

Gabriel Rappeport / Гавриїл Раппепорт: Biographical note

Gabriel (Gavriil) Rappeport / Гавриїл Раппепорт (1893-1935): Photographer who documented the 1920s famine in Kherson, Ukraine.

Gabriel Rappeport, son of a well-known professional photographer in Kherson, Ukraine, joined his father's studio and became active in a variety of professional capacities. He showed an early interest and aptitude in photojournalism particularly during the years of revolutionary ferment following WWI. During the famine of 1921-23, which was particularly severe in and around Kherson province, Rappeport took the initiative of documenting the horrors of famine that enveloped the region. "The pictures distributed in copies, reproductions and posters reproduced the full picture of the national disaster. They forced domestic and foreign charity organizations to send aid to the hungry. This saved hundreds of lives."¹ The local commission then tasked him with creating a "Museum of Famine," which he accomplished in 1923. It is said that Fridtjof Nansen, High Commissioner of the International Famine Relief Committee, gave Rappeport his own camera that he used in his famous polar expeditions, as an acknowledgment of Rappeport's work in documenting the famine.²

Rappeport later embarked on a career as an official Soviet photojournalist with assignments throughout the Soviet Union until his death in an airplane accident in 1935. No record has been found that he documented the Holodomor in the 1930s. His photographs are housed in the Kherson Regional Museum / Херсонський обласний краєзнавчий музей.

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¹ Білай, "Гавриїл Раппепорт – Відомий Херсонський Фотокореспондент."

² "Незалежний Спостерігач - Независимый Наблюдатель."

