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Radical Relief: The Politics and Economics of American Food Aid to Soviet Russia, 1917-1933

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What follows is an excerpt from a chapter that I am currently working on and that will most likely be divided into separate chapters. In this piece, I focus on two visions of famine relief to Soviet Russia in 1921-23, represented by the American Relief Administration and the so-called “radical relief” groups, such as the Friends of Soviet Russia. I argue that the clash between these two organizations was less about ameliorating Russian suffering and more about pursuing their respective economic interests. While the ARA sought to secure the Soviet market for American agricultural surpluses and to demonstrate the superiority of capitalism, the FSR focused on the economic reconstruction of Russian agriculture and the preservation of the Soviet regime. As this paper demonstrates, the FSR’s organization of famine relief facilitated an exchange of agricultural ideas between the United States and the Soviet Union, as American agricultural experts utilized the FSR’s relief activities as an opportunity to try out their ideas in Soviet Russia.

Part I: Food as the Deciding Factor¹

During the First World War, food production, distribution, and consumption shifted dramatically from a concern of national economies to an international issue. In 1917, then U.S. Food Administration director Herbert Hoover, or as the press labeled him “world food dictator,” declared, food had “gradually assumed a larger place in the economics, the statesmanship and the strategy of warfare.” During wartime, the U.S. Food Administration (USFA) organized the largest food relief effort in the world to date, mobilizing a large portion of the American population to voluntarily regulate their food consumption in order to fuel the war effort and feed

¹ Lesson No.1 in *Ten Lessons in Food Conservation* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917).

European Allies. More than seven billion dollars worth of foodstuffs and medical equipment were shipped to European nations to ameliorate food shortages experienced due to the destruction of their agricultural sectors and the disruption of food imports from their colonies. The United States profited immensely from Europe's food insecurity and the allied war effort owed its victory to that exchange. For the First World War revealed, victory on the battlefield depended as much on who could better regulate food production, distribution, and consumption as it did on the strength of armies and the technologies they employed.²

From its inception in August 1917, the USFA promoted the idea of an integral connection between food conservation and the preservation of the capitalist democracy that buttressed the free world. In one of its first bulletins, the USFA proclaimed that food would be “the deciding factor” in winning the war. The bulletin argued, by complying with voluntary food regulations Americans could fuel the allied war effort and, thus, make “the world safe for democracy.” Eating less meat, sugar, and wheat meant more than merely consuming less calories or even winning the war. Voluntary food conservation was a manifestation of democratic consciousness that relied on individual efforts by everyday Americans exercising self-control and self-sacrifice to overcome regimes that relied on compulsion and governmental authority. It was the epitome of everything that democratic capitalism purportedly stood for. Through a wide network of women's clubs, lectures, demonstrations, and public meetings, the USFA delivered this message to every American household, striving to shape an American citizenry that perceived personal sacrifice as an obligation towards the preservation of democracy both at home and abroad.³

² “Food Big War Factor,” *The Washington Post*, September 20, 1917; “Hoover for Food Dictator of World,” *The Washington Post*, July 21, 1918.

³ *Ten Lessons in Food Conservation* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), 3.

Despite the fact that the USFA was a temporary wartime agency, it actively prepared the American public for a postwar mission of continuing international food aid. Positioning America as the breadbasket of the world, the USFA, as well as the Department of Agriculture, encouraged American farmers to maintain wartime production levels in the postwar period of European reconstruction. Such pronouncements were not revolutionary. The legacy of agricultural exports and American democracy can be traced back to Thomas Jefferson's republican notions of an empire of liberty. Yet, while Jefferson envisioned an agricultural nation as a means to engender self-sufficiency and to avoid foreign entanglements, the USFA focused on America's obligation to the free world. It declared that the United States, as the "greatest food-producing country... assumed tremendous responsibilities" and that the "coming of peace" would not "solve the food problem." In addition to providing food to the Allies after the war, the USFA planned to feed the vanquished enemies, demonstrating the superiority of its ideology and peoples.⁴

For the USFA and its successor, the American Relief Administration (ARA), food aid was also a means to undermine the rise of domestic political radicalism. During the war, the USFA linked hunger to the rising threat of socialism. Inquiring as to why Russia turned to Bolshevism, the leading public relations campaigner and confidant of Herbert Hoover, Raymond Wilbur, suggested that hunger had led to the October Revolution declaring "Revolutions are from breadlines."⁵ Another representative of the USFA, Harry A. Wheeler, echoed Wilbur's words, warning that "Bolshevism and the red flag flourish where hunger dwells." If the United States

⁴ "Food Lessons Issued," *The Washington Post*, July 19, 1917; *Ten Lessons in Food Conservation* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917)

⁵ Raymond Wilbur, "Fighting with Food," Speech by Wilbur, May 8, 1918, U.S. Food Administration, Box 8, Folder 1, Hoover Archive & Library.

did not help European countries and protect itself from hunger, Wheeler continued, “even the Atlantic will not be a barrier to the spread of this doctrine of lawlessness in our own country.”⁶

After the war was over, American officials turned their attention from stopping the German horde to preventing the spread of Bolshevism. In his 1919 address to Congress, Woodrow Wilson declared that Bolshevism was “steadily advancing westward.” “It can not be stopped by force,” he stated, “but it can be stopped by food.”⁷ To be sure, during the immediate postwar period, European agricultural production had not recovered from the effects of the war.⁸ The inability of many European states to feed their populations increased people’s disappointment in current political regimes. Food shortages sparked riots in many cities across nations, making American policymakers anxious about the victories of radical ideas in postwar Europe.⁹ In particular, Germany and Eastern European countries, according to American observers, were susceptible to the appeal of these ideologies. Rather than emphasize the humanitarian nature of relief, American officials sold these programs to the public as means to protect freedom from adverse ideologies and the chaos they would unleash.

From June to September 1919, American newspapers were flooded with reports food riots in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, and other German cities. Troubling news about German food riots were exacerbated by speculations that these disturbances would lead to a larger communist revolution. In June 1919, when the Communist party and the Spartacists took over the Hamburg

⁶ “Stop Bolshevism by Saving Food,” *True Republican*, December 18, 1918.

⁷ Need citation.

⁸ Giovanni Federico, *Feeding the World: An Economic History of Agriculture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 191-196.

⁹ “The Food Riots in Italy,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 7, 1919; “Majorcans in Food RIots,” *Washington Post*, February 20, 1919; “Food Riots Grow in Northern Italy,” *New York Times*, July 6, 1919

city hall, American reporters claimed that the communists utilized “food riots as an excuse for their attempt to gain control.”¹⁰ Three months later, when food riots occurred in Westphalia, American media linked these riots with the opportunities presented to the communists of Westphalia who planned a “revolution... under the leadership of Russian Bolsheviki.”¹¹ While these attempts of the Communist Party to gain power in Germany failed, the idea about the connection between food shortage and Bolshevism was further strengthened in the minds of American policymakers and would determine the direction of American foreign policy towards Europe and the Soviet Union during the postwar period.

Finally, for the United States, the USFA and the ARA food aid to Europe was an opportunity to demonstrate the power of capitalism both at home and abroad. During wartime, the United States began to dominate international commerce, as its exports to the French and British had increased from \$40 million in 1914 to nearly \$2 billion a year by the end of the war. Moreover, securing European markets for its commerce, American private banks and the federal government loaned the European Allies approximately \$7 billion during the war and another \$3.3 billion for relief afterward.¹²

American food aid was inextricably connected to agricultural economic interests. During the war and the immediate postwar period, American farmers enjoyed the golden age of agriculture, as a sizable portion of that \$3.3 billion went to purchasing agricultural products that would have otherwise largely amounted to unprofitable surpluses. The 1919 *Yearbook of*

¹⁰ “185 Are Reported Killed in German Seaport; Soviet to Be Set Up,” *Washington Post*, June 27, 1919; “Spartacans Riot in Hamburg,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 27, 1919.

¹¹ “Food Riots in Berlin; Reds Active Again,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1919.

¹² John M. Rothgeb, Jr., *U.S. Trade Policy: Balancing Economic Dreams and Political Realities* (2001), 29.

Agriculture showed a crop price index averaging about 32 percent above 1866-1908 prices.

While farm prices dipped in 1915, in 1916 they recovered, increasing almost 60 percent over the period of 1914-1920.¹³ However, despite this safety valve for American agricultural surpluses, overproduction was rampant. American farmers found themselves in a financially detrimental position during by 1920, exacerbated by the 1920 decision of the U.S. government to end price guarantees and the decreasing European demand for American agricultural products. By November 1920, wheat prices had dropped by 33 percent in comparison to November prices of 1919; by July 1921, the drop was 85 percent. Moreover, farmers who purchased land for highly inflated prices during the war could not pay their debt. Finally, taxes became a significant burden for American farmers as they were almost entirely based on land ownership and not income.¹⁴ Lamenting the state of American agriculture, Henry Wallace argued that the farm crisis was the result of overproduction that occurred because the government told farmers about “a hungry world waiting to be fed and that there would be a strong demand for all they could produce.”¹⁵

As European relief markets dried up, Washington and the ARA were forced to look for new solutions. Thus, when the Soviets appealed to the international community to help fight the famine in August 1921, American policymakers recognized that feeding Russians through the ARA food aid was a way to fight agricultural depression, to save capitalism from an increasing farm discontent, and to demonstrate the superiority of capitalism and democracy. What is more, food relief had also become necessary as a means to relieve domestic agricultural fortunes. In

¹³ Need citation.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Hoffman and Gary D. Libecap, “Institutional Choice and the Development of U.S. Agricultural Policies in the 1920s,” *The Journal of Economic History* 51, no. 2 (1991), 397; Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory*, 18.

¹⁵ Henry Wallace, “Report on the State of Agriculture to the President of the United States, November 15, 1921,” *Yearbook of Agriculture* (Washington, 1922): 5.

December 1920, discussing the reconstruction of Eastern Europe and famine relief, Herbert Hoover and President Harding came to conclusion that the rebuilding of Europe would “relieve” the American “agricultural situation.”¹⁶

Part II: The ARA and Radical Relief: Two Visions of Famine Relief

From the beginning, the organization of famine relief to Soviet Russia was a contested issue. When Maxim Gorky, a famous Russian writer, appealed to the world to save starving Russians, multiple American philanthropic, religious, and pro-communist groups responded to the call. As these groups tried to organize food, money, and clothing drives across the United States, their interests inevitably collided with American foreign policy aims. While there is no doubt that humanitarianism played a large part in organizing famine relief, at the state level economic and ideological motivations were of primary concern. The ARA, unofficially presided over by Herbert Hoover, then Secretary of Commerce, was the largest organization and utilized its position to submerge small relief initiatives under its supervision. Taking almost complete control over the majority of famine relief operations in Russia, the ARA represented American economic interests abroad, as it tried to secure the Soviet market and to help American farmers to fight agricultural depression.¹⁷ On the other hand, smaller pro-communist organizations, such as the Friends of Soviet Russia and the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia, envisioned the Russian famine relief as a way to facilitate economic reconstruction of Russian agriculture and industry. Dubbed by the ARA as “radical relief” in press, these groups sent not only food,

¹⁶ “Hoover Talks to Harding on World Issues,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 13, 1920.

¹⁷ Other large relief organizations that worked in Russia were the YMCA and the Quakers. Yet, even their independence was conditional, as they had to coordinate their relief efforts with the ARA.

clothing, and medical supplies to the Soviets, but also modern American agricultural machinery and American-trained experts. Thus, the Russian famine relief became a battle of two economic visions of Russia: securing the Russian market for American agricultural surplus and strengthening the capitalist dominance in the world; and helping Russian economic reconstruction and saving the fledgling Soviet regime.

The interest of the United States in the Russian market became apparent even before the official beginning of famine relief. In January 1921, the Committee on Foreign Affairs discussed the opportunities that the Russian market presented. A.W. Kliefoth, a regional economist on Russia at the Foreign Trade Adviser's Office of the State Department, reported that "Russia represents a gigantic economic vacuum" and that the opportunities for the United States "will be unparalleled." "The upbuilding of the industries of Russia," he continued, "will not only be a great humanitarian work, but will render a patriotic service to the United States." Comparing the present Soviet Russia with the "development of our own great West," Kliefoth saw incredible opportunities for American products and companies.¹⁸

Farm lobbyists, who witnessed rapidly deteriorating status of American agriculture, could not agree more with Kliefoth's recommendations. As James R. Howard, the President of the American Farm Bureau Federation, and Gray Silver organized what we today call the Farm Bloc in early 1921. Their lobbying efforts were directed to relieving agricultural depression through the increase of farmers' purchasing power and finding outlets for accumulated agricultural surpluses. In November 1921, James Howard declared in his address, that American farmers had

¹⁸ *Conditions in Russia. Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, House of Representatives, Sixty-sixth Congress, 3rd. sess., on H. Res. 635 requesting the Secretary of State to furnish the House of Representatives Certain Information as to the Conditions in Russia. January 27, 29, 31, February 1, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18 and March 1, 1921. Page 147-148.

“no purchasing power.” While the American farmer was burdened by 670 million bushels of surplus, “central Russia is experiencing the worst famine of her history. It would help the American farmer, American industry and American shipping if 20,000,000 bushels of this surplus needed for European relief could be immediately purchased by our Government.”¹⁹

The pressure of the Farm Bloc, the dire state of American agriculture, the fear of losing the Russian market to rival and recovering European capitalist economies, and the ARA’s successful experience in Western Europe resulted in President Harding’s appeal to Congress to appropriate funds for the Russian relief. On December 5, 1921, President Harding asked U.S. senators to provide the ARA with “10,000,000 bushels of corn and 1,000,000 bushels of seed grain.”²⁰ Following Harding’s message, Joseph W. Fordney (R-Michigan), an active agricultural lobbyist, introduced the bill to the Committee on Foreign Affairs to help the Russians with famine relief. Unsurprisingly, the strongest support of this bill came from Hoover. He assured U.S. senators that by sending famine relief, the United States would help American farmers because the ARA was going to ship surplus “food supplies” that were “without a market in any quarter of the globe.” Today, Hoover stated, “we are ... feeding milk to our hogs; burning corn under our boilers. From an economic point of view there is no loss to America in exporting those foodstuffs for relief purposes.”²¹

Representing the interests of American midwestern farmers, Ralph Snyder, the president of the Kansas Farm Bureau Federation, completely agreed with Hoover and testified that

¹⁹ J.R. Howard, “The Purchasing Power of the Farmer,” *Berkshire World and Cornbelt Stockman*, January 1, 1922

²⁰ Need citation

²¹ Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-Seventh Congress, Second Session on H.R. 9459 and H.R. 9548 for the Relief of the Distressed and Starving People of Russia, December 13 and 14, 1921, Russian Relief, 39.

farmers, in particular corn producers, wholeheartedly supported the idea of the Russian relief.²²

In accord with Snyder, Carl Vrooman, a former Secretary of Agriculture under Woodrow Wilson, emphasized that the corn surplus was “a liability, not an asset” because there was “no domestic demand.”²³ To rid of corn surplus, according to Vrooman, benefited not only farmers but also “the whole country and the businessmen alike.”²⁴

However, not all farm interests were content with the emphasis placed on corn exports to Russia. The flagship of the northwestern farm magazines, *The Northwestern Miller*, published a harsh critique of the measure. While applauding the “apparently generous act,” the editor, William C. Edgar, criticized the bill for sending corn rather than wheat to Soviet Russia. Experienced in organizing famine relief for Russia in 1891, Edgar argued that sending corn was a poor solution.²⁵ Not only was corn unsuitable for undernourished people, but also the Russians did not have necessary equipment to grind it and knowledge of how to prepare it.²⁶ Instead of corn, Edgar insisted that the ARA should ship wheat that was also in surplus on the American market. Yet, his voice was not strong enough to undermine the power of the corn lobby.

²² Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-Seventh Congress, Second Session on H.R. 9459 and H.R. 9548 for the Relief of the Distressed and Starving People of Russia, December 13 and 14, 1921, Russian Relief, 48.

²³ Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-Seventh Congress, Second Session on H.R. 9459 and H.R. 9548 for the Relief of the Distressed and Starving People of Russia, December 13 and 14, 1921, Russian Relief, 49-50; Candace Summers, “Carl Schurtz Vrooman and Julia Scott Vrooman,” McLean County Museum of History (2008) <http://mchistory.org/research/resources/carl-and-julia-vrooman.php> (accessed: November 10, 2015).

²⁴ Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Sixty-Seventh Congress, Second Session on H.R. 9459 and H.R. 9548 for the Relief of the Distressed and Starving People of Russia, December 13 and 14, 1921, Russian Relief, 49-50.

²⁵ Richard G. Robins, Jr., *Famine in Russia, 1891-1892* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), 171. More on the Russian famine of 1891-1892, see: Charles Emory Smith, “The Famine in Russia,” *North American Review* 154, no. 426 (May 1892): 541-551; George S. Queen, “American Relief in the Russian Famine of 1891-1892,” *Russian Review* 14, no. 2 (April 1955): 140-150; Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad*, 100-103.

²⁶ Harold F. Smith, “Bread for the Russians: William C. Edgar and the Relief Campaign of 1892,” *Minnesota History* 42, no. 2 (Summer 1970): 54-62.

Other criticisms of the Russian famine relief bill were evoked by proponents of the Soviet recognition. For instance, William Edgar Borah emphasized that while he did not oppose the bill, he voted for it because he did not have “the heart to refuse it.” An avid proponent of Soviet recognition, Borah condemned how the Allies and the United States treated Russia. He argued that “recognition of the Russian de facto Government would in itself tend to stabilize conditions in that country and keep its people from starvation.” For Borah, the food relief measure was a temporary solution to the Soviet famine and agricultural depression in the United States.²⁷ Despite these criticisms, the U.S. Senate passed the bill by a vote 181 to 71 on December 20, 1921. Congress doubled the initially required famine fund from \$10,000,000 to \$20,000,000 for Russian relief and ordered the ARA to expand its work in Soviet Russia.²⁸ Three days later, on December 23, Harding signed the legislation - a symbolic Christmas present from capitalist Americans to communist Russians.²⁹

Meanwhile, the so-called “radical relief” groups, such as the Friends of Soviet Russia (FSR), prepared for their own brand of Russian famine relief. Established in August 1921, the FSR was one of the friendship societies that belonged to the International Workers’ Famine Relief Committee (IWFRC).³⁰ In the United States, it served as an umbrella organization for over two hundred pro-communist groups, in particular, the Society for Technical Aid to Soviet Russia, the Famine Scout Group, the American Labor Alliance, and the Soviet Russian Medical Relief

²⁷ Need citation

²⁸ “Senate Passes Bill for Russian Relief,” *New York Times*, December 21, 1921.

²⁹ Benjamin D. Rhodes, *James P. Goodrich, Indiana’s “Governor Strangelove”: A Republican’s Infatuation with Soviet Russia* (1996), 87.

³⁰ The FSR groups were all over the world: South Africa, Argentine, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany etc. The whole list is in GARF, f. 1064, op. 6, d. 97, Moscow.

Society. According to the magazine *Humanité*, the organization had branches “in nearly all the towns in the United States.”³¹ Through advertisements in pro-communist and left-leaning magazines and newspapers, as well as through meetings and conferences, the FSR raised money to buy food, medical supplies, and clothing to Russia. By February 1922, the organization raised \$300,000 for famine relief, noting that these funds came from cities across the United States.³²

In contrast to the ARA that envisioned the Russian relief as a short term solution to the famine and an opportunity for U.S. agricultural interests, the FSR expressed interest in long-term efforts to end the famine by developing Russian agriculture and organizing Russian farmworkers. In the words of the IWFRC’s official history, friendship societies, including the FSR in New York, did not offer “philanthropic” charity. Rather, their famine relief was a manifestation of “class solidarity.”³³ Encouraging American workers, farmers, and agricultural experts to demonstrate their solidarity with the Russians, the FSR facilitated the organization of agricultural communes that brought agricultural machinery and technologies to Russian villages.

In May 1922, the FSR sent its first agricultural unit under the supervision of Harold Ware. Ware, the son of Ella Reeve Bloor, was considered to be one of the best experts on agriculture within the Communist Party of America (CPA). One year prior to his departure to Russia, Ware traveled as an undercover “stiff” (a migrant agricultural worker) across the United States, recording “American agricultural problems.”³⁴ In his reports to the CPA, Ware emphasized the urgency of organizing farm workers to close the gap between city and farm

³¹ American Relief Administration Papers, Box 91, Folder 2.

³² American Relief Administration Papers, Box 91, Folder 2.

³³ *Official History of the International Workers’ Famine Relief Committee*, GARF, f. 1064, op. 6, d. 97, Moscow.

³⁴ Harold Ware, “American Agricultural Problems,” *The Toiler*, November 12, 1921, 8-10; Ware, “Our Agrarian Problem,” *The Communist* 1, no. 5 (November 1921): 20-21, 23.

labor. He further argued that the CPA should reorganize the centralized Agrarian Bureau that would respond to the needs of farm workers who had been dismissed by the Party as “counterrevolutionary forces.”³⁵ In contrast to this vision, Ware considered “the producers of food” to be integral to the defeat of capitalism. In his view, “the critical battles” between communism and capitalism would “be for *Food*.”³⁶

Convinced that he would be able to get necessary knowledge about the organization of farmers by working in Soviet Russia, Ware appealed to the FSR asking them to facilitate the establishment of his agricultural commune in Russia. In the commune’s program, Ware stated that its primary goal was to “demonstrate American agricultural methods and machinery and should have the greatest freedom of action for achieving more successful results.” Next, the commune members planned to bring cameras to take photographs of the Russian reality and, upon their return to the United States, use them as a method of propaganda to raise more money for famine relief. Finally, the Ware unit claimed that it would utilize this Russian experience as a “means of propaganda among agricultural masses in America.”³⁷

In response to Ware’s request, the FSR appealed to the People’s Commissariat of Agriculture (Narkomzem) that approved Ware’s agricultural commune and assigned 14,000 acres of land in Toykino, Perm gubernia.³⁸ After two and a half months of traveling, the group arrived in Toykino in early July 1922 and immediately experienced the hardships of the Russian famine

³⁵ Ware, “Our Agrarian Problem,” 3.

³⁶ Ware, “Our Agrarian Problem,” 3.

³⁷ “Agricultural Commune Program of the FSR,” June 24, 1922, GARF, f. 1058, op. 1, d. 276.

³⁸ Harold Ware’s name in the CP was Harrow to underscore his responsibility for dealing with agricultural questions in the party. “Minutes of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of America,” New York - March 8, 10, 14, 16, 23, 27, 29, 31, 1922. *The Comintern Archive*, f. 515, op. 1, d. 94, ll. 12-20.

and poor infrastructure of the Russian railroads.³⁹ During its trip through Latvia, the group's food car was "cut out of the freight," and the unit was put on famine rations. Ware's wife, Clarissa, who was responsible for providing food for the group, complained in her report about "the inevitable tea" and "the usual breakfast of tea and rice." The famine ration that consisted of a can of sardines and black bread, "made of a pinch of grain and a pound of grit," was so unpleasant to Americans stomachs that the group learnt to "leave" the ration to "the more courageous Russians."⁴⁰

When the food car finally arrived in Toykino, none of the provisions were meant for Russian villagers. "We would give away no food," Clarissa Ware stated in her report. "We had not come to give relief," she continued, "but to put the land back into cultivation so that relief would no longer be needed."⁴¹ Different in that mission from the ARA, the Ware agricultural unit set out to teach Russian peasants how to operate thirty tractors and other agricultural machinery that the groups brought to Toykino. A.C. Freeman, an American journalist who visited Toykino in the summer of 1922, applauded the Ware mission, emphasizing that the introduction of tractors and the demonstration of their potential was "unquestionably" the best way to reconstruct Russian agriculture and to overcome "the narrow individualistic psychology" of "the stupidest and most conservative of the muzhiks."⁴²

³⁹ Clarissa Ware, "In Russia with Western Pioneers," *The Survey*, November 1922, 162.

⁴⁰ Clarissa Ware, "In Russia with Western Pioneers," *The Survey*, November 1922, 162.

⁴¹ Clarissa Ware, "In Russia with Western Pioneers," *The Survey*, November 1922, 163.

⁴² A.C. Freeman, "Ploughing Up Kolchak's Trenches," *Soviet Russia* (November 1922): 232. A.C. Freeman was pseudonym for William Henry Chamberlin, an American historian and journalist who worked in Soviet Russia from 1922 to 1934. Chamberlin's archive is in Providence College: http://library.providence.edu/spcol/fa/xml/rppc_mschamberlin.xml.

The Soviet authorities wholeheartedly agreed with Freeman. Modernizing Russian agriculture and educating peasants about the benefits of large-scale collective production was of utmost priority for the Soviet government. In October 1922, after the Soviet press praised the achievements of American agricultural communes, Vladimir Lenin sent a telegram to the Friends of Soviet Russia, congratulating the organization with the success of the Ware agricultural unit.⁴³ He declared that “despite gigantic difficulties,” the Ware tractor unit achieved “exceptional results.” Recognizing the importance of American agricultural communes, Lenin appealed to the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) to publicly acknowledge the work of the FSR and the contribution of American agricultural groups. In his appeal to the VTsIK, he stated that the Soviet authorities should facilitate the work of the FSR because these groups brought American technology to Soviet Russia which was of “great significance” to Russian agriculture.⁴⁴ The next month the All-Russian Central Executive Committee declared the Toykino agricultural commune to be a “model farm estate” for the rest of Russia.⁴⁵

The Ware tractor unit served as an important foundation for the developing of future agricultural projects in Soviet Russia by American agricultural experts. Pleased with the results achieved by the Ware unit in Toykino and seeing the potential of inviting more American farmers to Russia, the Soviet authorities continued to cooperate with Ware and worked with him on a number of other agricultural projects, such as the Russian Reconstruction Farms (1925-1926) and State Farm No. 2 (1928-1930). As for American agricultural experts, Ware’s experience in

⁴³ Vladimir Lenin, “To the Friends of Soviet Russia,” *Pravda*, October 24, 1922; “Real Help of the FSR,” *Izvestia*, August 25, 1922; Harold Ware, “American Tractor Unit,” *Pravda*, October 15, 1922.

⁴⁴ Lenin, “To the Presidium of the VTsIK,” October 24, 1922, in Lenin, *Lenin Collected Works*, vol. 45 (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1970), 232.

⁴⁵ “American Farm Models for Russia,” *Soviet Russia* (December 1922): 287.

Toykino revealed immense opportunities for an experimentation with large-scale agriculture and an organization of peasants into large state farms. Upon their return from the Soviet Union, these agricultural experts would seek to apply their knowledge to the solution of the American agricultural crisis during the Great Depression.