1964
Tselinograd	Akmolinsk	1961
Ussuriysk	Voroshilov	1957
Volgograd	Stalingrad	1961
Zhdanov	Mariupol'	1948°

* In 1989, the city again became Mariupol'.

Source: Mathieson, R.S. The Soviet Union: An Economic Geography (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1975) p. 311.

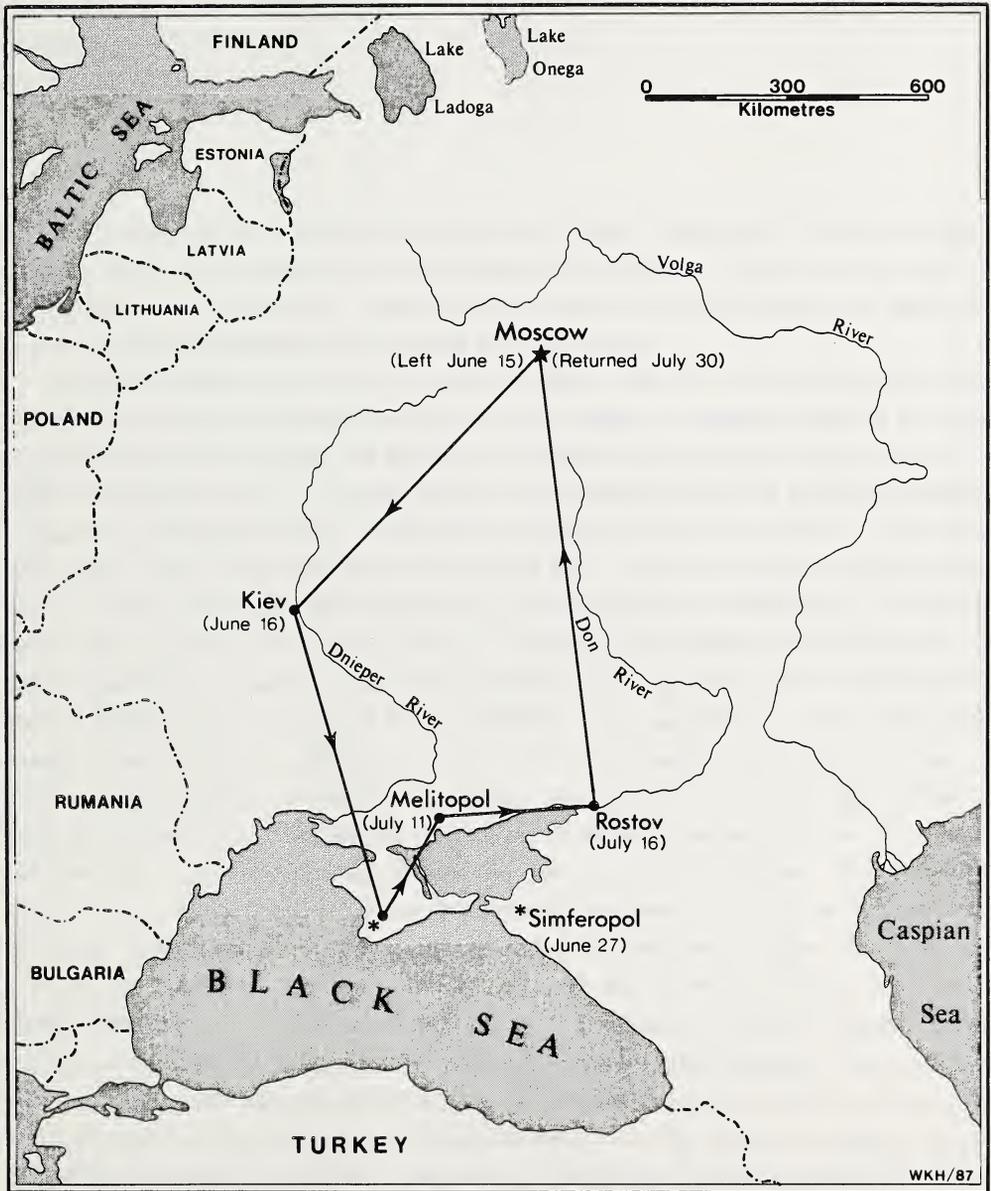
8. G.P.U. - State Political Administration (Glavnoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie)

9. M.T.S. - Machine Tractor Station

10. See note 3.

11. The article by O. Schiller "Agriculture in the Soviet Union in the Year 1931" (FO 371/16335) was translated from German into English by the British Foreign Office in Moscow and then sent to London.

**DESCRIPTION OF A TOUR IN
UKRAINE, CRIMEA AND N. CAUCASUS
BY
ANDREW CAIRNS**



Tour in Ukraine, Crimea and Northern Caucasus



MOSCOW

3rd August, 1932

I left Moscow on June 15th and returned on July 30th. During my six weeks absence I saw a good sample of the Ukraine, Crimea and Northern Caucasus. 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 1.5 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 in 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 8 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 2.5 roubles per litre, old potatoes 1.2 roubles per Russian pound of 400 grams, very little coarse black bread at 6 roubles per kilo, small rolls 1.3 roubles, 10 eggs 5.5 roubles, leg of chicken 2.5 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 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 grams 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 that 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 grams 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 other's 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 fingers across their throats, and said, in Russian "Khuosat' nyet, nichevo neyt" (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 per cent from collective farms and 40 per cent from State farms; The right side of the Ukraine, called the Kiev Oblast, has 63 per cent of peasants and 66 per cent of 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 organization) 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 .4 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 1.5 roubles per pound; bread 10.5 roubles per loaf; a policeman offering a pair of completely worn out top boots for 50 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 thousands 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 in to the towns by the thousands, that less than 80 per cent of the crop had been sown by collective farms and that 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, kolkhozes and sovkhozes, 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 was 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, 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 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.

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 Narkomzen 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 Kolkhoz 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 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. 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 per cent of the spring seeding plan and only 37.8 per cent of the potatoes, and the individual peasants only 44.6 per cent 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 jazz 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 grams of bread per day, that first category workers got 600 grams of bread per day and street car conductors only got 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, middle aged 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 Romanian 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 kolkhoz 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 150 roubles per month, and, being classed as a third category worker, only 300 grams of very poor bread per day, 1.5 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 grams 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 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 answer 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 been 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 per cent 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,

80.5 potatoes, 15 cauliflowers, 7.5 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, 237 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 148 cows, 50 per cent of which went to the Government factory for 40 to 50 kopeks per litre, depending on the percentage of butterfat; the members got 0.5 litre each per day and the rest was sold in the kolkhoz 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 product 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 visitor's 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 and 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 he 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 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 per cent of their vegetables and 25 per cent of their grain to the Government, but this year they would not deliver any vegetables to the Government, but would keep 10 per cent for their own use and sell 90 per cent 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 1.5 roubles per litre. They paid their members 50 per cent 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 grams 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 per cent, and the collective farms only 72 per cent 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 Kolkhoz Centre he said he thought I meant the Kiev rayon only, where the collective farms had sown 87 per cent and the individual peasants 60 per cent 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 fulfill 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, realized 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 thought 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 per cent of the wheat harvest in Eastern Poland and a large part of the harvest in Romania 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 organization 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 Kolkhoz 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 kolkhoz 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 kolkhozes 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 kolkhoz bazaar and pay the Government a rent of 300 roubles per year instead. Later he told me that the members got their meals for 23 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 kolkhozes had to give the Government from 25 to 30 per cent 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 organise (on the way home my guide said they made so much money because they were speculating) whereas on several nearby vegetable 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 forecasted yields as 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 per cent 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 per cent collectivisation, and 100 per cent 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 meal for sale, but plenty of ground 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 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 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 Kolkhoz 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 where 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 into the train or onto the roof, couplings and steps.

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 loaf, 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 every one 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 kolkhoz 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 Dnepropetrovsk got 400 grams of bread per day and first category workers (special type of factory workers) 800 grams per day and 500 grams 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 6.5 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 Narkomzem. 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 half a 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 1/12 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 holy-day of the proletarian sportsmen of the world - holy-day 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 sovkhoz. 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 stock 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 shop 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, 242 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, 206 potatoes and 20 in garden truck. The president said the cows (160 of them were not collectivised as they belonging 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 an 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 mechanised, they would have surpassed America.

In the evening I overheard an interesting conversation between a German-American and a Russian-American in "Insab". The first said: "Why in hell do you give men important positions just because they are communists and then as soon as they bum 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 on 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 expansion, 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 Insab 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 sovkhos. 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 showing 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 other's 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 per cent of the land and 85 per cent 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	<u>7.5</u>	<u>15</u>
	4,230.5	3,734

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 this year as compared with 10.3 in 1913 and 10.5 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 the 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
Bee (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, alas too often on paper only, with the "socialistic reconstruction of agriculture". Taking the figures for the end of 1928 to represent 100 percent, 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 percent 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 offset 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 propoganda 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 had 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 (2,136 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 them 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" follow:

	Sovkhozes	Kolkhozes	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	?
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 Dnepropetrovsk at 4 p.m. on June 27th for Simferopol, the capital of the Crimea. Watching the crops until it got dark was 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 groups 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 percent 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 sovkhoses, 21 machine-tractor stations (with 2,000 tractors, 50 per cent 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 sovkhoses; eighty-five per cent of this agriculture was collectivised and they had completed the spring sowing plan and a counter plan of 15 per cent. The four grain sovkhoses had 117,065 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 sovkhoses and a little less on the kolkhoses) 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 7.5 roubles per kilo, brown bread 6 to 6.5 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 1.30 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 0.5 to 0.75 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 5.5. 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 workers, 50 cows, 140 horses, 240 pigs, 17 tractors (7 Vickers), 30 hectares of vines, 11,000 rabbits, 2,400 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, men's overalls 50 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 were 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 per cent 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 grams or 10.4 roubles per pound, and fat pork 3.4 roubles per 100 grams), I was met by the director and others and driven to the nearby grain sovkhos. 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 sovkhos. 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 per cent 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) under-estimates 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 8.5 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 10.5 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 sovkhos. 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 per cent 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 dependants) from the Government. Forty per cent of the students were recruited from workers in the machine tractor stations and 60 percent from collective farms; 17 percent of the students were of German origin. At lunch I became very ill and had to be taken to the sovkhos and put to bed. I thought I had caught malaria; the people on the farm said it was sun-stroke; 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, 3,739 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 15 large and 92 small winnowers, 12 pick-up machines. Livestock: 174 horses, 116 cows, 200 sows and 400 young pigs, 180 sheep, 1,599 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 sovkhos and so poor on the adjacent farms, and was told it was because the sovkhos had summer fallowed in April and May and the kolkhozes 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 kilometers) 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 grams 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 sovkhos 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 crop, 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 sorghums, 340 potatoes, and 101 sugar beets. They said this rye would yield only 5 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 5.5 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 grams of grain per day. We were told in the restaurant that each of the 500 workers got 800 grams 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 1.5 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 the 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-day 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 sovkhozes 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 by the sugar monopoly for beet was to be doubled, but the price 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 sovkhoz. The farm had 1,500 hectares under cultivation, 500 vegetables, 400 wheat, 50 barley, 450 hectares of 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 kolkhoz 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 grams 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 extra-ordinarily 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 they 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 mosquitos 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 the 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 75 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 sovkhoz called "Bolsheviki". The farm had 8,502 winter wheat, 81 winter rye, 165 spring wheat, 303 barley, 100 oats, 100 maize, 350 sorghums, 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 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 agronomist told me he thought their winter wheat would yield 10 centers 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 15-30 I.H.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 sovkhoz was 300 roubles per month which was for the agronomist; the tractorists received 200 and the workers down to 50 (a few got only 25).

After dinner we visited a very fine Czechoslovakian kolkhoz. The farm had 265 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, 654 cattle (300 milking cows, producing 8 litres per day

when we were there), 203 working horses, 27 young horses, and 215 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 steam rust and was certainly not worth harvesting. The president told us 50 per cent of their dairy products were delivered under contract to the Government and the remainder sold through a kolkhoz 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 kolkhoz (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 9.5 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 per cent collectivised.

Next day (July 13th) we asked if we could be taken to Molochenko, an adjoining rayon, 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, where we wanted to see the largest grain sovkhov 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 sovkhov 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 sovkhov. 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 sovkhov, there was much fluidity of labour. The workers were given 800 grams 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 2.5 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 perspectives", 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 kolkhoz 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 Rispolkom 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 Sorghum 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 kolkhoz 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 10 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, black bread, 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 38,526 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 3.5 centners per hectare, oats 5, and barley only 2.5.

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 [material] 95.81, 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 per cent Tatars, who have far more brains than the Russians.

Vyvan 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 know 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 specialised dairy farm (on the bald, hot, wind-swept 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 2,800 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 like 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 really 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 know 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 1920 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 38 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 so much 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 ear-marks 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 be changed from a valuta to a rouble basis. His noble example brought him wide-spread 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 50 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 four weeks instead of two. 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 per cent 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 and they simply could not get one single spare 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 15 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, 2/3 in crop and 1/3 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 per cent 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 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, 1,534, 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 per cent had been completely, and the remainder 50 per cent winter killed), 7.5 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 baldy 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 youth 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 sovkhos 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 grams 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 30 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 could 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 50 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 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 recognise 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 a construction engineer.

I left Gigant very early in 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 jewellery and 6 coats at 320 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 per cent collectivised) and 5 sovkhoses (one grain, two horse, one cattle and one chicken) in the rayon; 140,000 people, two 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 per cent 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 per cent of it winter killed, 60 per cent of it rusted, and that the very most they could expect was 4 to 5 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 Verblut.

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 grams of bread a day (also 300 for each of his children) and only 0.5 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 grams of bread per day (600 for wife and 700 for each child), 1.5 kilos of sugar per month (and 500 grams for wife and 500 for each child), meat four times a month, butter once a month, 0.25 litres of milk per day for each child under 15, 1.5 kilos per month of meal, 1.5 litres of sunflower oil per month, 2 to 2.5 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 grams, 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 mowing 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 per cent 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 per cent 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 the 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. 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 that 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 4.5 roubles per kilo, potatoes 2 roubles per kilo, eggs 10 for 5.5 roubles, rice 1, 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 8/10 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.), 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 sovkhoses a success.

On June 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 per cent of their agriculture in the N. Caucasus; they had 343 sovkhoses (including 35 grain and 7 combination farms); winter wheat and rye 3,900,000 hectares, spring wheat 2,200,000, 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 not get more than 3 or 3.5 at the very most) as compared with 7.5 last year; 6 to 6.5 of spring wheat as compared with 3.5 to 4 last year when they had a drought and very hot winds in the eastern half of the region; 7.5 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 7.5 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 kolkhozes. 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 combatting 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 per cent as I was told in Salsk that they had lost 40 per cent, 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 per cent of the winter grains due to winter killing—at Verblud I was told they had lost from 35 to 40 per cent, at Gigant 20 per cent completely, and the remainder 50 per cent, winter killed, at Salsk 30 per cent. I told him I could not see how they could get from 6 to 6.5 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 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 30 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 two treats I had during 4.5 months in Russia. The first half-day I spent with Drs. Smitz and Muller visiting 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 had 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 or 2 centners. On the third road we saw a similar sight; the field of weeds (with a little wheat underneath) belonged to a kolkhoz. 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 per cent 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 Causasus 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 kolkhoz "summer fallow" neck-high in weeds. Dr. Smitz told me that as they had sown their wheat early (wheat from the 15th to 30th of September gave from 20 to 30 per cent 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 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 house, I went up 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 sovkhos 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 kolkhozes and noticed that their wheat would not yield more than 1 to 2 centners. Of the many interesting things we saw on the live-stock 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 per cent 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 per cent 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 my mind the expression 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 the 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 sovkhov, 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 sovkhov, said he could not see any grain for weeds all the way to the Concession. Another said the kolkhozes 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 3, 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 kolkhoz 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 sovkhos 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 per cent 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 specialisation. They made a most fortunate mistake in the spring by sowing on one field 40 kilos of sorghum 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, sorghums 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 5.5 centners of winter wheat, in 1928 it was too dry and they got only 10.5, in 1929 they got 17, in 1930 15.5, 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 per cent 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 5,600,00 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 thought 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 kolkhoz 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 2.8 centners per hectare. All the way (north-east) from Odessa to Dneipropetrovsk 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 some one 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 per cent of the peasants in the whole Ukraine were collectivised as compared with 33.7 per cent in 1930, 22.9 in 1929 and only 5 per cent in 1928. At the present time approximately 75 per cent 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 per cent of the land in the Ukraine was worked by tractors and 80 per cent 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 28.5 million hectares sown to all crops and about 27.5 in 1932; winter wheat 4.5 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; sunflowers 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 kolkhoz 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 kolkhoz 130 as compared with 63 in 1930. The kolkhozes had approximately 19.3 million hectares under cultivation, the sovkhoses 4.8 and the individual peasants 5. The kolkhozes and sovkhoses produced 82 per cent of the wheat although they had only 75 per cent of the wheat area—65 and 10 per cent respectively. They expected 8.5 centners per hectare of all grains in the Ukraine or about the same as last year and 20 to 30 per cent less than in 1930. They expected 10 to 10.5 centners per hectare of winter wheat or about 10 per cent 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 per cent as compared with the long term average of only 5.6 per cent. 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 1/3 million working horses and about 15 per cent 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 33 1/3 per cent since 1928 whereas the Dniepropetrovsk oblast lost 70 per cent 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 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 per cent of the gross harvest in the areas of good crops and only 25 per cent in the areas of poor crops, they should be successful. I asked if it was true, as I had heard, that the Government was 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

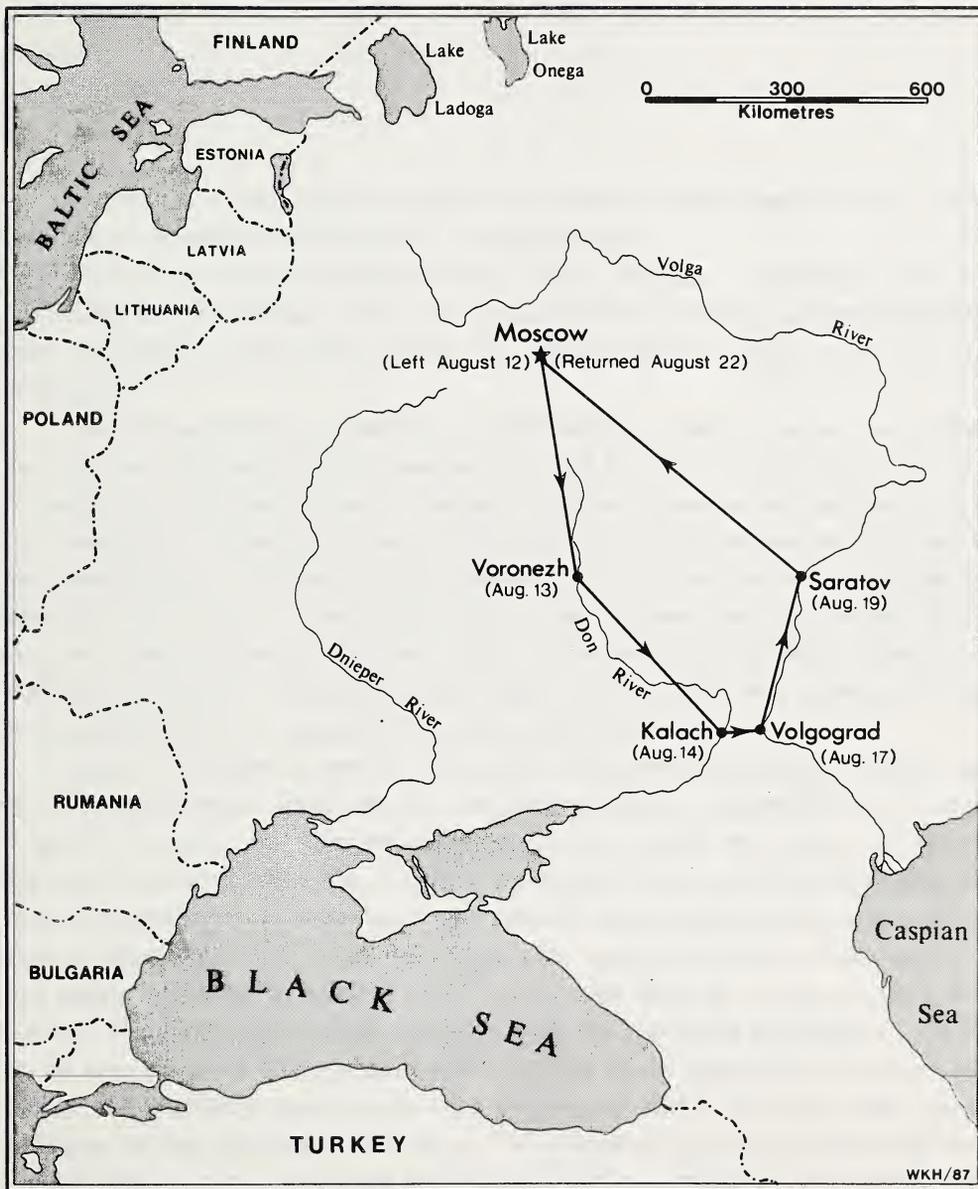
could not discuss. When harvesting started, they had increased the bread rations to workers on the sovkhoses from 800 to 1,000 grams per day, but he did not know when, or if, the workers' ration would be similarly increased. They still intended to thoroughly specialise their agriculture, on the kolkhozes as well as in the sovkhoses, 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 kolkhoz 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 kolkhoz 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 kolkhozes and sovkhoses and it was the task of the Government to improve the others.

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

A. CAIRNS.

**DESCRIPTION OF A TOUR IN
THE VOLGA REGION
by
ANDREW CAIRNS**



Tour in the Volga Region

Moscow

22 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, uncultured 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 3 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 ragged, 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 to 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 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 8.5 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	1,700,900	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 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 per cent 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 3.5 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 was 45 roubles per kilo in the bazaar, and bread was 3.5 to 4 roubles and had been 5 before the 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 was 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 and could neither read nor write, 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 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 grams of black bread per day (also 200 for his wife) and absolutely nothing else; in the bazaar butter was 10 roubles per pound, meat 7.5 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 grams 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 kolkhoz 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 the train I asked what the people were going to live on during the winter and he said only black bread and a few potatoes. On the way to the station I was told that the collective farms around Voronezh 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 unchewed. 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, kolkhozes, sovkhozes, 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 Voronezh 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 seeds 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 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 4.5 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. 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 Rospolkim told me that 97 per cent of the 42,000 people in the rayon were collectivised; that their sovkhos had gathered all its grain in good condition, but the kolkhozes 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 sovkhos ("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 per cent 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

average monthly wage of the unskilled workers was 65 roubles, but the skilled workers received from 120 to 300, the agronomists 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 0.5 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 those dates yielded very poorly. They ploughed all their summer fallow land (1/5 of the total) in May and thus got a good deal higher yield than the kolkhozes who ploughed all their summer fallow land (1/6 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 in Voronezh 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 Talovaya 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 accommodation 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 kolkhoz) would not agree and said their winter wheat was yielding only 6 centners, their spring wheat 7, and their rye 9, 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, 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 sovkhoz 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 kolkhoz 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 stock 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 anticommunist, but after visiting the Park of Culture and Rest he 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 2.5 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 3.5 hours and later the captain had sworn that they 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 3 bob [1 bob = £0.05] a bottle, because their guides were ignorant and told a lot of lies, and a lot of other "becausees". The party were told to assemble at 8:30 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 1.5 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 grams 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 800, that the workers got two meals per day in the factory (45 kopeks for breakfast and 85 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 1.5 kilos of black and .5 kilo of white bread per day, 1.5 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 .5 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 grams of bread per day which he said they were getting, he knew as well as I did that the maximum allowance was 800 grams 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 grams. 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 grams of black bread and absolutely nothing else. The next group said the same except they got 120 roubles per month, 800 grams 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, 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 "bo-hunks", Bulgarians and others who had returned from the States. He had been editor of the English newspaper in the plant for 2.5 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. 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 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 1.5 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 collectivisation 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 peoples' 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, McGuire, 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 conversations by asking me questions, but he was most unfortunate in his choice of questions—what the sugar crop was like, etc. They asked me what I thought the purchasing power of the rouble was and when I said about 2d., McGuire 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.

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 5.5 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 5.5 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 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 (0.5 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 grams 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, kolkhozes, 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 grams 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 grams 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 kolkhoz 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 upstairs and sat down to my Intourist fare—special Russian dish of raw fish, a fine white fish fried in butter, fresh tomatoes and cucumbers, 0.5 pounds of butter, 0.25 pounds 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 downstairs, 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 professor 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 .5 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 sovkhos 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 4.3 million hectares (3.5 in the Lower Volga and the rest in the Middle Volga) and 2.5 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 2.5 million hectares to fulfil Stalin's request. They had planned 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 Kazakhstan 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 96 per cent 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 grams). 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 today 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 Kazakhstan 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 Kazakhstan, could be grown anywhere, even in Moscow. Last year they had produced experimentally 25 tons of pure rubber. They now had about 2.5 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 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.

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The literature on the topics of soviet agriculture, politics, and famine is very extensive. The items listed below are some of the most useful materials in English covering the theme presented here as well as providing confirmatory detail on other closely related topics.

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