Dear friends and tireless seekers of Truth.

How can one possibly write about the atrocities of “Hunger: 33”, when my heart grows cold at the mere recollection of those years.

I was15 years old that year -1933. I never gave a thought to clothing, all I could think about was having at least one satisfying meal and, if I did, I could have ‘jumped over the house’ - those were my young thoughts at the time.

However it was not like that.

On January 5, 1933, a towing (hauling) crew - brigade (squad) called the “Chorna Mitla” (Black Broom) drove into our yard. Upon a thorough search of our house they found a “vorochok” (pot) of beans and 4 kilograms of poppy seeds in our attic. My mother had hidden those for a rainy day. Oh God, if only I was able to tell her now, that there is no such thing and will never be again.

That was not the end of it. My parents and I, a grade 7 student, were thrown out of our house. That winter, the temperatures went down to -30 and lower. A very poor but generous neighbour, Khoma Mykytenko, - five doors down from us, took me in.

I wondered where my poor mother and father would sleep. A question formed in my young mind, “What could be the reason for this kind of torment?” After all, my parents owned only 2.5 ha of land. That was not enough to be classified as a “Kurkul’. I later found out that my father was not a ‘Kurkul’, but he was a ‘Pidkurkulnyk’.

Due to the cold and hunger, my father’s legs began to swell, then my mother’s also and then mine as well. You would try to move your legs and you couldn’t believe that they were not responding, they felt like they were bound in heavy felt boots.

I don’t know how, but I managed to write a letter to Kyiv, to H. I. Petrovs′kyi, about the illegal actions of the local authorities, Ralko, Sokyra, Hushcha and others, about their inappropriate, rude, drunken and arrogant behaviour.

In the spring of 1933, children who had somehow miraculously survived death, were placed in houses in which there were still any living beings left. These children were called ‘patranovani’. Amidst them were: Kostiuks, Ralkos, Vovks, Mykytiuks, Lytovchenkos and others.

The Villages of Bobrovyts′kyi Rajon and previously Novo-Basans′kyi Rajon: Voron’ky, Vepryk, Kozats′ke, Shchasnivka, Bilotserkivtsi and others did not have any roads. The roads were overgrown with dense weeds, only animal trails “vovchi stezhky” winding through them.

I don’t know who was doing this, but houses in which everyone had perished from hunger, were marked with black flags - pieces of black rags or cloth.

An atmosphere of awful sadness and horror prevailed. People took on an animal sort of existence: a mother would bring her half dead baby in a sack, shake it into a common pit, and leave for home with the empty sack. Diggers of those pits received 1 kg. of bread in payment for their work.

You could write so much about that year of 1933, but what I’ve said should be enough to show what I suddenly, and without warning had to live through when I was 15 years old.

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