

Голод 1921 – 1922 рр., Голодомор 1932 – 1933 рр.

The famine of the 1921 – 1923, the Holodomor 1932 – 1932

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THE TERRITORY OF THE SPREAD OF MASS MAN-MADE FAMINE OF 1921–1923 IN UKRAINE IN THE POLITICS OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME

Abstract. *The purpose* of our research is to highlight the policy of the communist regime regarding the official recognition of the limits of the spread of famine in Ukraine in 1921–1923 and an indication of the factors that influenced the correction of the disaster area.

The scientific novelty of the publication is a comprehensive analysis of normative-legal acts, according to which the officially recognized limits of the spread of the famine of 1921-1923 were changed in Ukraine.

Conclusions. The confrontation between Ukrainian and Russian communists on the issue of recognizing the famine in Ukraine is shown, in particular, the definition of the territory of its distribution. Moscow's policy of downplaying the scale of the catastrophe and forming a common opinion about its locality in certain regions is traced. Several legislative acts are involved, directly or indirectly pointing to the actual territories covered by the famine of 1921-1923. The connection between determining the scale of famine and Moscow's plans for Ukrainian bread is proved.

Key words: *mass artificial famine, territory of distribution, communist regime, USSR, counties, provinces.*

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Бібліографічний опис для цитування: Байкеніч Д. Територія поширення масового штучного голоду 1921–1923 років в Україні в політиці комуністичного режиму. *Український селянин*. 2022. Вип. 28. С. 27-33. doi: 10.31651/2413-8142-2022-28-Baikienich

ТЕРИТОРІЯ ПОШИРЕННЯ МАСОВОГО ШТУЧНОГО ГОЛОДУ 1921–1923 РОКІВ В УКРАЇНІ В ПОЛІТИЦІ КОМУНІСТИЧНОГО РЕЖИМУ

Анотація. *Мета* нашого дослідження полягає у висвітленні політики комуністичного режиму щодо офіційного визнання меж поширення штучного голоду в Україні в 1921–1923 рр., зазначенні чинників впливу на корегування території катастрофи.

Науковою новизною публікації є комплексний аналіз нормативно-правових актів, відповідно до яких змінювалися офіційно визнані межі поширення штучного голоду 1921–1923 рр. в Україні.

Висновки. Про масштаби продовольчої катастрофи в Україні добре знали як у Харкові, так і в Москві. Українські комуністи чітко окреслювали постраждалі від посухи повіти та територію, охоплену голодом. У законодавчому регулюванні меж поширення лиха республіканська влада керувалися фактичною ситуацією на місцях.

Російські комуністи заперечували голод в Україні та не давали згоди на його визнання в 1921 р. У цьому вони керувалися власними планами щодо вивезення українського хлібу. Та навіть визнавши голод як такий у 1922 р., Москва заперечувала його поширення поза межами 5 південноукраїнських губерній. Через відновлення експорту українського збіжжя в 1922–1923 рр. питання голоду зникло з публічного дискурсу. Отже, комуністичний режим дотримувався усвідомленої політики невизнання фактичної території поширення масового штучного голоду 1921–1923 рр. в Україні.

Ключові слова: масовий штучний голод, територія поширення, комуністичний режим, УСРР, повіти, губернії.

Problem statement. The communist regime established in the scientific field and public consciousness the narrative about 5 southern governorates of Ukraine that suffered from a mass artificial famine of 1921–1923. This was due to the fact that the Russian communists officially considered the drought in the steppe areas to be the cause of the famine in the Ukrainian SSR, and its scale as not too catastrophic, compared to the famine in the Volga region. Also, during the famine, the authorities «united» the Ukrainian governorates into two groups – productive and non-productive. Thus, it continued to actively export grain to the RSFSR.

It is unlikely that the area of the spread of the famine clearly coincided with the administrative boundaries of the 5 governorates. It is important to find out what exactly led to the policy of the communist regime to designate territories as starving – ignorance or neglect.

Research analysis. Historiography is quite limited in terms of the mentioned aspect of the issue of studying the massive artificial famine of 1921–1923 in Ukraine. In our research, we primarily used the works of O. Veselova, S. Kulchytskyi, O. Movchan, V. Marochko¹, and R. Serbyn².

The purpose of the article is to study the policy of the communist regime in determining the territory of mass artificial famine of 1921–1923 in Ukraine.

The statement of the basic material. Prolonged hostilities and predatory policy of the communists in the agrarian issue led to a

decrease in the cultivated area and harvests in Ukraine in 1919–1920. Ukrainian peasants suffered significant losses of seed stock and live stock during the food apportionment. A sharp deterioration of the food situation was caused by a drought in the southern Ukrainian governorates in the summer of 1921. The communist regime in Moscow was fully aware of the situation of weather conditions and crop failure in Ukraine.

Information about the poor state of crops on the lands in the southern governorates of Ukraine began to arrive at the end of the spring of 1921. Indicators were measured on a 5-point scale, according to which the probable harvest and tax rates were calculated. The negative dynamics of the condition of the main four breads was clearly observed – on May 15, 3.3 points were recorded, and on July 15, the indicator dropped to 2.5³. In Kharkiv, the republican authorities were forced to delay the process of lowering tax rates due to the significant debts of the regions according to the production schedule⁴. Moscow demanded its full implementation.

The beginning of the new agricultural year and the transition to food tax changed the situation. The first grain harvest confirmed the predicted failure. On July 19, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CP(b)U reduced the tax rate for some volosts of Odesa and Mykolaiv governorates. The Zaporizhzhia governorate was refused a reduction in the tax burden. It was noted that all governorates, except for Donetsk one, «will have to rely exclusively on their own

1 Веселова О. М., Марочко В. І., Мовчан О. М. Голодомори в Україні, 1921–1923, 1932–1933 1946–1947: Злочини проти народу. 2-е вид., допов. К. Нью-Йорк: Вид-во М. П. Коць, 2000. 283 с.; Голод 1921–1923 років в Україні: Збірник документів і матеріалів. Упоряд.: О. М. Мовчан, А. П. Огінська, Л. В. Яковлева; Відп. ред. С. В. Кульчицький. К.: Наук. думка, 1993. 237 с.

2 Голод 1921–1923 і українська преса в Канаді. Упоряд. і ред. Р. Сербин. Торонто: Українсько-Канадський-Дослідчо-Документаційний Центр, 1992. 700 с.

3 Итоги борьбы с голодом в 1921 – 1922 гг.: сборник статей и отчетов. М.: ЦК Помгол, 1922. 499 с. С. 253.

4 Голод 1921–1923 років в Україні... С. 24–25.

resources in the near future»⁵. The industrial regions of the Donets governorate (excluding the agricultural Starobilsk, Mariupol, and Shakhty counties) had a special food status throughout the famine⁶.

At the beginning of August, after the end of the harvest, in view of the received detailed information, the Ukrainian authorities changed the productivity of the counties (a grade was given from 1st to 10th, where 1st is an extremely low yield). Thus, Kharkiv, Zmiiv, Chuguiv, Izyum, and Kupyansk counties are included in the 3rd category (30–35 poods per dessiatin); in Odesa governorate up to 2nd grade (25–30) – Tiraspol county, up to 1st (up to 25) – Odesa and Voznesensk; in the Katerynoslav governorate up to 3rd – Novomoskovsk and Pavlograd, up to 2nd – Verkhnyodniprovsk, up to 1st – Kryvyi Rih and Katerynoslav counties; in the Zaporizhzhya governorate, up to the 3rd grade – Oleksandrivsk, Gulyai-Pole and Veliky Tokmak, up to 2nd – Berdyansk, up to 1st – Melitopol counties; in the Poltava governorate up to 3rd – Konstantinograd county; in Mykolaiv governorate up to 3rd – Yelisavetgrad, up to 1st – Kherson, Mykolaiv and Dnipro counties; in the Donetsk governorate, up to 3rd – Starobilsk, Hryshyn, Shakhty, Sloviansk and Debaltsevo, up to 2nd – Mariupol, Taganrog, Yuzivka, Luhansk and Bakhmut counties; in the Kremenchug governorate to 2nd – Oleksandriya county⁷.

According to statistical indicators indicated by the authorities themselves, the most unharvested territories at the end of summer were 8 counties of Zaporizhzhia, Katerynoslav, Mykolaiv and Odesa governorates. The epicentre of the famine was the Mykolaiv governorate. Another 9 neighbouring counties were potential areas for the spread of famine in the near future. In total, 33 counties of 8 governorates were identified as unproductive.

Russian communists opposed the official recognition of the famine in Ukraine, and even more so its comparison with the situation in the Volga region. The denial of the beginning of the famine was connected with the policy of «pumping out» millions of poods of Ukrainian grain for the red capitals and helping the starving people of the Volga region⁸.

In view of the aggravation of the food crisis, the Ukrainian communists in Kharkiv tried to reduce the tax pressure and additionally help the peasants. In particular, on August 12, 1921, the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR adopted a resolution «On the replacement of food tax on wheat in low-harvest governorates with meat» (a total of 10% of the grain tax). The document referred to «counties of Ukraine that were affected by the failure of the bread harvest and are not exempted from the bread tax». These counties included: Odesa, Tiraspol, and Voznesensk (Odesa governorate), Dnipro, Mykolaiv, and Kherson (Mykolaiv governorate), Oleksandrivsk, Melitopol, and Berdyansk (Zaporizhzhia governorate), Katerynoslav, Verkhnyodniprovsk, and Novomoskovsk (Katerynoslav governorate), Mariupol, Taganrog, and Starobilsk (Donets governorate), Kupyansk and Izyum (Kharkiv governorate), Oleksandriya (Kremenchuk governorate)⁹. It is obvious that the situation was the most difficult in the mentioned 18 counties. In these territories, in most cases, the population was forced to reduce the consumption of bread, its use for livestock feed and as seed. Some farmers were suddenly or gradually left without any food supplies, which inevitably led to the destruction of their farms and starvation with fatal consequences.

The sowing campaign in August-October 1921 and the collection of food tax hid the famine situation behind the scenes of public discussion. However, the negative dynamics of food tax collection in low-harvest governorates and the reduction of the sown area in them forced the authorities to return to this issue in a few months.

Already on November 14, 1921, at a meeting of the Ukrainian Economic Council (hereinafter – UEC), it was decided to provide seed and food aid to three poor governorates: Zaporizhzhia, Katerynoslav, and Donets¹⁰. The limitation of the geography of aid provision by these governorates can be explained by the communists' fear of investing resources in the right-bank regions of the Ukrainian SSR after the events of the Second Winter Campaign of the UPR army.

Apparently, the situation in the above-mentioned governorates was so catastrophic that

5 ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 6. Спр. 17. Арк. 22 зв., 26.

6 Байкєніч Д. Масовий штучний голод 1921–1923 рр. у Донецькій губернії. Вісник ЛНУ імені Тараса Шевченка. 2021. №9 (347). С. 91–103. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.12958/2227-2844-2021-9\(347\)-91-103](https://doi.org/10.12958/2227-2844-2021-9(347)-91-103)

7 Збірник законів і розпоряджень Робітничо-Селянського уряду України (ЗУ України). 1921. Ч. 15. Ст. 418.

8 Голод 1921–1923 років в Україні... С. 31, 34.

9 ЗУ України. 1921. Ч. 15. Ст. 441.

10 Голод 1921–1923 років в Україні... С. 49.

even the regional and local authorities raised the issue of recognizing their regions as starving before the leadership of the republic, regardless of the consequences. Already on December 6, 1921, contrary to Moscow's position, Kharkiv recognized a number of territories as starving. They included: Zaporizhzhia governorate in its entirety; Mariupol and Taganrog counties of Donetsk governorate; Katerynoslav, Kryvyi Rih counties in full, Verkhnyodniprovsk in half of the Katerynoslav governorate; Mykolaiv, Kherson and Dnipro counties of Mykolaiv governorate; in Odesa governorate – Tiraspol counties in full and Odesa counties in half¹¹. Despite numerous mentions of the famine and hundreds of requests for help in overcoming it, approximately the same number of affected districts remained aside from such recognition.

Later, in the official report of the Central Commission for Aid to the Starving under the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, it was noted that in December 1921, about 1.25 million people were starving in 4 governorates – Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Katerynoslav, and Donetsk¹². But this did not correspond to the realities of that time, because archival documents testified about 1.9 million starving people¹³. It can be assumed that their calculation was carried out exclusively in the specified territories, with the aim of understatement the spread of famine.

The need to involve Ukrainian ports and railways to receive and transport for ARA humanitarian and seed cargoes to the Volga region influenced the change in Moscow's position regarding the recognition of famine in Ukraine. Already on January 14, 1922, the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR approved the resolution «On Reducing the Food Tax, Replacing it with Money and Waiving it in Governorates and Counties that Have Been Declared Non-Productive». Officially, the territory affected by the famine was expanded. The «affected» regions include: Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk governorate, Dnipro, Mykolaiv and Kherson (Mykolaiv governorate), Odesa, parts of Tiraspol and Voznesensk (Odesa governorate), Katerynoslav and Novomoskovsk (Katerynoslav governorate), Konstantinograd and Kobelyaky (Poltava governorate)¹⁴. A total of 25

counties and 6 governorates have delineated the area where the famine spread.

Despite Moscow's conditional recognition of the famine in Ukraine, the Russian communists tried to reduce the geography of such regions, denying the difficult situation in them. For example, for this purpose, the propaganda and instructional train of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) «October Revolution» came to Ukraine at the beginning of February. This mission was headed by M. Kalinin, head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. After this trip, he stated in the press that the situation of the South of Ukraine is 100 times better than the Volga region¹⁵.

During the spring sowing campaign, the hunger situation worsened even more. The number of starving people in Ukraine increased from 2.7 to 3.9 million in March-May¹⁶. And these were only official statistics from 5 southern Ukrainian governorates. The head of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee H. Petrovskyi tried to officially confirm the presence of starving people in other territories in order to certify the real scale of the disaster. The official provision of both state and international aid depended on this. In a letter to M. Kalinin dated May 1, 1922, G. Petrovsky stated that the following were actually starving: Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Katerynoslav governorates in their entirety, Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Dnipro counties (Mykolaiv governorate), Odesa, Tiraspol, and Voznesensk counties (Odesa governorate). The counties of Kostyantynograd and Kobelyaky (Poltava governorate), Zmiiv, Kupyansk and Izyum (Kharkiv governorate), Elizavetgrad (Mykolaiv governorate) and Oleksandriya (Kremenchuk governorate) were in a difficult situation¹⁷. In fact, the territory affected by the famine at that time was 35 counties and 8 governorates.

Hopes for the improvement of the situation in connection with the new harvest did not come true. The beginning of the harvest confirmed the forecasts of repeated crop failure due to drought. At the same time, grain collection temporarily improved the statistical picture of bread availability in the areas. On July 13, All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee officially updated the list of starving counties. The following territories were included: Berdyansk, Gulyai-

11 Голод 1921–1923 років в Україні... С. 117.

12 Отчёт о работе Центральной комиссии ... С. 3.

13 ЦДАГО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 20. Спр. 1034. Арк. 1.

14 Голод 1921–1923 років в Україні... С. 11–12.

15 Голодомори в Україні... С. 120.

16 Отчёт о работе Центральной комиссии... С. 5.

17 Голод 1921–1923 років в Україні... С. 117.

Pole, Melitopol, Velikiy Tokmak, Zaporizhzhia and Genichesk (Zaporizhzhia governorate), Hryshyne, Mariupol, Taganrog and Yuzivka (Donets governorate), Verkhne-Dniprovsk, Katerynoslav, Nikopol, Kryvyi Rih and Pavlograd (Katerynoslav governorate), Dnipro, Mykolaiv and Kherson (Mykolaiv governorate), Odesa, Tiraspol and Voznesensk (Odesa governorate)¹⁸. But this list of 21 counties did not reflect the real situation.

On the same day, the Ukrainian communists adopted another list of territories that were exempted from underpayments of the natural tax «due to the failure of the harvest». It included all counties of Zaporizhzhia, Donets, Mykolaiv, Katerynoslav, and Kremenchug governorates, Odesa, Tiraspol, and Voznesensk (Odesa governorate), Kostyantynograd, and Kobelyaky (Poltava governorate), Izyum, Zmiiv, and Kupyansk (Kharkiv governorate)¹⁹. In our opinion, the second list of 40 districts more truthfully testified to the limits of the spread of famine, in particular, for the first time to a part of the forest-steppe strip.

After the harvest of 1922, as well as overcoming the peak of famine in the Volga region and choosing a course to restore the export of bread, Moscow officially announced the end of the famine as such. At the same time, famine in the Ukrainian governorates remained an obstacle for the communists. The regime launched an information campaign to shift the focus from «fighting famine» to «fighting the consequences of famine». It also required a demonstrable reduction in the area affected by famine. In view of this, at the end of September 1922, a trip of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee commission was organized to Odesa, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kherson governorates²⁰. The report of this trip was heard at the 3rd session of the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee on October 14, 1922. Based on the report, it was determined that there are counties in the 5 southern governorates that are «at risk of famine». It is significant that the specified territory outlined the boundaries of the spread of famine, recognized by the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee in December 1921, and not the broader list agreed by Moscow on January 14, 1922, namely: Mykolaiv, Dnipro, and Kherson

in the Mykolaiv governorate; Berdyansk, Velikiy Tokmak, Henichesk and Melitopol in the Zaporizhzhia governorate; Nikopol, Kryvyi Rih and Katerynoslav in Katerynoslav governorate; Debaltsevo, Mariupol, Yuzivka and Central mountain districts in Donets governorate; Odesa and Tiraspol in Odesa governorate²¹.

The official determination by the authorities of the territory of the spread of famine had the effect of restricting the provision of the necessary aid in other districts affected by the famine. A vivid example of this was the resolutions of the UEC dated November 3 and 10 on the postponement of collection of the seed loan of spring 1922, which extended to the territories specified on October 14. At the same time, the preliminary resolution of the Council of People's Commissars RSC of the Ukrainian SSR dated October 3 «On the Postponement of the Payment of the Spring Seed Loan of 1922» provided so in favour of a much larger number of starving counties, specified in July²².

It is worth mentioning that already on October 15, 1922, a resolution was issued on changes in the administrative-territorial division of Ukraine. In particular, the Zaporizhzhia governorate became part of the Katerynoslav governorate, and the Mykolaiv governorate became part of the Odesa governorate. The Kremenchuk governorate was liquidated: Zolotonosha, Kremenchug and Khorol counties were annexed to the Poltava governorate, Cherkasy and Chyhyryn – to the Kyiv governorate, Oleksandriya – to the Katerynoslav governorate²³. In this way, the geographical ratio of starving and non-starving governorate was artificially levelled: before the changes – 5 to 7, after – 3 to 6. This maintained the conditional «non-critical» percentage of starving areas in Ukraine determined by Moscow (about 30–35% by the number of counties), without specifying the area of such territories, which was almost half.

The policy of the communist regime towards the starving regions was influenced by the export of grain from Ukraine, which began at the end of 1922. Along with the ban on publishing any information about the export of grain abroad, it was forbidden to report on the famine secretly. We can determine the territory where the famine continued in the first half of

18 ЗУ України. 1922. Ч. 30. Ст. 473.

19 ЗУ України. 1922. Ч. 30. Ст. 474.

20 ЦДАВО України. Ф. 1. Оп. 2. Спр. 624. Арк. 72.

21 ЦДАВО України. Ф. 258. Оп. 1. Спр. 97. Арк. 76-77.

22 Собрание узаконений и распоряжений рабоче-крестьянского правительства Украины. Отдел второй. 1923. Ч. 2. Ст. 20–21; ЗУ України. 1922. Ч. 43. Ст. 633.

23 ЗУ України. 1922. Ч. 44. Ст. 655.

1923 only because of the corresponding benefits granted by the authorities to certain regions. In particular, on January 16, 1923, the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR issued a resolution «On the Implementation of the Labour Tax in Areas of the Ukrainian SSR Affected by Famine». It was noted that such districts included those recognized by the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee in 1921 as «completely in starvation»²⁴.

Referring to the same resolution of December 1921, the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee Decree of May 20, 1923 «On a Unified Agricultural Tax» in paragraph 17th provided benefits for taxpayers of those counties. Starving governorates under the new administrative division were indirectly mentioned in subparagraph «B» of paragraph 18th – Odesa, Donetsk and Katerynoslav governorates²⁵. This was the last document that determined the area of famine before the harvest of 1923, which stabilized the food situation in Ukraine.

The conclusions. The above allows us to state that information about the spread of famine in Ukraine was perceived by the communist

regime in Moscow as hostile and tried to prevent recognition of the scale of the disaster at the legislative level and in the public space. At first, the Russian communists denied the facts of the famine in the Ukrainian governorates, but due to external factors, they were forced to legally recognize the famine. In fact, Moscow, spreading and cultivating the thesis of «5 starving governorates», created the image of a local manifestation of this calamity only in some Ukrainian governorates with a gradual reduction of the affected counties in them.

Instead, the Ukrainian communist authorities from the beginning adhered to the position of recognizing the famine within the actual limits of its spread. With this, Kharkiv tried to prevent the further spread of this phenomenon and weaken the food exploitation of Ukraine. The political confrontation between the centre and the metropolis regarding the delineation of the territory affected by the disaster continued until the regime's official statement about overcoming the famine and resuming the export of Ukrainian bread in the fall of 1922.

24 ЗУ України. 1923. Ч. 6. Ст. 107.

25 ЗУ України. 1923. Ч. 24. Ст. 351.

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