Famine in 1920s Soviet Union allegedly forced peasants to eat human flesh

By Jack PhillipsEpoch Times Staff

March 2017 marks the 100th anniversary of the start of the Russian Revolution, which led to the eventual rise of communist rule in Russia. But just a few years after the Bolshevik Revolution, an igno-

table footnote in history emerged.

A few years after the Soviet Union became the world’s first communist state in the 1920s, a little-

known but devastating famine ravaged the Russian countryside. The Povolzhye famine started in 1921 and persisted until 1922, leaving millions dead and even more Starving Russian girl in Buguruslan, 1921. afflicted.

The famine was so bad that peasants were driven to practice the unthinkbable: cannibalism. The Red Cross quoted a 1921 Soviet police report as saying, “Right now [the peasants] are digging up bodies in order to eat them.”

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nists, the threat of food shortages that put an estimated 32 million lives at risk in Russia, Ukraine and Georgia,” said the Red Cross. “In 1921, on top of the political chaos that caused the break-

down of whatever health services existed, the region experienced a devastating drought, leading to a gen-

erational famine.”

Photos captured during the distressing time show starving Russian farmers and workers — clad in thin coats — standing over children’s body parts. Appar-

ently, the body parts were sold on the black market.

At least 5 million people died during the Povolzhye famine, which was triggered by policies initiated by Russian dictator Vladimir Lenin, who had been in charge of the Soviet Union since 1917. At the time, he instructed guards to take food from the poor. Yitzhak Rabinovitch believed peasants were trying to under-

mine the war effort by taking their food away from the army.

This famine, however, should not be confused with the soviet “Great Famine,” known as the Holodomor in Ukraine, which lasted between 1932 and 1933, leaving more millions more dead under Joseph Stalin. But as Lenin himself said, “Let the peasants starve.”

The Red Cross noted “Thousands of villages were abandoned by their starved inhabitants, who went scaven-

gering for food wherever they could hope to find it. They survived on grass, clumps of earth, domestic animals... and even human flesh.” In June 1922, Lenin acknowledged the looming tragedy, and the writer [Maxim] Gorky appealed to the world for help. The Red Cross noted that “After the killing fields of the First World War, the political upheaval in Russia and elsewhere, and the rampant spread of disease among exhausted communists, the threat of food shortages that put an estimated 32 million lives at risk in Russia, Ukraine and Georgia,” said the Red Cross. “In 1921, on top of the political chaos that caused the breakdown of whatever health services existed, the region experienced a devastating drought, leading to a generational famine.”

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