

live animals (some for food, some for other purposes), meat and meat preparations, eggs, sugar and sugar preparations, and bakery products.

Communist Asia

The famines of 1960 and 1961 in mainland China have brought on "food riots" and widespread starvation. The Peiping government announced in January 1961 that more than half the cultivated acreage of China has been stricken in various degrees by drought, typhoons, and floods; 8 of the 12 main rivers in Shantung province were said to have dried up completely.

The extent of the food deficit is not clear because of the lack of reliable statistics. In 1957, the Chinese reported output of grain and other food products, expressed in grain equivalents, amounting to 185 million metric tons. On this accounting, the per capita daily availabilities for a 640-million population would amount to something over 1.8 pounds, as compared to an official ration of slightly over 1 pound per day in the 1960-61 period.⁴

Nevertheless, mainland China has continued to export food to the West and to the less developed area. Among its exports in 1959—also a year of acute shortages—were rice, beans, peas, other pulses, soybeans, and nuts.

Imports from the West have been planned for 1961 at 5.87 million tons of cereal grains, to come largely from Australia and Canada. This would suggest, after netting the decline in exports and the increase in imports, that the 1961 deficit of cereals may amount to 10 or 20 million tons—the food supply, at rationed levels, of some 50 to 100 million Chinese.

The costs of these grain purchases will amount to about \$340 million, of which the West has extended credits of \$120 million.

In 1962, it is anticipated that the Chinese will attempt to purchase, on credit, another 6 million tons of cereal grains. The availability of such an amount may reduce disorder and, perhaps, prevent revolt in the cities; it will probably do little for the large rural populations, however, which are most seriously affected.

The principal question arising in this context is whether the West should extend credit to an insolvent enemy. Humanitarian considerations may preclude an embargo. However, in view of the \$4 to \$9 billion of gold reserves possessed by the U.S.S.R., it would seem unnecessary for the West to extend credit.

Famine conditions in Communist China appear to be only at the beginning. The Economist, June 17, 1961 (p. 1212), reported that as a result of the forced slaughter of millions of draft animals in 1960, more than 20 million men were recruited from the cities to assist in agricultural work. While forced labor in agriculture is not without precedent in the Communist area, this is a retrogressive development, in that draft animals are a more efficient form of draft power than human beings, and involve a lower maintenance cost.

In the Soviet famines—during the period of military communism, 1917-22, during the collectivization in 1930-32, and during World War II—the populations affected could be measured in tens of millions. In China, famine now affects hundreds of millions. In the West, catastrophes of this dimension are hardly comprehensible.

⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates of Chinese production of the main cereals are not consistent with reported Chinese estimates, which appear to be most inflated. See appendix table A-8; and also, USDA, Foreign Agricultural Circular, March 1961, and Far Eastern Economic Review, "China's Third Bitter Year," September 1961.