

No 157

315 989 Poltava oblast
Khorol raion
Village of Khvoshchivka
Hlushchenko, D. D.

P.1

“1933: Famine”

Good day!

For the Memorial book “1933: Famine” (I think that is the correct title), I am sending you materials about those who died from hunger as recorded by the Khvoshchivka Village Council in 1933. We collected the materials in the summer of 1988 and submitted them to a raion newspaper for publication.

In the same issue of the newspaper,

P.2

materials were published about the fate of villages and hamlets of the former Pokrovska Bahachka volost¹ now belonging to a village council of Khorol raion by someone named V. Kochur.

Would you make use of this material? Write to me, and I will send it to you.

December 24, 1988 [signature]
Hlushchenko, Danylo Demydovych

¹ Administrative territorial unit later replaced by *raion* (district).

P.3 (newspaper clipping)

Kolhospna Pravda

The newspaper of the Khorol Raion Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the Raion Council of People's Deputies of Poltava oblast
December 17, 1988, p. 2.

The Pages of History: Pain of the Soul. The Famine of 1933

Villages and hamlets of the former Khvoshchivka Village Council could not avoid the famine of 1933. The bony hand of death took the lives of many totally innocent people. It took them all: working people, the elderly, and children who had only started understanding happiness and grief in their lives.

The data on the number of the deceased for this Village Council is nowhere to be found, though it should exist. And it is our duty [to make sure] that next generations know the true history of their predecessors in the time of tyranny imposed by Stalin-the-despot.

Authors of this correspondence have agreed: the number of famine victims in Khvoshchivka, Petrakiivka and Olimpiadivka, which was at the time part of the Khvoshchivka Village Council, in the tragic months of 1933 must be counted and published even if 55 years later.

We visited several families of the elders [*starozhyliv*] in each of these villages. They were the ones who helped us remember the names of the heads of households who lived in 1933, and recalled together how many and who died from hunger in one or another family. We acknowledge the active and expert assistance of Mykhailo Ivanovych Komar, Uliana Fedorivna Shkola, Mykhailo Trokhymovych Pisetsky, Hryhorii Ivanovych Pokoienko, Nataliya Demianivna Shabala, and others who helped to create a more or less accurate record of the famine victims.

With our joint efforts we came up with the following gruesome statistics: 111 people died from hunger in Khvoshchivka, 26 in Petrakiivka, 2 in Olimpiadivka, with a total of 139 accounted for across the village council (with an error probability of 2-5 people).

In some families within the territory of the village council, all family members died, including the families of Prokip Tiutiunnyk (6 people), three in Ivan Platonovych

Bohatyrenko's , the same in Yukhym Huzychenko's , and others. At that time almost everybody was swollen or emaciated.

Many dozens or maybe even several hundreds of lives from Khvoshchivka, Petrakiivka, and Olimpiadivka were saved thanks to the director of the Khvoshchivka peatland development site Arok Aazarovych Zaturensky. He employed many people there and organized two meals daily for those who worked there and members of their families. He lent two tons of flour to the collective farm, which was used to cook what they called *balanda* [thin and lean broth] for those starving in the most critical days before the harvest was collected. This gave many fellow-villagers the opportunity to survive.

A.A. Zaturensky was persecuted in the 1930s and perished.

Why did this terrible human tragedy happen?

First, the 1933 famine was preceded by one may say, the stormy years of numerous grain procurement campaigns. Grain was extorted from both collective farmers and independent farmers. Special so-called "extortion brigades" (*buksyrni bryhady*) expropriated everything from storage and from households, including what they called bread grain and bean seeds. They uncovered (using crowbars and shovels) and took everything from hiding places to which people had had to resort to have grain for a "rainy" day. A few people managed to hide some grain, as in most cases these "extortion brigades" were quite heavy-handed and followed unlawful (sometimes mindless) instructions blindly.

Second, collective farmers were paid nothing per workday for collecting the harvest in 1932, and they only got a poor harvest of potatoes, beetroots, corn, or other vegetables from their gardens.

So the villagers met the winter of 1932-33 with food product shortages.

The famine was approaching inevitably...

Was it possible to stop or avert the upcoming tragedy in this situation in the Khorol area or across the country in the first half of 1933? Yes, it was. One of the authors of this correspondence, A. H. Komar, saw a large supply of grain at a storage facility near Khorol railway station in early 1933 -- and unfortunately, not far from the

depot, people who were weak, swollen, or even dead. And now in the time of *glasnost*² and democratization, we have learned from mass media that there was enough grain in the country, and even part of it would have been enough to save the hungry from starvation. But this was not done...

On the order of the “great leader and helmsman,” millions of centners³ of grain, expropriated forcefully from collective and independent farms, were taken abroad. You see, Stalin needed hard currency, not hungry people who were dropping dead in Ukraine, Kuban, and Kazakhstan. Only a soulless person, a tyrant, could undertake such action without remorse!

Stalin-the-gravedigger followed a very simple calculation: millions of centners of grain were taken abroad by ship and train, and millions of our people were taken to grave pits at cemeteries by carts...

A. Komar, head of the Khvoshchivka “The Paris Commune” collective farm in 1933;

D. Hlushchenko, retired teacher of the Khvoshchivka 8 grade school, veteran of the Great Patriotic War.

² “Openness and transparency” (in the former Soviet Union) - the policy or practice of more open consultative government and wider dissemination of information, initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev from 1985.

³ A unit of weight in parts of the former Soviet Union equal to 100 kilograms (220.46 pounds).