

Social / Economic Issues: 'War Communism' (1918-21)

"Decree on Grain Procurements" (1918)

A ruinous process of disintegration of the food procurement of the country - the heavy legacy of a four-year war - continues to expand and aggravate the existing distress.

While the consuming provinces are starving, great stocks of cereals...are in the hands of rural kulaks...Replete and satisfied, having accumulated an enormous mass of money earned in the years of war, this rural bourgeoisie remains deaf and unresponsive in the face of the moanings of starving workers and poor peasants...

The obstinacy of the greedy kulaks and wealthy peasants must be brought to an end. [They are] making food inaccessible to several millions of toiling people and exposing them to the inevitability of death by starvation.

The reply to the violence of grain holders upon the rural poor must be violence upon the bourgeoisie. Not one single sack of grain must remain in the hands of the grain holders, except the quantity needed for sowing and subsistence of the household until the next harvest...

Taking into account this situation ... **the All- Russian Executive Central Committee has decreed:**

- To invite all toiling people and propertyless peasants to unite immediately in a merciless struggle against the kulaks.
- **To declare enemies of the nation all people having surpluses of grain and not handing them over ... and even dissipating the stocks of cereals for their own home brew [i.e., make illegal 'moonshine'] instead of delivering them to the collecting stations; to bring them before the Revolutionary Courts, put them in jail for not less than ten years, confiscate all their belongings, banish them out of the [village community] and condemn the holders of home brew to forced labour in public works.**
- **In the case of discovery of any surplus of grain which had not been declared for delivery, grain will be requisitioned without payment and half of the value which was due at fixed Prices for the undeclared surplus will be paid to the people who took part in discovering the surpluses...**
- *(Elsewhere in the decree, authority was given to "make use of armed troops in the case of resistance to requisition of grain and other foodstuffs.")*