

Vinnytsia
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The unprecedented famine in 1933 gripped the whole of Ukraine and the Ukrainian population.

There was a lead up before the famine came knocking at the door.

Stalin learned well Trotsky's theory of "turning the screws" and eventually had him killed (via Beria).

It was decided in one fell swoop to carry out complete collectivization as quickly as possible, to drive the peasantry in, like they drive a herd of animals.

Stalin thought that if they did not carry out collectivization, some peasants could grow into capitalists; especially dangerous were the *kurkuls*.

I remember very well 1931-32; I was 17 years old, and I was studying in my second year at the workers' faculty [specific program for workers] at the Vinnytsia Pharmaceutical Institute.

During these years in Ukraine, the situation with foods products was terrible; there were none. The collective farm peasantry worked for free, didn't receive grain or money, which was the case with my father, who left the collective farm and was hired to work as a guard in a Vinnytsia office.

They imposed very high taxes on individual farms to push them into the collective farms. Some individuals could not withstand such pressure of shame and bullying; they decided to drive their horses from the yard; they then wandered through the streets of the village looking for food, and when winter came, the horses usually died.

The collective farmers left the fields, the individual farmers left their fields, and went to look for a better life, a better destiny to work for a piece of bread and to survive. Collective farms and individual lands for the most part were impoverished, left empty, unsown, there was no one to work them.

The peasants' resistance did not have much effect; they were *de-kurkulized*, even the ones who were going along were subjected to expulsion to Solovki (labour camp), Siberia, and other places.

The hastiness of the formation of the collective farms in Ukraine meant that they took the bread, took it all away. Such Stalinist methods of leadership led to grief and a tragic famine. In Ukraine, more than 10 million people died of starvation.

The peasantry was brought to poverty and beggary. The food producers did not have anything to eat, and in the spring of 1933 the townspeople saw with their own eyes how peasants from all the villages of the area flooded into the city for a piece of bread with outstretched hands, and the starving filled all the streets of the city. The city was also starving and so could not help them. The starving died like flies that had been poisoned; city transportation could not manage to bring the dead bodies to the graveyard for burial. In 1933, students received rations of 50 grams of bread, and the majority of our students were dying. I became all swollen, my mother saved me. At that time, green currents and apples appeared. Mother cooked a soup, and 50 grams of bread was divided into three parts: for me, my mother and father; in addition, I went to collect couch grass, it was dried, cut into small pieces, ground in a mortar [makitra]. We took this flour and added green apples and baked pancakes; this is how I survived, and from September 1933, I received 100 grams of bread.

In the early days of May 1933, they proposed I take the final exam for the third year of the *rabfak* [workers faculty], because the city Komsomol was ordering me to the soviet farm of the village of Kovalivka, Nemyriv raion, as a representative for carrying out mass political agitation amongst workers and collective farmers. The fields were poorly cultivated, the tractors and other agricultural machinery were more often idle than operating, there were no specialists.

Before my arrival in Kovalivka, which had more than ten thousand inhabitants, H. I. Petrovsky had been there. By his order one train car of flour was delivered to Kovalivka. The flour was apportioned to the people; they baked bread and ate it and even more began to die. The crucial fact was that neither the medical staff nor the village leaders were in control.

After the conclusion of my assignment there, I was packing to go home, and the leader signed off on documents for the monthly work, expressed gratitude, and ordered that I be given 500 grams of bread for the road baked from bran. It was three times further to go by road to Nemyriv station, so I went through the field and the forest. As I went across the field and approached the forest, sixty meters away I saw five human figures, leaning on trees. They stood without moving, gripped with fear. I thought I was trapped. I began to speak loudly; nobody reacted and they gave no signs of life. I came up to one and pushed him with a stick. One of them seemed to still be alive; I took some bread from my suitcase, approached him to give it to him to eat, but it turned out he was dead.

This terrible story has haunted me throughout my life.
In four and a half pages.

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