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# Famine statistics

Re the letter from the USSR Embassy in Ottawa, about the famine during the “devastating drought” in 1931 and 1932 in the Ukraine (Dec. 13):

I was interested in seeing what cold, unemotional Soviet statistics have to say about that period in the Ukraine. World Weather Records 1941-50 (Washington D.C., U.S. Department of Commerce Weather Bureau, 1959) gives total precipitation statistics for the Ukraine as reported by the Kiev station. In 1931, annual precipitation ranged from 525 in 1934 to 753 in 1937 (figures for 1938 are incomplete). From these figures it can be seen that the 1932-33 had the highest precipitation of the decade.

Vneshniaia Torgovlia, the Soviet annual of foreign trade, gives the following statistics for exports from the Soviet Union during the period 1932-33 (in thousand tons): wheat, 551 (1932), 748 (1933); rye, 421, 157; barley, 422, 567; oats, 17, 84; corn, 311, 121. Besides grain, sold in Europe were 103,000 tons of lentils, 63,000 of peas, 20,500 of buckwheat, etc., 94,200 of poultry, eggs, bacon and butter. At the time, there was talk of Soviet “dumping” on the European market.

A comparison between the Soviet censuses of 1926 and 1939 shows that there was an increase of 15.7 per cent in the population of the Soviet Union as whole, an increase of 28 per cent for the Russians and of 11.3 per cent for the Byelorussians. For the Ukrainians, there was a decrease of 9.9 per cent. An official census taken in 1937 was withdrawn and destroyed.

If the only criticism of a documentary about genocide by famine is the validity of a picture or two (letter from Douglas Tottle - Dec. 13), well, that speaks for itself.

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