

Dear Sergo [Ordzhonikidze],

I'm writing you from Novosibirsk. I have driven around several collective farms [kolkhozes] and consider it necessary to inform you about a few items. I was in various kolkhozes--not productive and relatively unproductive ones, but everywhere there was only one sight--that of a huge shortage of seed, famine, and extreme emaciation of livestock.

In the kolkhozes which I observed I attempted to learn how much the livestock had diminished in comparison with the years 1927-28. It turns out that kolkhoz Ziuzia has 507 milch cows at present while there were 2000 in '28; kolkhoz Ust'-Tandovskii collectively and individually has 203 head, earlier they had more than 600; kolkhoz Kruglo-Ozernyi at present has 418 head of beef cattle and 50 held by kolkhozniks, in 1928 there were 1800 head; kolkhoz Goldoba collectively and individually has 275 head, in 1929 there were 1000 plus head, this kolkhoz now has 350 sheep, in 1929 there were 1500. Approximately the same correlations were found also in the kolkhozes Ol'gino and Novo-Spasski.

The raion which I visited (Barabinskii) is known for its butter export, but even in the other raions of Western Siberia the decline of livestock farming during this period is not much smaller.

These are facts that I myself checked, and on this basis I think that the data in the general census recently carried out by Gosplan significantly embellish the real picture.

The situation of the kolkhoz livestock farms is a bad one, primarily because of lack of feed. Milk production has reached extremely low levels of 1, 2 or 3 liters per day instead of the 5-7 liters normal for this region in a high-yield year [crossed out: "as noted by kolkhozniks and individual farmers"]. The poor condition of the livestock cannot be blamed on poor care or poor labor organization since in most of the kolkhozes I visited, the situation in terms of care and labor organization, relatively speaking, is not bad (although it could be much better), but in any case it is immeasurably better than in the butter-producing state farms [sovkhozes] of the raion, which I also visited.

And so, undoubtedly, if the collectivized livestock is sufficiently fed every year, we can increase greatly the yield of commodity production, but this still does not remedy the situation, in that the sovkhozes and kolkhozes will not be able to meet the needs of the country for meat and butter in the next 2-3 years, and I think it is now necessary, when the socialistic sector of the villages has been strengthened, to speed up the growth of livestock farming in the private households of the kolkhozniks and individual farmers. The resolution of the Central Committee forbidding collectivization of the last cow is somewhat of a plus in this regard, but this is not the main issue. The main issue is the fact that almost all of the kolkhoznik's livestock is contracted and removed. This livestock consists of the last cows and last sheep. In addition, when this livestock is contracted, the kolkhoznik and individual farmer slaughter off the rest. As a result, in the villages where I have observed this situation, not more than 20-30% of the

kolkhozniks have one cow each and a few sheep, but as a rule, the kolkhoznik and individual farmer not only do not raise livestock, but they try to get rid of or slaughter those they do own.

If this situation continues, then in my opinion, next year the shortage of meat, leather, and fats will be greater than this year.

The regional [Party] workers firmly believe that the sovkhoses and the com-commodity farms of the kolkhozes will be able to supply the nation already this year with the necessary production and express the idea that private ownership of livestock by the kolkhozniks should cease.

I think we should undertake all measures to increase private ownership of livestock by the kolkhoznik or else there is no way out of the present periodic shortage of products.

The second item concerns the sowing campaign. The situation is such that there is not enough seed in the kolkhozes. There is no way that we will be able to fulfill the plan for grain production, and the shortfall in the krai will probably be 15-20 percent. Besides this, horses are quite emaciated, a significant number of them have already died, and in addition, the people do not have provisions. And so the spring planting will occur in exceptionally tight circumstances, but I figure that with the right organization of seed distribution within the krai and among the kolkhozes we can achieve such a level that the gross yield in 1932 will rise above not only the gross yield of last year, but even that of the high-yield year of 1930.

How can we accomplish this? Here is the situation: all kolkhozes have been given a plan for sowing. [crossed out: Some areas were given state subsidies in order to carry out this plan. As a result] some kolkhozes have enough or nearly enough seed (including the state subsidy), but other kolkhozes have barely any seed. Since the planting will be carried out according to plan, one group of kolkhozes will sow all fields, but another group with less seed will be faced with a large underfulfillment of the sowing plan. How does this relate to crop capacity? The point is that in these circumstances fields which may yield an extremely insignificant harvest will be sown in the first group of kolkhozes; that is, not only the fallow and autumn fields will be sown, but if the plan is followed blindly even the salt-marshes, on which absolutely nothing grows, will be sown (as was done last year); whereas fallow and autumn fields in the second group of kolkhozes which that readied last year and have proven to be productive will remain unsown.

In order to prevent this situation it is necessary to change the existing plan, but no one wants to do this, even though they understand perfectly well that it is imperative to review the plan. The situation I discovered in the kolkhozes that I observed last year was that at least 30% of all the sown fields were sown by the kolkhozes at too late a date, merely to carry out the sowing plan (this is one of the reasons for the crop failure); on the other hand, fields known to produce a less than decent harvest were sown, also merely to carry out the plan. This year the same episode will be repeated if instructions on behalf of the Central Committee are not

be issued accordingly--in a time of acute seed deficiency a significant amount of seed will be wasted on worthless land, the sowing will occur at a time when the land is already drying out, that is, when it is too late to sow, but the fallow and autumn fields of the second group of kolkhozes will remain underutilized. These conditions guarantee a meager harvest, and in some places complete crop failure, only because a plan was given based on a forecast of spring planting, consisting of as many favorable qualifying indicators as possible, not considering that the fall harvest will result in extremely unfavorable qualitative results.

And so I come to my second conclusion--that the Central Committee give the order to all regional organizations (as soon as possible, there is little time left before the spring planting) depending on the conditions of each raion and kolkhoz, that the plan be changed in such a way as to produce the best qualitative results. For this it is imperative to conduct a review from the standpoint of 1) sowing all prepared fields (fallow and autumn fields) without exception; 2) redistribution of seed among the kolkhozes in the time remaining before the planting date so that the planting be completed within 15 days, and under no circumstances more than 17 days; 3) and finally, that the improvement of fallow land be stipulated for 1933.

In fulfilling these conditions, given average or especially favorable climatic conditions, the gross yield, and consequently, even the commodity output of bread may yield not less but even more than in 1930, even if the sown area declines. But in addition, I believe that in reality the sown area will not decline because last year and the year before all agricultural agencies and Party organizations pushed madly for quantitative indicators, the planting season was extremely lengthy, they sowed worthless land and, as a rule, only lands that were suitable and were sown at the correct time were productive. If in following this course (to conceal the actual nature of things with quantitative indicators) we immediately start and propose to review the plan from the standpoint of achieving the best qualitative indicators [crossed out: results] (taking into account the seed shortage), then we can reach the necessary results.

Third issue--the peasant's attitude.

Their attitude is utterly bad in light of the famine and the fact that they are losing their last cows through contracting--as a result the kolkhoznik has neither bread nor milk. I saw all this with my own eyes and am not exaggerating. People are starving, living on food substitutes, they grow weaker, and naturally, under such circumstances, their mood is hostile. I have not seen such an attitude as is now found in the villages, due to famine and the loss of the last cows and sheep through contracting, in a long time. I will inform you of the facts that substantiate this when we meet. Upon arriving in Moscow, I will try to see Stalin and inform him, or if he cannot spare the time, I will write him a letter.

It seems that you told me in 1926-27 (in Morozovka), when the opposition was making quite furious attacks on the Central Committee that Stalin sees farther than the rest of you. This is undoubtedly so and was substantiated during the period from 1923

on and especially since the establishment of the five-year plan. But in order for him to see beyond everyone, one must, with absolute objectivity, relate to him those facts which are based on reality. I will attempt to do this upon my arrival in Moscow, and I will tell him what I have seen with my own eyes. Maybe I am drawing incorrect conclusions, but I acquainted myself thoroughly with the factual situation and it seems to me that it is utterly imperative that Stalin take up this matter. This sounds like those arguments the German Social Democrats made in Marx's lifetime, saying, "I know the factual situation, but let 'papa' Marx draw the conclusion." I have nothing new to say besides what I have already related, and I will just repeat what the German Social Democrats used to say: "Let 'papa' Stalin draw the conclusions, and I will describe the factual situation as it is."

Take care. Feigin

19/9 April 32

At the same time I am sending you the doctor's statement on the famine in peasant families and in turn I corroborate that I observed a similar situation.

Top Secret

TO THE HEAD OF THE WESTERN SIBERIA REGIONAL BOARD OF HEALTH Comrade TRAKMAN.

Copy to POKROV REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE ALL-UNION COMMUNIST PARTY (Bosheviks), REGIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE and RUSSIAN COMMUNIST LEAGUE

MEMORANDUM

On the instructions of the Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) issued to Kiselev on 24 March 1932 on the subject of finding hunger-caused illness, several families of the Kartsovskii village soviet were observed and the following was found: as stated by soviet chairman Comrade Sukhanov and secretary of the First Party Organization Comrade Medvedev, a series of written and oral statements from the kolkhozniks of this village, that they and their families suffer from starvation, were received.

The statements were made by the following people: Gorokhova Mariia, Pautova Malan'ia, Rogozina Irina, Logacheva Ustin'ia, and others. The soviet chairman, the secretary of the First Party Organization and other communists substantiate the fact that the kolkhozniks use animals that have died as food.

Together with the soviet chairman and other citizens I visited the quarters of the above-mentioned kolkhozniks and also as per my wish I observed a series of homes besides the aforementioned in

order to be convinced that the worst family cases were not chosen as an example.

From my observation of 20 homes in first and second Karpov, I found only in one home, that of a Red Army veteran, a relative condition of nourishment, some flour and bread, but the rest subsist on food substitutes. Almost in every home either children or mothers were ill, undoubtedly due to starvation, since their faces and entire bodies were swollen.

An especially horrible picture of the following families:

1) The family of Konstantin Sidel'nikov who had gone to trade his wife's remaining shirts, skirts, and scarves for bread. The wife lay ill, having given birth 5 days earlier, and 4 very small children as pale as wax with swollen cheeks sat at the filthy table like marmots, and with spoons ate, from a common cup, hot water into which had been added from a bottle a white liquid of questionable taste and sour smell, which turned out to be skim milk (the result of passing milk through a separator). Konstantin Sidel'nikov and his wife are excellent kolkhozniks--prime workers, experienced kolkhozniks.

2) Iakov Sidel'nikov has 2 children and elderly parents, both 70, living in one room, but they eat separately; that is, the elderly obtain their own food substitutes with their savings; the son, Iakov Sidel'nikov, with his own; they hide their food substitutes from each other outside (I have attached examples of these food substitutes to this memorandum). The elderly in tears ask: "Doctor, give us death!"

3) Filipp Borodin has earned 650 work-days, has a wife and 5 children ranging from one-and-a-half to nine years of age. The wife lies ill on the oven, 3 children sit on the oven, they are as pale as wax with swollen faces, the one-and-a-half year old sits pale by the window, swollen, the 9 year old lies ill on the earthen floor covered with rags, and Filipp Borodin himself sits on a bench and continuously smokes cigarettes made of repulsively pungent tobacco, cries like a babe, asks death for his children. In tears he asks Comrade Sukhanov: "Give us at least 1 kilo of potatoes, give us at least 1 liter of milk, after all, I worked all summer and even now I work unceasingly (now he takes care of the bulls and in the summer he tends the grazing cows).

According to the statement by Comrade Sukhanov and the brigadier of the kolkhoz "Red Partisan," Borodin was a non-complaining worker.

Borodin does not even have food substitutes for nourishment, two days ago he and his family ate two sickly piglets thrown out of the common farmyard. In the Borodin home there is unbelievable filth, dampness, and stench, mixed with the smell of tobacco. Borodin swears at the children: "The devils don't die, I wish I didn't have to look at you!" Having objectively investigated the condition of Borodin himself I ascertain that he (Borodin) is starting to slip into psychosis due to starvation, which can lead to his eating his own children.

My inspection of the series of families took place at the dinner

hour, where they use those same food substitutes which they eat with hot water, but in several homes (2) on the table there were gnawed bones from a sickly horse. According to the explanations of the kolkhozniks, they themselves prepare food in the following manner: they grind sunflower stems, flax and hemp seeds, chaff, dreg, colza, goosefoot, and dried potato peelings, and they bake flat cakes. Of the food substitutes listed above, the oily seeds are nutritious, which are healthy in combined foods since they contain vitamins, by themselves the vegetable oils do not contain vitamins and by not combining them with other food products of more equal nourishment and caloric value they are found to be toxic and will harm the body. Based on: General Course on Hygiene by Prof. G. V. Khotopin, p. 301-4--.

The homes are filthy, the area around the homes is polluted by human waste, by diarrhea caused by these substitutes. People walk around like shadows, silent, vacant; empty homes with boarded-up windows (about 500 homeowners have left their homes in Karpov village for destinations unknown); one rarely sees an animal on the street (apparently the last ones have been eaten).

In the entire village of 1000 yards I found only 2 chickens and a rooster. Occasionally one meets an emaciated dog.

The impression is that Karpov village seems to be hit by anbiosis (hibernation, a freeze, falling asleep).

The livestock is free to feed on thatched roofs of homes and barns.

In reporting the above-related to the Pokrov Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Regional Executive Committee, Russian Communist League, and to you, as the regional health inspector and doctor of the Pokrov region, I beg of you to undertake immediate measures to help the starving and to notify me of the practical measures taken.

March 25, 1932 Regional health inspector--doctor--KISELEV

Original Letter

Дорогой Серге.

2

136

Пишу тебе из Новосибирска. Объездил ряд колхозов и считаю необходимыми о некоторых фактах сообщить тебе. Был я в разных ~~колхозах~~ - недорощных и относительно дорощных, но всюду и везде одна и та-же картина - огромный недостаток в семенах, голод и крайнее истощение скота.

По обследованиим мною колхозам я пытался выяснить, в таком размере уменьшилось количество поголовья, по сравнению с 1927-28 годом. Выяснилась следующая картина: Колхоз "Звезда" - имеется в настоящее время 507 дойных коров, в 28 году дойных коров было 2000; колхоз "Усть-Танцовский" - имеется всего дойного скота в колхозе и в собственности у колхозников и единоличников - 203 головы, раньше было свыше 600; колхоз "Крупо-Озерный" - имеется в настоящее время в колхозе 418 голов крупного рогатого скота и 50 - у колхозников, было в 1928 году - 1800 голов; колхоз "Голдоба" - имеется в колхозе у колхозников и единоличников 275 голов, в 29 году - было 1000 с лишним голов, овец в этом колхозе имеется 350, а в 1929 го было 1500. Примерно, такое же соотношение в других обследованных колхозах: "Ольгино" и "Ново-Спасский".

Район, в котором я был (Варежский), является районом экспортного масла, но и в других районах Западной Сибири убыль животноводства за этот период времени вряд-ли меньшая.

Таковые факты, прочеренные мною, и на этом фоне мне думается, что данные всеобщей переписи, разработанные в последнее время Госпланом, значительно прикрашивают действительную картину.

Положение в колхозах^{нах}, животноводческих фермах, плохое, главным образом, из-за отсутствия кормов. Удойность дошла до крайне низких пределов, составляя в среднем ~~о~~ 1-2-3 литра в сутки, вместо 5-7 литров удоиности коровы этого района, ~~ведущейся во владении колхозника и единоличника~~ в урожайный год. Плохое состояние скота нельзя ~~отнести~~ отнести к плохому уходу и плохой организации труда, т.к. в большинстве ви-