Russia held the largest population of horses in the world at the beginning of the 1900s. This large horse population would soon be decimated by World War I, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Russian Civil War, collectivization, and World War II. This thesis will examine the changing relationship between the Russian people and the Russian horse from the end of the nineteenth century through the Soviet period, closely examining the 1930s collectivization period in which Russian peasants slaughtered their horses in resistance to the state-funded collectivization drive. As a result, horses became active participants in the resistance against collectivization. Beginning in the 1950s, the relationship between the Russian horse and Russian people began to change. Russian horses and riders became cultural diplomats for the Soviet Union by competing in international competitions and by breeders exporting Russian horses to countries abroad. The success of the Russian horse abroad became commemorated in the Soviet Union in forms of postage stamps, which allowed the horse to become a commodity and gave everyone in the Soviet Union a chance to interact with horses. While the demise of the Russian horse population due to the horrific events of the early twentieth century, it allowed the Russian horse industry a unique opportunity to start over and make their breeding programs stronger by reviving Russian horse breeds with careful scrutiny.
For my parents, Ken and Diane, and my siblings, Brenna, Jeff, and Nathan
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CHAPTER ONE HISTORIOGRAPHY: PLACING THE HORSE IN HISTORY AND THEORY

Interaction between humans and horses occurred even before the domestication of the horse. The horse, a symbol of strength, endurance, and beauty, among others, holds a special place in human civilizations. While humans domesticated the horse around roughly 3600 BCE in Kazakhstan\textsuperscript{1}, the horse retains a wild and untamed allure despite human mastery over them. John Baskett ponders the same question, writing, “How did it (the horse) come to be tamed- if this is the right expression for a creature with such an equivocal relationship with man.”\textsuperscript{2} Horses are respected by humans, arguably more so than any other animal. Warriors galloped into battle on the backs of war horses; work horses were used as transportation in the city and to plow the fields in the country, and at times used as meat to feed human populations. Some archeologists argue that horses have helped shape human history more so than any other animal.\textsuperscript{3} In order to understand the relationship between the Soviet peasant and horse, it is important to understand Human-Animal Studies theory and the historiography of peasant resistance.

Because of these different uses, humans have varying relations with horses. In the current day and in modern history, horses are slaughtered for meat, kept as work horse or pets, wild or feral animals, and as competition animals. All of these different roles showcase a different type of relationship between human and horses. In this thesis, the relationship between the Russian peasants and their horses during collectivization in the 1930s will be examined. The relationship between peasant and horse will be analyzed by exploring the peasant’s motives to slaughter their horses in resistance to the state and collectivization.

\textsuperscript{2} John Baskett, \textit{The Horse in Art}, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 9.
\textsuperscript{3} DeMello, \textit{Animals and Society}, 190.
In order to analyze the peasant-horse relationship and the slaughter of the horse as resistance, it is important to classify the horse using Human-Animal Studies (HAS) theory. HAS has only emerged as scholarly study within the past few decades that developed from the broader theory of postmodernism. A field which specifically focuses on the relations between human and animals, HAS scholars argue that because humans are surrounded by animals, they are constantly interacting with them, and this makes animals important historical characters with agency. “Animal” or “non-human animal” are terms used by HAS scholars to refer to non-human beings. HAS scholars search to insert animals into the historical narrative and bring to the forefront their role in history. “Animals exist as mirrors for human thoughts; they allow us to think about, talk about, and classify ourselves and others,” Margo DeMello writes in her introductory text to HAS theory that humans classify animals in three categories; pet, livestock, and working animals. These categories often relate to where these animals are located. However, these categories are not sufficient enough when discussing the role of the horse throughout history, and this thesis will build upon DeMello’s categories in order to better organize and understand the role of the horse in the historical narrative.

Using these three categories, it is necessary to classify the horse in order to analyze it in the context of Russian agriculture, collectivization, and peasant resistance. According to these categories, the peasant horse in Soviet 1930s could be classified both as livestock and as a working animal, but most likely not be considered a pet. DeMello defines a pet as an animal that was given a name, allowed in the house, and not bought to be consumed as meat. In addition, pets are generally used to teach children responsibility. This became fashionable in Victorian

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4 Ibid., 7.
5 Ibid., 14.
6 Ibid., 15.
7 Ibid., 149.
England, and the word “pet” derives from an English term meaning “spoiled child.” While horses have become classified as pets in the modern era, traditionally they have either been classified as livestock or working animals. Historically, horses started off as a food source for human populations. In some parts of the world, such as Europe and Asia, horses are still bred and consumed for meat consumption. This act of breeding or hunting horses for meat would classify them as livestock. In the Soviet 1930s, horses spent their time living in fields or in barns, and while they may have been given names, the horse more closely fits the definition of livestock or working animal than a pet due to the peasants’ motive to use them for work.

Yet, the horse is yet again in a different classification of livestock than from other livestock-classified animals. A horse is arguably valued more by humans than a chicken, pig, or even a cow. This is evident through both historical and modern day attitudes towards these animals. The majority of people with carnivore diets in the United States eat meat from pigs, cows, chickens, and sheep without thinking much about the process of farming and slaughtering of them. However, many Americans oppose slaughtering horses for the consumption of their meat, which has led to the closure of equine slaughterhouses in the United States. This suggests that many American people view the horse as having value outside of their meat, and hints at the American people finding it morally wrong to slaughter a horse because they view the horse as an animal that people can forge strong bonds with. DeMello also notes humans’ lack of eating cats, but for a different reason. She argues that humans will only eat cats during harsh times such as famine because cats can be viewed as pets, but they can also be viewed as dirty pests that roam the streets. As a result, cats are rarely raised as food. DeMello calls this process “functional versus symbolic,” where humans decide which animals are appropriate for eating and which are

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8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 129.
not. In modern Western societies under normal circumstances, horses are not considered to be appropriate for consumption because they are more valuable alive than as meat.\textsuperscript{10} With the shortage of horses in Russia following the Russian Civil War (1917-1922), peasants would value the horse alive rather than dead for meat.

The horses discussed in this thesis are classified as “tame,” meaning that they are domesticated animals living within the boundaries of human society. There are horses around the world that are “wild,” meaning they live outside the bounds of human culture.\textsuperscript{11} The horses that will be examined in this paper are considered to be tamed, as well as trained by humans to perform specific tasks in order to better serve human kind. This is an important distinction to make, because there are some feral bands of horses on the Eurasian Steppe. However, because they are wild animals and do not serve the Russian peasant population, these feral horses will not be considered in this paper.

With the domestication of horses in Kazakhstan in 3600 BCE, horses then moved to another classification: the working animal. After domestication, the horse had another value besides as meat; its ability to be used for work, transportation, and war. This classification changed yet again with the development of the internal combustion engine in the early nineteenth century. After this invention, the horse’s use as a work animal rapidly declined, and instead the animal gradually became more valued as a competition and companion animal.\textsuperscript{12} Despite the declining need for the horse in agriculture and transportation, the horse did not lose its status in Western society and remained beloved by people and valued now as sport companions and as pets.

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 127.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 86.
This relationship between human and horse is unique and is not found in many other animal-human interactions. The value humans place on horses is perhaps due to the amount of time they have spent with horses in battle, in the fields, and caring for them, as well as the constant need for horses in order for humans to effectively and efficiently build civilizations. Traditionally, this relationship between human and horse has come to symbolize masculinity.\(^\text{13}\) However, during the Soviet period, animal husbandry became increasingly feminized. In what Robert C. Stuart calls, “the feminization of agriculture,” women began not only to work in agricultural fields, but began to take leadership positions in collective farms.\(^\text{14}\) These managerial roles tended to be in fields such as animal husbandry, zootechnology, and agronomy.\(^\text{15}\) Mary Buckley concedes that women were prevalent in agricultural sectors such as animal husbandry and field work positions.\(^\text{16}\) The horse changed from representing masculinity, military strength, and autocratic power in the Imperial Age to representing peasant resistance and feminism in the Soviet era.

There is limited Western scholarship written on the Russian horse and Russian people. However, one of the strongest examples of human-animal relationships in Russian history would be that of the dairy maid and the dairy cow. Milking cows during the Soviet era was laborious, and the cows had to be milked several times throughout the day and night. As a result, these women spent a large amount of time milking these cows. Milking cows, because of the amount of time and care needed, was viewed as a typically female job. If one were to examine domesticated animals through a gendered lens, the dairy cow could be viewed as a feminine

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
symbol because it is an animal that is used to provide for other animals and humans, and is not used for warfare. From a religious standpoint, Hindus refuse to slaughter cows because Hinduism values the cow as a symbol of life and God. “As Mary is to Christians the mother of God, the cow to Hindus is the mother of life,” summarizes Marvin Harris. Unlike cows, horses do not represent peace or femininity. In contrast, they typically represent war and power. Perhaps because of the horse’s symbolism of war and power, along with their draft power, is why the Soviet state was more concerned about the low horse population than the low cow population in the Soviet 1930s.

The value of the horse can be seen in how post-emancipation of serfdom in 1861 Imperial Russian villages handled horse thieves. Horse thievery was a common occurrence in Imperial Russia, according to historian Christine D. Worobec, though it was more common out on the frontier of the Russian Empire. Worobec provides a chart that shows the number of horses stolen from 1888-1893 in various cities across the empire. It shows that northern cities tended to have far fewer horses stolen than cities in the southern region. In Archangel, for example, only 8 horses were stolen in this five-year period, whereas in Orenburg, 1,110 horses were stolen. However, horses were not as prevalent in the northern regions of Russia as they were in other regions. Animal husbandry was prominent in the southern regions, meaning there would be more horses in the south than in other regions in Russia. Regardless of the region, horse thievery impacted these villages and individual peasants negatively. If a horse was stolen from a family, other villagers would become nervous, knowing that there were horse thieves in the area and their horses might be stolen next. A peasant family would be negatively affected because they

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19 Ibid., 285.
would lose their source of draft power. If peasants lost their horses, they would have to hire a horse from another peasant in the village, which became expensive and would greatly hinder their farming progress.\(^{20}\) Due to the hardships horse theft caused, peasants pushed the Imperial government to enact more laws and surveillance regarding horse thievery. The state was not concerned with horse thievery and peasant-on-peasant disputes; however, the state was more concerned with making sure that the peasants and the landlord classes got along.\(^{21}\) However, a law was passed in March 1880 that lengthened the prison sentences of horse thieves. A prison sentence for a single horse theft could range from three months to one year, while someone involved in the horse theft trade would be sentenced between one-and-a-half and two-and-a-half years, and a repeat offender could receive a maximum sentence of six years.\(^{22}\) These new laws did not mean that law enforcement became more effective in arresting horse thieves. One statistic estimated that only one out of ten horse thieves was caught at the turn of the twentieth century.\(^{23}\)

Due to the lack of action from the Tsarist government, peasant villages took horse thievery justice into their own hands. These punishments ranged from a quick murder to a slow tortured death. Tortures ranged from tying the horse thief up and poking the person with hot daggers to scalping them, or gouging their eyes out. Often they would maim the horse thief, which symbolized how disabled the peasants felt when their horses were stolen from them and allow other villagers to recognize the person as a horse thief. The peasants sometimes would rape

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 284.
\(^{21}\) Ibid., 285-286.
\(^{22}\) Ibid., 284.
\(^{23}\) Ibid, 284.
the horse thief with a hot or barbed rod. This was especially insulting because rape placed the thief in a submissive position more closely associated with women in this patriarchal society.\textsuperscript{24} 

This backlash and violence towards horse thieves illustrates the value of the horse within nineteenth century peasant society. Not only did they take action when their horses were stolen from them, but they punished these thieves in a gruesome manner. These punishments were conducted by entire villages and groups of peasants, proving that this was an injustice not only forced upon the horse owner, but on the entire community viewed it as a threat and a crime. Crimes such as horse theft display to the historian that horses were not only valuable, but an essential part of the peasant life, and stood as a symbol for peasant culture in the nineteenth century.

In conclusion, while the Russian horse cannot be classified as a pet according to Margo DeMello’s Human-Animal Studies classifications, the relationship between human and horse cannot be overstated. Nor can the Russian horse’s economic or cultural value be diminished. Because of a shared history on the battlefield, on the streets, and on the farm, horse and human shared a deep, and almost unexplainable bond different from any other animal relationship. This bond and culturally, emotionally, and economic importance to the Russian peasant community is evident in how horse thieves were handled in the Imperial age. As the twentieth century progresses into the Cold War era, the relationship between human and horse changes from the rural and battlefield spaces to the national space, when horses become cultural ambassadors for the Soviet Union through international sport and breeding. The relationship between horses, people, and spaces is constantly evolving in order to progress with the times. While DeMello’s classification of pet, livestock, and feral/wild are an excellent start to the classifications of

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 289.
human-animal relationships, the historical example of the peasants and their horses during collectivization which this thesis will explore portray how these classifications need to be broadened. A peasant horse is not quite a pet, but holds a deeper emotional bond to humans than a sheep or a chicken. A war horse would be considered livestock or a working animal, but also holds close emotional ties to its warrior. Clearly, horses do not fit tidily into DeMello’s classifications. Perhaps it is necessary to classify the horse in a unique way due to this close bond. Because of this strong bond between horse and human, as well as peasant reliance on the horse for day to day life, it was natural that peasants would rebel and at times became violent when the Soviet state began collectivization of land and livestock in the Soviet 1930s.

*Peasant Resistance in Soviet Collectivization*

“Collectivization was a violent and bloody clash between two cultures at fatal variance with one another,” Lynne Viola writes in her book, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin.*

The start of collectivization of agriculture in 1928 is remembered as a violent period of war on the peasant culture. As a result, it is a significant focus of study in Soviet historiography. John M. Thompson defines collectivization as, “the transfer of all peasant land, whether managed by the commune or individuals, into new agricultural units called collective farms, which all peasants had to join and to which they were also required to contribute most of their livestock and tools.”

This definition is concise and succinct, but it does not convey to the reader the atrocious violence, the suffocating tension, and the overall hysteria that collectivization brought to the Soviet peasantry and the countryside. This thesis on peasant resistance seeks to bring autonomy to the peasants

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involved in the resistance to collectivization and portrays resistance actions as deliberate to show that the peasants disagreed with the state’s collectivization campaign.

A recent trend in Soviet historiography on peasantry is to view peasants not as victims, but perpetrators. Jason C. Sharman supports the changing interpretations on peasants in Soviet historiography over the decades and how he believes that peasants cannot be considered victims because of the chaos, violence, and destruction they were responsible for during collectivization. One of his most provocative arguments is his discussion of the rational peasant: “Furthermore, peasants, so long thought of as a ‘mass’ which escaped a dull passivity only for explosive, inchoate violence, are now painted as active, reasonable and rational, adopting and adapting ‘weapons of the weak’ and ‘subaltern strategies’ to press their demands on the state and modify the shape of the kolchozy at the point of both material and symbolic production and consumption.”27 In this quote, Sharman intentionally borrows language from Shelia Fitzpatrick’s work, Stalin’s Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization.28 Sharman’s argument leads into a discussion about the relationship between the peasantry and the state and how this relationship may have contributed to the violence of collectivization. Sharman concludes that Soviet political historiography points to the fact that disorganization of the Soviet state meant societal chaos, and therefore the tension between the peasantry and the state, which then led to peasant resistance, could be a consequence of the disorganized state.29 This article is important to collectivization historiography because it gives the peasants agency and speaks to their intelligence, instead of illustrating them as a singular, backwards minded mass. 

29 Ibid.
peasants surely knew the consequences of slaughtering their horses and livestock better than any other group. As people who worked with animals and relied on horse draught power, it would be insulting and incorrect to believe that the peasants mindlessly slaughtered their horses and livestock. These peasants made a conscious decision to slaughter their animals as a show of resistance. They were willing to suffer the consequences in order to demonstrate their resistance to the state’s collectivization drive.

The slaughter of horses is defined under passive resistance. Shelia Fitzpatrick discusses “passive resistance” in her work. Titled *Stalin’s Peasants*, Fitzpatrick examines the effect collectivization had on the countryside as well as forms of resistance the peasants took. “Passive resistance” dated back to the Imperial era institution of serfdom, which was abolished in 1861. Passive resistance included foot dragging, failure to understand instructions, refusal to take initiative, pilfering, and general unwillingness to work. Fitzpatrick argued that “The famine of 1933 was the consequence of an irresistible force (the state’s demands for set quotas of grain) meeting an immoveable object (the peasants’ stubborn passive resistance to these demands).”

Resistance such as refusing to sow endangered the peasants as much as it endangered the collective authorities, but yet the peasants remained steadfast, and they refused to sow unless they were given their land back. Fitzpatrick gives countless other examples of resistance, from slaughtering animals to leaving the village. As we shall see, passive resistance was the peasants’ most powerful tool against the Soviet state.

Using HAS theory, the slaughter of livestock became militant. If a scholar is to give the horse agency, which is one of the major tenants of Human-Animal Studies theory, the slaughtering of these horses became militant because the peasants slaughtered an equal being.

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Horses once symbolized the state and its power during the Imperial Age, but soon came to be a symbol for peasants and rural lifestyle during the Soviet age as technology advanced and as the Bolsheviks forced modernity on the Soviet people. While the horse has been classified as a work animal with strong relations to human beings for the purposes of this study, one cannot overlook its importance as a symbol for the peasant lifestyle and its old symbol for the Imperial government. By slaughtering their horses, the peasants were slaughtering a symbol of their lifestyle, and a worker equal. By slaughtering their horses, they were slaughtering a field comrade, a being that had toiled with them while plowing, an animal that had worked alongside them during the cold winters and the hot summers, and an animal that had once symbolized the loyalty of servant to master, and person to government.

Slaughtering these horses was not without consequences to both the state and the peasant rural. Reluctant as the state was to admit it, the Soviet Union still heavily relied on horses for its agricultural power and, to a lesser extent, for military purposes. R.L. DiNardo wrote about the Soviet need for horses in his book, *Mechanized Juggernaut or Military Anachronism? Horses and the German Army of World War II*. According to DiNardo, the German army was careful not to take many Soviet horses upon their 1941 invasion of the USSR because they did not want to disrupt Soviet agriculture. The German army knew that the Soviet Union depended on horses for agriculture, and they were aware of the low Soviet horse population. Because the German army planned on taking Soviet food and agriculture to support its own troops, troops deliberately avoided stealing Russian horses for their army. If the German army took Soviet horses and the peasants were unable to use them to farm, then the Germans would eventually starve.  

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Regarding the Soviet military, peasants had a strong influence and population not only in the countryside, but in the army as well. In an article, titled, “Red Army Opposition to Forced Collectivization, 1929-1930: The Army Wavers,” Roger R. Reese examines the relationship between the state and the military, and how the majority of the soldiers resisted their role in collectivization. Reese explains that the Soviet regime hoped to strengthen its ties with the military through collectivization, but the campaign instead had the opposite effect and only made state and military relations worse. “The Red Army did play a crucial role in the drama of collectivization, but one in many ways hostile to the goals and methods of the regime,” Reese states.

While it may seem that the Red Army would be a natural ally for the Soviet regime’s agenda, it is also logical that the soldiers of the Red Army would defend the peasants and resist forced collectivization, as many of them came from peasant families themselves. Stalin and party authorities were aware of this, and attempted to use the Red Army as a vehicle to modernize the peasant soldier and mold him into “the New Soviet Man.” In this discussion, Reese again addresses the conflict that collectivization brought, writing, “Soldiers faced a choice between what the state mandated and what they personally wanted, creating conflict within and between individuals, and between individuals and the Soviet state.”

Peasant soldiers also inspired resistance to collectivization by writing home to their friends and family about the difficult conditions in collectivization. The state had tried to create a letter writing program, that encouraged soldiers to write home to their loved ones to inspire them to join collective farms and tell them how much easier life would be on a kolkhoz. A kolkhoz is

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33 Ibid., 29.
34 Ibid., 29-30.
the Russian term for a collective farm. Instead soldiers wrote to their home villages and told them of the difficulties collectivization would bring to their villages. The peasant soldiers were ultimately successful in gaining support for their resistance against collectivization, and as a result peasant villagers began to actively resist collectivization.³⁶ In conclusion, Reese asserted that, while the state tried to use collectivization to modernize and inspire the peasant soldiers to support the state, it only widened the gap between the peasantry and the state, and turned many Red Army soldiers against the Soviet regime.³⁷

Red Army peasant soldiers were not the only group in Stalinist Russia to actively resist collectivization. Peasant women also actively resisted collectivization, much to the surprise of the state. Many historians note the significance of the peasant women in revolts, but Lynne Viola specifically examines the peasant women’s resistance in the form of bab’i bunty (women’s riot) in her article, “Bab’i Bunty and Peasant Women’s Protest during Collectivization.” Peasant women were in a unique position because the state viewed them as the weaker sex, and because of this, were often successful in voicing their discontent with collectivization due to the state’s false perceptions of them. As discussed in Sharman’s article, the state was known for viewing peasants as backward, dark, irrational, and at times stupid. The Soviet officials viewed peasant women as uneducated, irrational, and prone to hysterical outbreaks. Because of these perceptions, the state did not take bab’i bunty as a serious action against the state or collectivization. Instead, they viewed it as in the peasant women’s nature to lash out with hysterical violence without a cause. Viola addresses these points in the introduction to her article,

³⁶ Ibid., 32-33.
³⁷ Ibid., 34.
writing, “Rarely, if ever, were bab’i bunty described or evaluated in political or ideological terms.”

Viola argues that these peasant women used the state’s false perceptions of them in order to protest without being deported or punished in another fashion. Because the state viewed the bab’i bunty as a violent, but random and hysterical outburst, they hardly ever punished the women who participated in them. While the bab’i bunty were viewed as non-political and backwards, peasant men who participated in protests could be labeled as kulaks or kulak sympathizers, and therefore the peasant men faced serious consequence of their resistance actions. Because the state did not take these women’s revolts to collectivization seriously, they could not stop the eruption of bab’i bunty that rolled over the Russian countryside.

Rumors were thought to be the spark that started these riots. Rumors regarding the state taking away peasant children, wide-sharing, forcing peasant women to cut their hair, among many others, caused mass hysteria throughout the countryside. Viola also notes that the implementation of the radical collectivization policies were also cause for the bab’i bunty. Policies regarding the domestication of livestock outraged peasant women, as traditionally they had always been the ones to care for animals, and they did not want to see their traditional ways of caring for livestock change. This understandable outrage about livestock policy changing depicts that livestock and the care of livestock were important factors in peasant rural life.

Some scholars believe that collectivization was not merely a state program used to modernize the countryside, but rather an all-out civil war on peasantry. As many of the other

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39 Ibid., 27.
40 Ibid., 28.
41 Ibid., 32-33.
Soviet scholars believe, Lynne Viola agrees that collectivization was not only a way for the state to control the flow of agricultural goods coming out of these villages, but also as a way to modernize the peasantry and a way to bring socialism to the villages.\footnote{Viola, \textit{Peasant Rebels Under Stalin}, 13.} Viola explains the events that led up to collectivization, and explains how peasants withheld their grain in 1927 due to the overproduction of industrial goods and not enough agricultural goods. Because of this, Stalin began to accuse the peasants of purposely withholding grain, and instructed forced grain requisition to begin. Viola once again returns to her argument of the town versus countryside, and writes that “For Stalin, culture became class.”\footnote{Ibid., 24.} Stalin viewed the peasants withholding grain as a class-based resistance, and sought to eliminate it through collectivization. However, Viola argued that the peasants viewed this as an attack on their culture, and thus began the violence and resistance of the collectivization period.\footnote{Ibid., 24-25.} Due to this cultural divide, Viola refers to collectivization as a civil war within the state.\footnote{Ibid., 44.}

Another theme reflected in Viola’s book is the idea that resistance came naturally to the peasants. Once the peasants felt that the state was attacking them and their way of life, they resisted and fought back out of instinct. Viola wrote, “Peasant resistance to collectivization would be rooted in their culture, rather than specific social strata, and would draw upon an arsenal of peasant tactics native to their culture.”\footnote{Ibid., 44.} This idea is an interesting one. The reason the peasants were being attacked by the state was because the state viewed them as backward and as a dark people, and the state wanted to change that. It is perhaps an insult to the state for the

\footnote{42 Viola, \textit{Peasant Rebels Under Stalin}, 13.} \footnote{43 Ibid., 24.} \footnote{44 Ibid., 24-25.} \footnote{45 Ibid., 44.} \footnote{46 Ibid.}
peasants to fight back using their own cultural resistance tactics, of which are a part of what the state wants to change or eliminate from the Russian peasant culture.

Tracy McDonald examines a specific peasant uprising in her article, “A Peasant Rebellion in Stalin’s Russia: The Pitelinskii Uprising, Riazan 1930.” In this article, McDonald not only examines the violence committed by the peasants, but the violent tactics used by the Soviet authorities in order to force Russian peasants to bend to their will. While McDonald only writes about one uprising in one specific region of Russia in her article, there are many themes and roles in this uprising that are reflected in the other peasant rebellions discussed in this article.47 Pitelinskii is located roughly 225 miles southeast of Moscow, and the closest city to this village is Riazan, which is 125 miles southeast of Moscow. McDonald states that beginning in January 1930, tension grew between collectivizers and the local peasantry, which in turn would lead to the uprising. With the help of rumors and the overall tension, the uprising began on February 22, when peasants gathered on the streets. Some accounts state that this growing group of peasants repossessed their cattle, and other accounts state that the lack of tact on the part of the collectivizers led to the uprising. The collectivizers were known for going door-to-door at all hours demanding grain from the peasants. If the peasants refused, peasant women would be dragged by their braids, and their livestock taken without proper preparation.48 The collectivization authorities treated the peasants with disrespect and at times with cruelty. Not surprisingly, peasants reacted with resistance and anger. By the end of the day on February 22, the village of Veriaevo had had enough, and chased the collectivization agents out of the village. The authorities ran towards the nearby village of Gridino, but the Veriaevo villagers rang the

48 Ibid., 126.
church bells to warn their neighbors. Part of the Veriaevó mob ran after the collectivizers, destroying state property and reissuing land to kulaks as they went. McDonald notes that this disturbance lasted until five or six in the evening.⁴⁹

The state decided to send in an armed detachment to avoid a larger rebellion breaking out in the region, but that only backfired. Upon the detachment’s arrival on the morning of February 23, the village of Veriaevó was calm, but the peace would not last. Feeling threatened by the armed guards, the villagers demanded that the men put down their weapons or leave the village. When this did not happen, the crowd once again became violent, throwing sticks and other objects at the detachment.⁵⁰ As is evident in the other incidents of peasant uprisings discussed in McDonald’s article, once the peasants felt that the state threatened their way of life, they fought to defend their village, people, and culture. McDonald quotes the Veriaevó peasants as chanting, “We welcome soviet power without collective farms, grain collections, and local communists.”⁵¹ This chant further demonstrates that the peasants were willing, on some level, to cooperate with the Soviet authorities, but not when they felt that their culture was at risk. The state authorities reacted with violent tactics in a desperate effort to control the village; however, it is evident that the state violence forced upon the peasants only made the situation worse. The Pitelinskii Uprising is a classic case of the distrust and confusion in the relationship between the state and countryside.

The Soviet state not only used military strength to force the peasantry to collectivize, but they also used famine to their advantage. According to historian Sergei Maksudov, the Soviet state knowingly forced the Ukraine into a state of famine by instituting high grain tariffs on the

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⁴⁹ Ibid.
⁵⁰ Ibid., 127.
⁵¹ Ibid., 129.
Ukrainian people in the 1930s. As a result of these high grain tariffs, the Ukrainian peasants began to starve and fell into famine. By starving the Ukrainians, the state was also weakening not only their bodies, but their spirit and desire to resist collectivization. Maksudov argues in his article that the famine turned those who survived into passive individuals who submissively carried out the will of the state. In short, the Ukrainian peasants lost their will to resist because the Soviet state broke their humanity and turned them into mindless robots who served the state in order to survive.52

Naturally, the Ukrainian peasants resisted at first, but Maksudov notes that the state quickly stopped the resistance by imposing fines five times higher than a normal fine and sentencing peasants who resisted collectivization to one year of forced labor.53 However, the Soviet officials were able to break the Ukrainian peasants when the famine began. As Maksudov writes, “Hunger proved to be the most powerful and effective weapon.”54 He continues to describe the state of mind of the starving individual. “Passivity”, he writes, “became the habitual state of the inhabitants of the grain-growing region where the famine rages.”55 Starvation in its own way began to collectivize the Ukrainian region; traditions and polite behavior began to fade away as these peasants fought to survive.

Maksudov concludes that this horrific event in Ukrainian history shaped the future peasants. The 1931-33 famine allowed the future generation to become hardened and able to survive, but they also lost much of their tradition and connection to the land: “The peasant lost his love for his land, his love of work, and his sense of pride in a job well done, and then,

53 Ibid., 128.
54 Ibid., 132.
55 Ibid., 133.
gradually, even his ability to work long and hard.”56 Because of the famine, the Soviet collectivization authorities were able to use starvation to completely break an entire culture and people. As historians like Maksudov argue, famine was the state’s trump card against peasant resistance.

Despite the atrocities of collectivization, Stalin and his inner circle managed to paint a picture of modernization and progress for the rest of the world to gaze upon. Historian Ronald Suny states it best in his book, The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States: “The regime painted a picture of progress and harmony, even as peasants resisted collectivization and workers struggled against the enormous difficulties of early industrialization. The forced images of energy, joy, and purpose did not easily mesh with the harsh daily experiences of most people.”57

Despite peasant resistance, most scholars agree that the state was victorious in its collectivization efforts, though it was achieved at a steep price. In the span of a few years, the state managed to destroy urban-rural relations, send regions spiraling into famines, and ultimately did not raise agricultural production. However, by the mid-1930s, the Soviet countryside was mostly collectivized and mostly dekulakized. Kulaks were loosely defined as rich peasants. This definition was never set by the state, but was often defined as peasants who owned more than one horse and one cow. The Soviet state believed that kulaks were the reason for the struggles on the Soviet rural, and as a result sought to exterminate or displace them. This extermination and displacement became known as dekulakization.

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56 Ibid., 145.
Peasants continued to resist in passive forms once on the *kolkhoz*, and refused to follow the state’s agenda proving to the state that they were unhappy. In this regard, it is difficult to decide if there was a true victor in the collectivization conflict. However, in terms of lost culture and the displacement of people, the peasantry suffered a great loss not only in their horse and livestock populations, but in their culture and traditions as well. Although their resistance was inspiring and a few times they managed to succeed against the collectivization officials, in the end, the state took their land, their animals, and forced them onto a *kolhozes* or deported them to labor camps. Despite their resistance, the peasants lost what they viewed as the civil war of collectivization. The Soviet state through its campaign for collectivization, is responsible for the decline of the Soviet horse population. However, beginning in the late 1940s, they will be responsible for reviving the Soviet horse population, which will be explored in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER TWO THE HISTORY OF HORSES AND HORSE-BREEDING IN RUSSIA

Russia holds a strong history in horses and horse breeding, and until the twentieth century, Russia had the highest population of horses in the world. “Russia alone is capable of remounting a numerous cavalry within the shortest time, and of keeping it effective during the most protracted war,” wrote Dr. Fredrick Unterberg, a veterinarian who wrote a pamphlet about the Russian horse breeding industry in 1853.\(^{58}\)

In the 1888 Russian census, 40.1% of peasant households had one horse, 31.03% had two horses, and 28.6% had three or more horses. However, this would result in 99.73% of Russian households owning horses, leading one to believe that perhaps there is an issue with the 1888 census, or perhaps the numbers were recorded incorrectly. Regardless, the number of horses increased from 1882-1886, the population of horses in Russia was 619,757.\(^{59}\)

However, this estimate is low compared to other statistics. One source claims that Russia in 1884 had a population of 23,085,975 horses\(^{60}\), and another source claims that in 1876 Russia held a population of 21,570,000.\(^{61}\) These sources were not specific about the areas they surveyed, so it is difficult to ascertain which number is accurate. However, it is reasonable to estimate that the equine population at the turn of the century would be around 20,000,000, conservatively, given that two out of the three sources are upwards of this number.

Russia would not maintain this high population of horses during the ensuing decades of the twentieth century. The Russia that once boasted the highest population of horses in the world would soon witness a crippling loss of its equine population due to the Russian Civil War, World

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\(^{58}\) Frederick Unterberger, “Horses in Russia: Notes of Journey into the Interior of Russia,” *Spirit of the Times: A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage*, May 20, 1854; 24; 14; American Periodicals, 164.


\(^{60}\) *Horse Matters: Horse Breeding in Russia Vol. 15*. (Lansing, MI: American Periodicals Series II., 1884), 1.

War I, collectivization in the 1930s, and the German invasion if the Soviet Union in World War II. Before collectivization is explored in detail, it is crucial to understand the Imperial Age and how horses interacted in the Imperial Russian narrative. Russians in the Imperial Age worked hard to breed quality purebred horses in Imperial Studs and on private breeding farms owned by nobility. However, the Russian horse owners would be unable to do this without international influence due to the importation of foreign horses into the Russian breeding stock.

Many horse breeds from around the world influenced the Russian horses. The Arabian and the Thoroughbred were two of the biggest influences in the Russian horse breeding industry. During the Imperial Age, pure bred horses were bred exclusively on Imperial Stud farms and private stud farms owned by nobility, most likely in order to maintain bloodlines and breed characteristics. Arabian horses became one of the most important influences in Russian horse breed development, both in creating new Russian horse breeds and creating the Russian type Arabian. The first Arabian horses were imported to Russia under the reign of Ivan the Terrible in the mid-1500s, and became crucial in the development of later Russian breeds, such as the Orlov Trotter and the Orlov Riding Horse. Russian breeding farms, such as the Tersk Stud, became known for exclusively breeding Arabian horses, while other farms crossbred Arabs and other horse breeds to create new breeds. Extensive importation of the Arabian horse to Russia did not begin until the eighteenth century due to the Turkish Wars. A.G. Orlov is credited with introducing Arabian blood into Russian stock as well as the first to export Russian Arabian horses, and he is best known for creating Russian horse breeds such as the Orlov Trotter and Orlov Riding Horse. When Count Orlov died, the Russian Imperial Government purchased his

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farm and used it as an imperial stud. The Soviet Union began its selection program in 1925, importing Arab stallions from Hungary and France in 1930. During World War II and the Russian invasion of Poland, the Soviet Union took many Arabian horses from Polish stud farms to replenish their own depleted farms and breeding farms on their own soil.

Similarly, the English Thoroughbred greatly influenced the Russian horse breeding industry, although the Thoroughbred was only introduced to Russia in the late eighteenth century, and were first used to create the Orlov Riding Horse. The import and breeding of the Thoroughbred horse became more rapid as Thoroughbred racing became more popular, especially in Moscow in the eighteenth century. Thoroughbred breeding began to spread across the country, even to the most remote areas, such as Central Asia and the Far East. The industry took a hit when World War I and the Civil War plagued Russian soil, and nearly destroyed the Thoroughbred breeding industry. However, after the Revolution of 1917, the new regime instituted new state studs to revive the nearly extinct industry, and as a result, the Thoroughbred breed population came back gradually.

While there were private horse farms and studs during the Imperial Age, the studs discussed in this thesis will be imperial or Soviet run institutions. Ivan III established the first Imperial Stud near Moscow, according to Sir Walter Gilbey. Just how many studs the Imperial government held is in question, since different sources claim different numbers. One American

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67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 26.
periodical claimed that there were twelve Imperial studs, fourteen government depots and country stables, and about 2,500 private studs in Russia in 1876. This same periodical estimates that there were 21,570,000 horses on Russian soil in 1876. Another American periodical estimates that in 1884, Russia held a horse population of 23,085,975. According to the Soviet Union Department of Agriculture and Forestry, in 1892 there were twenty seven Imperial Studs, and these studs were successful in breeding high quality draft horses, farming horses, cavalry horses, town use horses, and trotters.

One of the most famous and influential Russian studs (existing to this day) is the Tersk Stud. The Tersk Stud is located in the Caucasus Mountains in the Southern European region of Russia, where most of the Russian horse breeding industry is located. Founded by Count Sergei Stroganov and his brother-in-law Prince Aleksandr Grigorievich Shcherbatov in 1889, this stud began with two stallions and nine mares which Stroganov and Shcherbatov purchased on a trip to Syria in 1888. Two years later in 1891, Sheik Nasra Ibn Abdulla donated two more stallions to Tersk Stud. This stud continued to expand its number of horses until 1917, and by 1899 held nine stallions and 21 breeding mares in their breeding stock, totaling 66 horses including yearlings. However, the stud was ransacked by soldiers during the 1917 Russian Civil war, losing all of their horses. In 1921, Tersk Stud became an official Soviet State stud farm and was officially named the Tersk Stud, honoring the local Tersk Cossack group. Due to the entire farm’s stock being lost in the Russian Civil War, the stud was supplied with half-breed (known

70 “Horses In Europe,” Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly (1876-1904) 6, American Periodicals (December 1877), 750.
71 Ibid.
73 Agriculture and Forestry Soviet Union Department, “The Industries of Russia,” (1893), 211.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
as grade stock in the United States) horses, which they were to breed in order to supply the
Russian army with cavalry horses.\textsuperscript{77} According to Gilbey, the Russian Army needed about 7,200
horses yearly for the Russian cavalry during the war, and with many of the stud farms having
been emptied due to the Russian Civil War, it was imperative that these farms begin breeding
horses again immediately.\textsuperscript{78} In 1922, Marshall Semyon Budyonny declared that the stud be
renamed State Military Stud No. 169. A year after the stud’s name change, the stud began to
import pure breed Arabian horses once again in order to breed them for the Russian military. The
stud initially wanted to restore the Strelet’s line, but due to a lack of Strelet horses, the stud
decided to make a new Arabian breed line called the Tersk horse. The Tersk horse would be used
as a riding horse, unlike horses that peasants bred on the steppe or on their own personal farms,
which were often grade stock horses and bred as work horses. These Tersk Arabians would be
high quality animals used for warfare and would later draw attention to the Soviet Union at
international horse expositions because of their quality bloodlines and impressive conformation.

In 1930, the Tersk Stud began to import horses in order to improve its stock. One source
argues that the Russian horse industry would not have survived without imports.\textsuperscript{79} The stud
imported six broodmares and one stallion named Kann from France. Tersk Stud now credits
these French horses with enabling the stud to create a sustainable breeding program. In 1936,
Tersk turned once again to the West to add more horses to their stock. Tersk Stud imported six
stallions and nineteen broodmares from England, all of which were added to the Tersk Stud
breeding program.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Gilbey, \textit{Horse-Breeding in England and India and Army Horses Abroad}, 40.
The Tersk Stud became a state-run institution in the 1920s, but did not receive the violent backlash from the peasants that resulted from the 1930s collectivization of smaller farms. This is most likely because the Tersk Stud had been owned by the noble Stroganov family and not by peasants. From the literature on Tersk Stud, it appears that the stud was abandoned by Stroganov before the Civil War. Shcherbatov died in 1915, and Stroganov escaped to Paris in 1917. Due to his noble status, Stroganov most likely fled to escape the impending arrival of the Red Army, leaving his stud farm under the care of the grooms and other staff who worked there. It can be assumed that the grooms also abandoned the farm and the horses. These staff members would not have the authority to fight the soldiers that came and stole the horses, because the horses were not theirs, unlike collectivization, where the collectivization officers took the peasants livestock by force. Another difference would be that the Tersk Stud horses were used for pleasure previous to the facility being taken over by the Soviet state. The peasants in the 1930s collectivization used their horses for work and for transportation; horses were an essential need for them to survive their day-to-day lives. While the Tersk Stud was not a peasant-run institution, it is still an important farm to discuss when understanding the decline of the Russian horse population because it was crucial in attempting to bring the Russian horse population back to its pre-Civil War numbers.

Starozhilovo Stud was another famous horse breeding stud that influenced the Russian horse population and breeding program. Founded in 1893 by successors of Baron Pavel von Deriz, this stud focused on breeding Arabians, Thoroughbreds, and draft horses. Later, the stud bought out another stud, which specialized in Orlov-Rostophinsky trotting horses, and

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Starozhilovo began to specialize in trotters as well. In 1917, the stud became state run, and a cavalry course was taught at the stud farm. Famous Soviet military officer Georgy Zhukov graduated from the Starozhilovo, although World War II decimated the stud. In October 1941, the stud made the decision to relocate its stock elsewhere to save the horses from the approaching German armies. Unfortunately, all the horses were lost on a ferry during the evacuation. The Starozhilovo Stud will be brought up again, because it continued to be important for the Russian horse breeding program in the later Soviet period.

Despite the high number of horses in the country prior to 1917 and luxurious stud farms such as the Tersk Stud and the Starozhilovo Stud, Russians did not have the technical finesse common in Western styles of riding, and as a result Russian riders were often looked down upon by Western equestrians. British cavalry officer Matthew Horace Hayes traveled to Russia at the turn of the twentieth century to instruct the Russian cavalry on proper Western horsemanship and the breaking of young horses to saddle. He chronicled his experience in Russia as a Western horsemanship ambassador in his book, Among Horses in Russia in 1900. Hayes did not have high compliments for the Russian horsemen. He recorded in his work that Russian stables were unsanitary: “Knowing that many horses go wrong in their wind in Russia, on account of the unsanitary conditions which exist in the vast majority the stables belonging to Russian gentlemen…” Hayes also noted, speaking specifically about an English mare he had brought to Russia for a Russian horseman, who reportedly had become sour in behavior a few months after her arrival. It is apparent in this account that Hayes did not think highly of Russian horsemanship. From calling Russian stables unsanitary to claiming that the Russians ruined good

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83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
English horses he imported for them, Hayes’ complaints and judgments about Russian horsemanship did not end there. He remarked while he worked in St. Petersburg at the turn of the twentieth century that the city only had two riding schools, both of which were managed and frequented by German people, not Russians.\textsuperscript{87} Hayes also critiqued the condition of the cab horses, stating that they were too thin.\textsuperscript{88} To be fair, it should be noted that cab horses throughout the world at this time were not being treated with the highest regard, and that this statement Hayes made about the cab horses was not unique to Russia. Hayes’ lack of respect for Russian horses and the Russian horse world did not go unnoticed. The Head of the Remount Department at the time of Hayes’ visit at the turn of the twentieth century, General Strukov, said to Hayes in annoyance, “You imagine we are a lot of barbarians who do not know how to break in horses.”\textsuperscript{89}

If one were to only read Hayes’ account of Russians and their horses, one might imagine that the Russians held no knowledge of or respect for their equine friends. However, other sources show just the opposite. Englishman Sir Walter Gilbey praised Russian horsemanship, stating that Imperial Studs were taken care of with the best care and intentions. The forage for the horses was selected carefully, they were exercised daily, and none of the broodmares were bred until they were at least five years of age and fully developed.\textsuperscript{90} Gibley continued to note that all of the Imperial Studs had schools for the horsemen to attend so that they could conduct their jobs with correctness. This school was known as \textit{khrenovoi}, and was also attended by jockeys, trainers, huntsmen, and coachmen.\textsuperscript{91} In her article “The Peasant Way of Life,” Mary Matossian notes that the peasants in the Imperial age took good care of their horses. They made sure that

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 93.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 101.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{90} Gibley, \textit{Horse-Breeding in England and India and Army Horses Abroad}, 40.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 39.
their horses received plenty of grazing time, received oats if they worked hard enough to merit them, and kept them in stables when the weather was too cold for the animals to be outside. Peasants even went as far as to hang icons of Floris and Lauris, the patron saints of horses, over their stables to protect their horses inside. Matossain also made gendered connections, explaining that since man and horse worked so closely in the rural countryside, that the horse came to be known as a symbol of masculinity. In his article, “The Peasant and the Army,” John S. Curtiss explains that enlisted men were instructed to groom and keep well fed the cavalry horses that would parade through the towns before going to battle. From these perspectives, Russians took good care of their horses, albeit they had a different way of caring for them than Western nations.

Despite his arrogance and air of superiority, Hayes made some helpful observations about Russian horses. He noted that all Russian horses looked the same; small, wiry, and hardy creatures that could survive the extreme heat and extreme cold of the Russian steppe and other climates. This was a critical account by Hayes, but not an unfair one. Russian horses from the steppe were small and hardy and because of their strength and how easy they were to keep, they were often used as cavalry horses. According to Gilbey, the Russian army did not often use the steppe-bred horses for the cavalry because they were too small.

While all Russian horses did not look the same, Hayes was correct in that the majority of them were built similarly. As a result, variety of build in these horses was lacking. With the

93 Ibid., 4.
95 Hayes, Among Horses in Russia, 75.
96 Gilbey, Horse-Breeding in England and India and Army Horses Abroad, 41.
exception of the breeding schools and Imperial horse studs that Gilbey wrote about, animal husbandry and breeding did not become significant or recognized as important until the Soviet era. According to a Soviet pamphlet dedicated to livestock raising, in Tsarist times, stock raising in Russia was considered to be the most backwards branch of agriculture. There was little demand for animal husbandry experts, and therefore there was no higher educational institution for this field. The most relevant program to animal husbandry was the Zoo-Technical Laboratory, founded in 1905. At the time of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, there were only six agriculture schools in Russia, three of which were publicly funded, and the other three privately maintained. According to the pamphlet, published in 1939, the Soviet Union boasts many more agriculture schools, but does not provide a specific number.

By the time the Soviet government had been implemented post revolution, Soviet officials began taking a closer look and interest in animal husbandry, especially horse breeding. This included government officials such as Semyon Budyonny, who started off as a cavalryman and in 1943 became the Commander in Chief of Cavalry. Budyonny was responsible for turning famous horse farms such as the Tersk Stud into state run operations. Known as a supreme horseman, Budyonny had completed his formal equestrian and cavalry education at the St. Petersburg Riding School, where he often competed and excelled in dressage competitions. Budyonny used his experience as a horseman to create a new Russian breed, which he named after himself. Budyonny perhaps was inspired by the lack of a hardy cavalry horse unique to Russia. Russians typically used horses from the steppe and from peasant farms as cavalry horses.

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97 Y. Liskun, Livestock Raising in the USSR (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing Houses, 1939), 5.
98 Ibid., 6.
100 Semyon Budyonny, The Path of Valor,(Moscow, USSR; Progress Publishers, 1972), 11.
While these horses were hardy and used to extreme climates and required little care, they were often too small for larger soldiers to ride and were too small to pull heavy artillery. These animals were also not flashy to look at in comparison to the impressive cavalry horses of the western countries. Budyonny wanted to create a strong, large, and brave horse for the battlefield, but one that was flashy enough to carry an officer and athletic enough to compete in horse shows when it was not in battle. Unlike the Arabian horses that the Tersk Stud was breeding at this time, the Budyonny Horse was unique to Russia, which gave pride to Russian horse people and soldiers. The Budyonny horse was bred at the S.M. Budyonny and *Pervaya Konnaya Armia* studs of the Rostov region between 1921-1949 by crossing the Don horse with the Thoroughbred horse. By developing this new horse breed S.M. Budyonny hoped to create a high-grade cavalry horse that would rival the cavalry horses of Western European nations. In order to make the breed hardy, the horses were kept under unfavorable conditions in special barns. This breeding management made for an athletic horse that could perform under the harshest of conditions.¹⁰¹

Figure 1: Portrait of Catherine the Great on her Horse Brilliant
The Imagery and Symbolism of the Imperial Russian Horse

Paintings, photographs, and other visual art mediums are valuable in assessing a certain group’s or society’s views and values. In this case, photographs and paintings will help decipher how Imperial Russia perceived the horse and the human-horse relationship. In the era of Imperial Russia, the horse was viewed as symbol of military strength, work, transportation, as well as a symbol of the autocracy. Autocrats such as Catherine the Great, depicted below, were shown riding magnificent horses, with arched necks, seemingly prancing in place, with elaborate tack on to display Imperial power and wealth.

Figure 1 depicts the horse as a powerful symbol of the state and of royal power. Despite As a female ruler, Catherine the Great was known for her refusal to ride sidesaddle and her desire to dress in male equestrian outfits and wield swords and shields as symbols of masculine power. In this portrait, Catherine and her horse are depicted as partners, her horse, Brillant, appearing as a noble and loyal servant to his queen.102

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Figure 2: Finka
However, the vast majority of the horses in Imperial Russia were not horses of royalty or nobility. Many of them were used for farm work or belonged to peasant families. These animals are still depicted as loyal and not a threat to authority. Many early photographs show the horses being used for work or transportation, as displayed below.

According to the Library of Congress description, this horse is a breed known as the Finka. Figures 2 and 3 are photographs taken by Prokudin-Gorskiĭ. Prokudin-Gorskii was a scientist and photographer who traveled throughout the Russian Empire from 1905 to 1915 capturing images of what the Library of Congress defines as “photographic surveys.”

Naturally, horses were an integral part of life in the Russian Empire, especially the rural regions. Depicted in Figure 2 is a horse similar to what Hayes described in his account. This horse is plain in appearance, small, and wiry. From Figure 2, it is evident that the horse is a docile, but noble creature, with a kind soft eye, and relaxed ears. Yet, it is also evident that this animal is a work horse, due to the work vehicle in which it is hitched. The photograph also depicts the horse as a partner, a being who toiled in the field alongside peasant workers. The photograph captured the horse as the main character in the moment.

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Figure 3: Arbakesh, Samarkand
Other photos from the era also display the work horse as a docile and willing servant. Figure 3 depicts two men in the wagon and the horse picking its way carefully through the muddy terrain. Both men and horse are depicted as workers, toiling on the muddy path to complete their work for the day. There could be numerous reasons why Prokudin-Gorskii chose to photograph work horses and peasant workers. In the later 1800s and early 1900s, the Russian peasantry and Russian rural landscape held a romantic appeal to the urban intelligentsia. These photographs, while beautiful, depict the hard work and sacrifice of both horse and peasant, and depict an idealized portrayal of the relationship between peasant and horse as a partnership rather than man and servant. In Figure 2, the horse’s ears are back, listening to its master’s commands, eyes are clear and docile, and it is pulling from its hind end, ready to pull the wagon with more force at any given moment.

This loyalty and respect between human and horse is evident in paintings as well. In Figure 4, a Cossack is shown sitting by his dead horse.

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Figure 4: A Russian Cossack Sits by His Dead Horse
The horse is shown sprawled on the ground, with blood running down on its girth area and a bloody scrap in its front left foreleg. The Cossack sits beside his trusty steed, his shoulders hunched over, and the red of his cape matching the blood on his horse. Presumably, the horse is dead, due to the blood running down its girth and the Cossack man sitting beside the horse, his head lowered in defeat. The painting appears to depict sun rise or sun set, perhaps symbolizing the start of the Cossack’s life without his horse, or the ending of the horse’s life. This painting displays the strong emotional connection between Russian man and his horse, and the sense of loyalty that bonds them. Even after the horse’s death, the Cossack man is reluctant to leave. Drawing from Margo DeMello’s Human-Animal Studies theory, this painting represents a deep relationship between man and horse. As previously discussed, the horse to the peasants was not quite a pet, but assumed a deeper relationship with humans than an animal classified as a work animal or a livestock animal. In the painting, the man has not left his horse’s side, despite the animal’s presumed death. The Cossack man appears to be mourning, judging from his hunched shoulders, lowered head, and stillness. All of these signs portray that the Cossack man finds it necessary to take time to mourn the loss of his trusty companion. Usually, one would not mourn the death of a livestock animal, because the expectation would be that the animal would eventually die in order to provide food or other products for humans. However, war animals have a different relationship with humans than other working animals. Soldier and horse would naturally have a deeper bond, due to their shared experiences in war, with death all around them and other challenges presented by the natural terrain. This painting depicts that the horse was viewed as a loyal companion that the soldier valued highly for its companionship and skill to successfully carry him through battle.
The horses in the Catherine the Great portrait and the Cossack painting both are white. As portrayed in Figures 2 and 3, most Russian horses were not white, gray, or other light colors, but, brown or other dark colors. The Arabian and other purebred horses would have a higher chance at being white or gray, and Catherine the Great had many horses in her stables to choose from, meaning she more than likely did have a light colored horse. However, the white horse in the Cossack painting hints that the artist is using color as a symbol or emotion. Russian horses born on the steppe, where many Cossack bands lived, would most likely be dark colored or tan in order to blend in with their surroundings to protect themselves from predators. Their coloring would also be darker or tan colored because they most likely had not been influenced by pure bred horses, where there are more varieties of coat colors. The Cossack’s white horse may symbolize the innocence of the horse, loyalty to the state, and symbol as a war horse. John Baskett noted that many artists began to paint the horse in a more scientific and realistic manner during the sixteenth century. Beginning in the sixteenth century, art work began to depict the horse’s movements, coloring, and conformation in an attempt to better understand and work with these animals. As a result, it would appear that the artist of the Cossack painting painted the horse white in order to evoke emotion out of the viewer or to symbolize loyalty and military strength. In both Figures 1 and 4, the horse is not the focus point of the paintings, and instead are almost devoid of emotion and are used as a prop to depict the human emotion. While both Figure 1 and Figure 4 depict a strong relationship and respect between horse and human, it is done so from the human perspective because the horse figurines in both paintings lack emotional expression.

Conclusion

All of these paintings and photographs portray the Imperial Age Russian horse as a loyal character to the state. The horse occupied spaces and relationships with humans in spaces such as rural regions, military spaces, and nobility spaces. These horses were used in battle to fight for the empire, as well as used on the farm to produce farm goods to feed the empire. Imperial Russia recognized the horse’s importance to the empire, and kings as well as noblemen made sure to produce quality horses from their stud farms. Even though the horse population took a hit during the Russian Civil War, the Bolsheviks continued and strengthened the animal husbandry education so that the state would be able to replenish the horse population following the Civil War. Despite their thirst for modernity and technological advancement, the Bolsheviks respected the need for the horse in agriculture and transportation. This need for the horse allowed the peasants to utilize the horse in the rural countryside as a symbol of their lifestyle and culture, while remaining useful to the state at the turn of the twentieth century. However, this peaceful divide yet cooperation between city and country, peasant and state, would not remain as the Soviet State advanced and grew. Relations between the peasant and state would change drastically after Stalin took control, and once he implemented collectivization, the peasants would utilize the Imperial Age symbol of the horse by slaughtering them before the eyes of collectivization officials, acting on their feelings of frustration toward the state by slaughtering a symbol of subordination and loyalty.

The horse, which once symbolized humility, loyalty, and autocratic power, slowly turned into a symbol of backwardness, peasantry, and ironically, need. Despite the Bolshevik hatred for the rural backwardness and peasant “darkness,” they needed the peasants in order to feed the country. The horse became similar to the peasants; albeit outdated and slow, horse drawn
transportation and agriculture draught power was needed in order for the Soviet state to grow. Much as the state tried to hide the horse and the peasant culture under it’s rapid industrialization, growing cities, and booming urban populations, it could not keep its outdated needs hidden once collectivization was implemented in the 1930s.
“Out of all other crisis with which the Soviet Union is now beset the crisis in agriculture is undoubtedly the acutest and the gravest,” wrote Gareth Jones, former Foreign Affairs Advisor to Ex-Prime Minister David Lloyd George wrote in “The General Survey of Agricultural Conditions in U.S.S.R.” While this statement has elements of hyperbole, at its core it rings true. After World War I and the Russian Civil War, the Russian horse population continued declining at an alarming pace. The majority of studs were cleared out, and the Soviet state was rapidly trying to take over the few private stud farms left after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in order to rebuild the horse population. With a depressed state of agriculture in the country, Soviet leaders knew it was imperative to replenish the horse population in order to feed the country and provide transportation.

Unfortunately, the Russian horse population lacked sufficient time to recover between the Russian Civil War and Stalin’s implementation of collectivization of agricultural regions. The Soviet Union tried utilizing education, reward systems, and eventually punishment to try and bring the Russian horse population back up to Imperial Age levels and to get the peasants to stop slaughtering livestock, but the peasants generally prevailed in their resistance. While some of these horses were slaughtered due to the need for food, one should not simply conclude that the peasants were slaughtering their horses and other livestock for food. Using Shelia Fitzpatrick’s ideas on passive resistance discussed in Chapter 1, this chapter will use this idea as a theoretical framework when examining the mass slaughtering of livestock. Simply concluding that the peasants were slaughtering their horses out of necessity is an overarching and false conclusion. While not every single peasant slaughtered their horses for resistance, through examining state

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documents, foreigners’ first-hand accounts, and secondary scholarly sources on the resistance actions and motives during collectivization, it becomes clear that the action of slaughtering horses and other livestock was largely in resistance to the state and its collectivization drive. By slaughtering these animals, the peasants were utilizing their power over the rural countryside and the agricultural industry to punish the state and its officials. The slaughtering of these animals gave the peasants autonomy and a presence in the historical narrative. This chapter examines the specific details of collectivization, peasant resistance, and the consequences of collectivization between 1928 until the eve of World War II.

The Role of Animal Husbandry Education

Mary Buckley wrote, “…the fall in the number of horses negatively affected traction power and the ability to harvest a fall which came on top of earlier losses of millions of horses for the Tsarist Red and White armies.”\textsuperscript{109} The loss of livestock from the Civil War meant less manure to fertilize the soil, further weakening the state of agriculture in the Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{110} Because of the need for horses, the Soviet Union began to create agriculture education programs that specifically focused on animal husbandry. Animal husbandry had recently been thought of as backward and useless in Imperial Russia (excluding some of the more elaborate stud farms, such as the Tersk Stud, which had been privately owned during the Russian Imperial Age). As a result, there was only one state animal husbandry program during the Imperial Age, and it was not founded until 1905 at the Zoo-technical Laboratory.\textsuperscript{111} By the time of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, there was a total of three agricultural colleges maintained by the state. This lack of agricultural education became a problem with the emergence of famine, drought, and loss of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{109} Mary Buckley, \textit{Mobilizing Soviet Peasants: Heroines and Heroes of Stalin’s Fields}, (Maryland: Rawman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2006), 22.
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Y. Liskun, \textit{Livestock Raising in the USSR}, (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1939), 5.
\end{itemize}
livestock in the early Soviet era, and these factors inspired the Soviet leaders to not only improve animal husbandry programs, but also to improve agricultural programs as a whole. According to a state-published pamphlet on livestock raising, the belief was that, “the existence of a close contact between the science and the practice of stock-raising gives us the assurance that in the very near future we shall be able to direct at will all the processes of reproduction of the herd of farm animals as well as the output of the produce of stock-raising.”

The new livestock-raising education in the Soviet Union implemented newer technologies such as artificial insemination. The Soviet Union boasted in their literature that their horse population numbers were back up to pre-Soviet era levels and that they were just as advanced as Western agricultural societies; however, this is not the case. Most likely Soviet propagandists wrote and published these lies to create a stronger international persona, specifically to the West, and to boost the morale of their own rural population. A Soviet livestock raising pamphlet claims “100% calving of cows and foaling of mares” since the “intellectual application of achievements of world science in animal husbandry.” It also claims that the Soviet agricultural field was up to par or had surpassed world records in agriculture. The pamphlet continues to say that in 1938 the number of horses on collective farms had increased by eight percent. While foaling rates on collective farms may have improved, this pamphlet does not take into account the number of horses that survived until adulthood, therefore making these horses an asset to the Soviet population because they would be able to work. Generally, a horse is not considered to be of working age until it is five years old. This age is consistent throughout the world, because a horse’s body is not finished

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112 Ibid., 9.
114 Liskun, Livestock Raising in the USSR, 10.
115 Ibid., 13.
116 Ibid.
maturing until five years of age or even later. Additionally, considering that the horse population numbers remained low for the remainder of the Soviet period, it is unlikely that these statistics the pamphlet published were accurate. It is more likely that the Soviet Union lied about its horse and cow birthing rates in order to bolster moral and respect among international agricultural groups.

Western numbers and statistics support the claim that this Soviet pamphlet is an exaggeration. There are different numbers and percentages in the historiography of this topic. Gareth Jones contested that while Soviet agriculture improved slightly over the New Economic Policy it faced challenges once more in the collectivization period. According to Jones, who used Soviet data to make his argument, between 1929 and 1930, 3,400,000 horses were slaughtered in resistance to collectivization. Mary Buckely’s numbers show that the horse population was at 24.4 million in 1929 and fell to 12.8 million in 1939. R.L. DiNardo claimed the population fell from 32 million to 17 million, a 47 percent decrease, between 1928 and 1933. Even if the Soviet Union had a perfect birthing rate for their horses, it would not make up for the large amount of horses of working age that they lost from the late 1920s to the early 1930s.

The Soviet Union tried a reward system to keep the horse population stable and growing. The Soviet Union would award collective farmers for their good care of horses. One of the staples of a good stakhanovite, a Soviet worker who was awarded by the state, was to never permit the overload or overwork of a horse, according to Mary Buckley. The Soviet officials

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118 Ibid., 3.
119 Buckley, Mobilizing Soviet Peasants, 249,
120 DiNardo, Mechanized Juggernaut or Military Anarchism?, 39.
121 Ibid., 131.
took it even further and applied consequences to those who took poor care of their horses. Gareth Jones quotes this decree, Article 13, in his survey as saying, “…any person guilty of irregular and rapacious exploitation of horses (overloading, beating, bad harnessing) must be severely punished. The local authorities must investigate every case of death of a horse or other draught animals and bring to justice those responsible for the death.”\textsuperscript{122} The agriculture and justice systems in the Soviet Union took Article 13 seriously. Jones depicted in his text an incident where a \textit{kolkhoz} peasant left a horse out in the fields because it would not move further in the field due to exhaustion and hunger. The horse died due to exposure. The Commissary of the case concluded, “I have no doubt that you will agree with me that the sentence of death which must be passed by the court on the scoundrel shall be considered just and proper.”\textsuperscript{123} This punishment may appear extreme to the modern present-day reader, but the case illustrates how badly the Soviet Union was in need of horses and the lengths they the Soviets were willing to go through to protect them. Gareth Jones concludes this sentiment by writing, “Evidently…things became desperate if the government must use such severe measures in order to stop the widespread mistreatment of horses.”\textsuperscript{124}

While Soviet officials were serious about building the horse population back up through education, reward systems, and legal consequences, they were unable to keep the peasants from slaughtering the horses and other livestock \textit{en masse}. The peasants were serious about their resistance to collectivization, and if they could not keep their horses, they would slaughter them so the state could not have them.

\begin{flushleft}
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
Collectivization and the Impact on the Livestock Population

The Soviet Union began the seizure of land and livestock in 1927. In the 1930s, famine swept across the countryside, especially in the Ukraine, worsening the starvation and suffering in the rural regions. The Soviet authorities believed that despite the famine, the peasants were hoarding grain, and officials intensified collectivization in 1930. As a result, the state sought to collectivize as many horses as possible before the peasants slaughtered them. However, this did not mean that the kolkhozy were taking good care of these animals or keeping them safe. Not only did the peasants slaughter their horses and other livestock in resistance, there were also several incidents of the peasants storming the collective farms to reclaim their horses, as well as purposefully working slowly with their animals once on the kolkhozy in order to keep collective farm production levels low.

Collectivization became a confusing period for the peasants. A personal account written by Miron Dolot outlines his experience with collectivization and later the 1932 Ukrainian Famine in his small rural village in the county of Cherkasy. Dolot explained that the community he lived in began hearing rumors about collectivization in early 1929. Eventually, the rumors became true, and collectivization officials arrived in the village. Dolot noted that these officials did not appear to be knowledgeable about agriculture or peasant culture. Dolot recounted an incident were collectivization official Comrade Zeitlin examined a peasant’s cow. Zeitlin commented on the peasant’s calf, but instead called the baby cow a colt. The peasant hesitantly corrected Zeitlin, and explained that a colt was a baby horse, and a calf was a baby cow. Zeitlin brushed off the correction, and retorted, “Colt or calf, it does not matter. The world

126 Ibid., 3.
proletarian revolution won’t suffer because of that.”

Dolot noted the villagers frustration with their new leaders’ incompetent behavior regarding agriculture and peasant culture, and stated that they felt uneasy when the collectivization officials arrested the village elders and leaders, inserting Bolshevik officials in their place. Dolot wrote that the collectivization officials did not successfully explain collectivization to the peasants, and the villagers were concerned that collectivization would be a new form of serfdom.

The peasants in Dolot’s village were not given a choice whether to collectivize or not. Dolot recalls sitting in a village meeting called by the Soviet authorities, and when he and his family resisted joining the collective farm, they were called “enemies of the people” by the propagandist. “We were happy on our little farms, and we wanted nothing else but to be left alone,” Dolot states. Sadly, Dolot’s family was forced to collectivize, although they did survive the famine. Dolot’s account shows how it was possible for individuals to survive collectivization and famine, while, at the same time, peasant culture and agricultural methods were disappearing.

Hindus provides a different perspective on collectivization. Hindus returned to the Russian village he grew up in after moving away to the United States. In his work, he reports being surprised by how much his village had changed. He notes the modern fabrics the youth are wearing, and how excited they are for collectivization. Hindus states that only the older generations feared collectivization, but that the youth in the village were excited and ready to
modernize.\textsuperscript{132} This is an interesting perspective not stated in any of the other works. It was not unusual that the younger generations were more influenced by Bolshevik ideology, as they grew up in the revolutionary age and were greatly influenced by Bolshevik ideas through their education. This age difference was interesting, because in the examples found for this thesis, the peasants who stormed the \textit{kolkhozy} appeared to be middle aged or elderly individuals or children going with their parents. No sources used in this thesis show young adult-aged peasants storming the collective farms to take their horses back.

While the Soviet state did not make attempts to provide the peasants with more food, attempts were made by the state to replace horses with other forms of tractive power. These attempts suggest that the state was not concerned about the suffering of the peasants, but rather they were concerned about the lack of tractive power and transportation because this resulted in consequences for the entire country. One failed solution to the loss of the horse population was to replace horse power with tractors. Gareth Jones explained that the Soviet Union agriculture officials hoped to replace horse traction with tractors. However, this turned out to be problematic and continued the need for horses in the Soviet Union. Jones estimated that one tractor equaled sixteen horses. The Soviet peasants and \textit{kolkhozy} were not given enough tractors to make up for the crippling loss of horses. Jones calculated that the amount of tractors in the Soviet Union only accounted for 27.5\% of horses.\textsuperscript{133} Additionally, many of the tractors in the Soviet Union were not properly cared for or repaired, leaving them in disuse. However, how many of these tractors were in disrepair remains unknown.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
Tractors were sent to the Soviet Union by an unlikely provider; the United States. Deborah Fitzgerald examines the agricultural aid given by American farming companies and authorities to the Soviet Union when they were undergoing collectivization. Fitzgerald comments largely on the relationship between the Americans and the Soviet people. “Agricultural experts such as mechanics sent to the Soviet Union by implement companies to help assemble machinery, and farm economists and agricultural engineers, who were often invited to live and work in the Soviet Union as well-paid advisers, served as both commentators on and participants in the Soviet ‘experiment,’” Fitzgerald writes. She attributes American interest in Soviet agriculture to the 1921 Russian famine. After the famine, American agricultural specialists became interested in helping the new Soviet Union industrialize their agriculture. As a result, within a few years the United States was sending tens of thousands of tractors and other farm equipment to the Soviet Union, which the Soviet authorities ordered. It was estimated that July of 1930, the Soviet Union ordered $40 million worth of tractors and combines from the United States.

Despite these tractors and other farm vehicles being sent to the Soviet farming regions in the thousands, it did not always mean that the Soviet peasants knew how to assemble the machinery or how to use it. American engineers constantly complained that tractors were breaking down in two years or less, when they would normally last for ten or twelve years in the United States, simply because the Soviet farmers did not know how to take care of these machines. Often times the Soviet farmers were unable to even assemble the machinery,

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136 Ibid., 466.
137 Ibid., 475.
because the manuals were written in English.\textsuperscript{138} These frustrations, along with the Soviets mistrust and resentment for the American workers there, only heightened the tension during the collectivization period. While there is no evidence given in this article that the Americans working in the Soviet Union as a part of this agricultural project knew of the tragic actions committed against the peasantry by the state, it is important to note that the American agricultural community did influence and aid the Soviet collectivization effort.

As made evident above, the tractors did not equate to the amount of horses lost in collectivization, and the situation worsened. One man by the name of Fegin sent a letter to Sergo Ordzhonikidze, a close friend of Stalin’s, regarding the conditions of the \textit{kolkhozy} in Novosibirsk in September 1932. Fegin wrote: “I was in various \textit{kolkhozes}—not productive and relatively unproductive ones, but everywhere there was only one sight--that of a huge shortage of seed, famine, and extreme emaciation of livestock.”\textsuperscript{139} Fegin argued in his letter that the poor condition of the livestock was not because of the poor care they received from the peasants, but rather from the lack of feed. Fegin wrote: “The poor condition of the livestock cannot be blamed on poor care or poor labor organization since in most of the \textit{kolkhozes} I visited, the situation in terms of care and labor organization, relatively speaking, is not bad (although it could be much better), but in any case it is im-measurably better than in the butter-producing state farms \textit[sovkhozes] of the \textit{raion}, which I also visited.”\textsuperscript{140} Fegin explained the root of the problem to his reader, citing that the reason livestock numbers were so low was because peasant farmers refused to see their livestock go to state farms, and slaughtered off their animals instead and did not breed anymore. Because of this, Fegin offered a solution: “… and I think it is now necessary,

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 476.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid.
when the socialistic sector of the villages has been strengthened, to speed up the growth of livestock farming in the private households of the kolkhozniks and individual farmers.”

Without allowing the private agricultural sector to grow, Fegin predicted that in the next two to three years, the country would starve. Additionally, Fegin wrote about the horses, saying that most of them were either emaciated or dead. Because of this, the peasants were unable to plow, plant, or sow the little seed they did have.

The peasants themselves were frustrated by the bleak conditions and being forced to collectivize. In one incident, peasant women decide to portray their frustration and insubordination by storming a collective farm to reclaim their horses. In 1929, a babii bunt broke out in the village of Novosrednyi in the Stavropol’skii region. Lynne Viola wrote that the women peasants in this village were frustrated by collectivization because they viewed it as a threat to their livelihood and way of life. Peasant women tended to get their information from rumors that circulated the countryside, many of which included how the peasants would have to change their ways of raising children and livestock, as well as how wives would be sexually shared among men in the villages. These rumors greatly upset the women, and as a result often led to women actively resisting collectivization and rioting. The women of Novosrednyi heard from a nearby village that the women had gone and successfully reclaimed their animals from the collective farms. The peasant women of Novodrednyi, inspired by these neighboring women, set off to reclaim their animals from their collective farm. Many of the women took their children, and demanded their livestock back. The collectivization officials tried to calm the crowd of almost 200 women, but this only made them angrier. Someone shouted; “Babas [go] for the horses,” and the women attacked the stables and reclaimed their horses. Reportedly, the husbands of these

\[141\] Ibid.
\[142\] Ibid.
women were not happy with their wives for reclaiming the horses, and told them to return the horses. However, the women stood their ground and refused to return the horses. A meeting was held that night where the women continued to refuse to take the horses back, and the men claimed innocence and ignorance of the situation. Viola concluded this incident by explaining that this depicts the women’s ability to act independently of men in resistance situations and that sometimes they were even able to resist more efficiently due to the state officials’ misunderstanding of peasant women, believing them to be irrational. As a result, women tended to face lighter punishment and consequences or none at all because the state did not view them as rational beings.143

Additionally, it is important to note that the women went to the collective farm to reclaim their livestock, but only took their horses. While it is impossible to know the motives of these women when taking the horses unless one was to interview them, their action of taking just the horses suggests that the horse was the most valuable to them, either because of their relationship with the horses, the loss it would give to the state by taking them, or the symbolism of the horse to the peasant lifestyle. Regardless, the fact that a woman called out an order to take the horses should not be taken lightly, and this should signify the importance of the horse over the other animals at the kolkhoz.

Miron Dolot wrote in his account about his fellow villagers demanding their cows and horses back as well. After a village meeting where the collectivization official spoke to the peasants about collectivization, one villager became irate and began yelling out to the peasants to go to the collective farms and steal back their animals. The peasants ran out of the doors of the meeting and sprinted toward the collective farm to collect their animals. On the run to the farm,

Dolot inserted excerpts from conversations he heard, many of which centered on peasants being concerned that their animals or equipment would be wrongfully or purposefully taken by other villagers.\textsuperscript{144} Dolot ran behind the crowd with his mother, who could not run very fast, and reported that the crowds who had gotten to the farms first sprinted back the opposite way with their reclaimed livestock and equipment. Dolot observed that some peasants were only able to find their equipment, and some only found their cows and not their horses and vice versa. Some villagers were unable to find anything of theirs, and cried out angrily in the middle of the road. Dolot and his mother knew exactly where their cow was on the collective farm, Dolot explained, because he and his mother had visited her nearly daily since she had been taken to the collective farm. Dolot explained that his mother had a deep connection with their cow, and as a result cried every time she went to visit the cow. “Our cow meant much to us. Her milk was the main nourishment that kept us alive during the past few years. Without it, we would not have had much hope for survival,” Dolot wrote.\textsuperscript{145} Dolot went to find their horse, only to find that the horse had already been taken, along with their wagon. “Hurriedly, we headed home with our cow, thankful to at least have her back with us, but saddened by the loss of our horse and wagon,” wrote Dolot.\textsuperscript{146}

The horse and cow were of great value to Dolot’s family. Dolot continued to write that he and his brother went back to the collective farm the next morning, amidst heavy artillery gunshots in the village, to go search for their horse and wagon. However, they turned back for home as soon as they saw blood stained snow in the village near the church. A week passed after Dolot’s village rioted and reclaimed their livestock before a collectivization official held a

\textsuperscript{144} Dolot, \textit{Execution by Hunger}, 84-85.  
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid., 86.  
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid.
village meeting. This collectivization official blamed the riot on the kulaks, and used the events to fuel the state’s dekulakization agenda.\textsuperscript{147}

Dolot remarked on the conditions of the animals at the collective farm. In his village, the peasants did not slaughter the animals in resistance because the state had already collectivized them. Instead, the villagers had to watch their livestock suffer in miserable conditions. The state had not prepared properly for the possession of all of these animals, and as a result did not have the proper amount of food or shelter for them. As a result, many of these animals died from lack of food and neglect.\textsuperscript{148}

The horses in Dolot’s village suffered from a different fate. According to Dolot, the state had promised the village tractors to replace the horses. As a result, the villagers were unsure of what to do with their horses. Horses became useless eaters on the collective farms, and by the fall of 1930, nobody knew what to do with them. Someone came up with the idea to free them from the collective farm, since the collective farms could not feed nor care for them. The horses were turned loose on the countryside and roamed for food. A disease struck these horses, and combined with the lack of proper food and care, these horses died. Dolot wrote, “The pattern was the same throughout the Ukraine. Carcasses dotted the fields and woods. This tremendous loss posed a serious problem for the officials of collective farms, for horse power still determined agricultural production.”\textsuperscript{149}

Dolot’s account portrays to the modern reader that horses and other livestock held an important place in the hearts of villagers. However, due to the disorganization and swiftness of collectivization, these animals suffered a bleak fate when they were taken to the collective farms.

\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., 87-88.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 91.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid., 91.
The peasants fought to get them back, but ultimately were no match for the Soviet state and its collectivization agenda.

Word of the dire livestock and agriculture situation reached foreign countries by way of media. The New York Times published an article in 1934 disclosing the severity of the Soviet agriculture situation. “Stalin Discloses Livestock Losses: Number of Horses, Cattle, Pigs, Sheep and Goats Cut About 50% by Collectivization,” the title and subtitle boast to the reader. This article explained that Stalin finally revealed the numbers of livestock lost due to collectivization, estimating that the horse population in 1929 was 34,000,000 and dropped to 16,500,000 in 1933. The article stated that these losses were due to the peasants slaughtering their animals, but continued to say that Stalin did not explain whether the slaughtering was still occurring or not. The article concludes that the Soviet State hopes to overcome these disastrous livestock losses through large Soviet farms and renewing peasant confidence. The article does not explain what it means by “large Soviet farms,” but perhaps the journalist meant by using this phrase that the Soviet state hoped to bring back the livestock populations by creating breeding programs on these large state farms. At this point in collectivization, more than 80 percent of the peasants had been collectivized and were now on kolkhozy, according to this journalist. Despite Stalin’s reassuring words that the Soviet state had gotten collectivization under control, it could not be ignored that the Soviet rural and agricultural sectors were in a vicious downward spiral.

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151 Ibid.
Images of Horses and Collectivization:

Despite the lack of horses within the Soviet borders, their importance to the Russian people and Soviet government is evident through many Soviet era posters and stamps. Beginning with propaganda posters, it is evident that the horse remained a nostalgic symbol for the Soviet government and its people. In many of these images, the horse is shown standing side-by-side with the Soviet person, suggesting that perhaps the horse is viewed as an equal. In other images, the horse is depicted as a powerful war animal, with a proletarian riding it into the battlefields of ideology. These images differ greatly from the images of horses depicted in the Imperial Age. Firstly, the horses are depicted in realistic colors, instead of being all white. Since Russian horse breeds, especially those that lived on the Steppe and were used as work animals tended to be darker colors, the horses in these Soviet images are more realistic. Secondly, the horses in these images are not just props. Instead, they are positioned and depicted as active characters equal to those of the human figures in these artworks.

In Figure 5, titled, “Go to the Collective Farm” a young peasant woman is depicted leading a cow and a horse. The cow is walking behind the peasant woman and its face half hidden behind her arm, suggesting subordination. The horse, however, holds its head high over the peasant’s shoulder and is walking next to the woman. This positioning suggests that the horse is viewed as a companion. The poster calls for the peasants to take all their livestock to the collective farms in order to unite against the kulaks. The poster suggests that by bringing their livestock to the collective farms, the peasants and horses would be fighting the kulaks and siding with the state.

Figure 5: Go to the Collective Farm
The peasant woman’s neckerchief is tied behind her head, as opposed to being tied under her chin. The neckerchief tied under the chin was the old, outdated way to wear a neckerchief, and often associated with older peasant women. Having it tied behind the head was common among factory workers, and by showing this peasant woman with hers tied behind her head suggests modernity. The horse is black, which is different from the horses portrayed in pre-1917 artwork. The horse in this propaganda poster is a more realistic depiction of a Russian horse than the ones depicted in the pre-1917 artwork.153

Figure 5 depicts equality between human and animals by the positioning of peasant woman and horses. In the main image of the poster, the animals are not being used for work (with the exception of the piece of meat hanging in the lower left corner, but the argument could be made that it is no longer identifiable as an animal because the animal has already been slaughtered and has now changed forms into meat which is now consumable), but they are being led by the peasant woman to the collective farm. However, cows are portrayed as not being completely equal to humans, because in the lower right image they are depicted in stalls. As Margo DeMello claims in her work, this equates them to being livestock.154 However, comparing this propaganda poster to Imperial Age images of horses and other animals, this poster is progressive. Neither the horse nor cow are harnessed to a work vehicle. The cow is not being milked, nor is the horse being ridden or driven by a peasant. Instead these animals are being led by the peasant woman. The poster is depicting that the woman is proud to be going to the kolkhoz, and is proudly leading her animals to serve the Soviet state. While we know that collectivization did not progress in this romantic way illustrated by this poster created in 1919, it

153 Ibid.
is interesting that the state-funded artist decided to depict the animals in this poster as unharnessed from work.¹⁵⁵

Other propaganda posters portray the significance of the horse to Soviet agriculture. A series of posters which circulated in the Soviet Central Asia, one encouraged correct equine care. One Russian/Uzbekistan poster declared, “Despite the Rise in mechanized farming, ‘we cannot dispense with the horse.’”¹⁵⁶ This poster was published in 1933 and the art style is different than that of the poster featured in Figure 5. This horse is depicted in sharp contrast to the tractor in the background, and in the foreground, a man is shown brushing the horse. In the bottom right panel of the poster, two horses are depicted plowing, and on the top a tractor is illustrated in blue ink, and the top right a red tractor is depicted as broken and being worked on by a man. Despite the presence of the tractors, the poster is clearly centered on the horse, complete with the cry to take care of the horse because the Soviet state still needed horse power. The poster suggests that while tractors break, horses will continue to work hard if they are given proper care. While the horse is a gray color, it exudes a strong presence due to its facial expressions. Its face portrays a calm and soft expression, and its ears are positioned realistically. The horse’s facial expression and positioning in the foreground of the poster makes the horse an active figure in this image.

¹⁵⁵ “Go to the Collective Farms,” Russian Posters Collection, 1919-1989 and undated, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.
¹⁵⁶ Unknown author, Despite the Rise in mechanized farming, ‘we cannot dispense with the horse, Central Asia: Propaganda Show Spotlights Soviet Push in Muslim Lands, eurasianet.org, DOI Sept 22, 2013.
Figure 6: “Despite the Rise in mechanized farming, ‘we cannot dispense with the horse.’”
Because of this, the poster gives the Russian horse autonomy and immense value. Not only is the poster encouraging Soviet citizens to take care of the Russian horses, it is encouraging that them to take care of the horses because they have great value to the state.\textsuperscript{157}

It is important to remember that these posters were circulated in many regions with the hope that every citizen of a given region would see them, read them, and apply the lessons to everyday life. It is important to note that the state actively sought to maintain the horse population by encouraging citizens to take excellent care of the horses left in their regions, and bring them to the \textit{kolhozy}. The state revealed its vested interest in protecting the Russian horse population by printing these posters, among other actions such as increasing animal husbandry education and creating new laws to protect the horses.

Other Soviet posters portray the horse in a revolutionary role. A Russian Civil War poster declared “Get on a Horse, Proletariat!” and is clearly a call to arms and action for people to join the Bolsheviks in the revolution.\textsuperscript{158} The horse is depicted as a strong and fiery animal, and it looks as if horse and rider are galloping into war, judging from the way the rider is wielding his sword and the powerful stride and flared nostrils the horse has in the poster. Even though the horse is depicted as a warhorse, it differs greatly from the horses depicted in Chapter One. The horse in Figure 7 is depicted as an active character in the artwork. In the figures in Chapter 1, the horses were depicted as props for the human figures in the painting more than as active actors with autonomy. This is supported by the horse’s positioning. For example, in the equestrian portrait of Catherine the Great in Chapter 1, the horse is simply standing, with one hoof raised, staring out at the viewer. The focus of the painting is on the figure of Catherine the Great, her

\footnote{\textsuperscript{157} Ibid.}
\footnote{\textsuperscript{158} Unknown Author, \textit{Get on a Horse, Proletariat!}, http://www.sovietposters.com/showposter.php?poster=61, DOI October 8, 2015.}
Figure 7: Get on a Horse, Proletariat!
facial and body expressions, and her dress. The poster *Get on a Horse, Proletariat!* instead blends horse and man, almost into one figure, and the two figures share the viewers’ attention. The artist of this poster depicted pride and readiness on both the horse’s face and the rider’s face, and both figures appear eager and proud to be galloping into the ideological battle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.\textsuperscript{159}

The state used these images of horse and human in attempt to encourage both Soviet people and animals to participate in the state’s agenda of collectivization, and in the case of Figure 7, in war. While the peasants resisted collectivization, the state picked up upon their strong relationships with their horses, and depicted that partnership in the propaganda posters. The Soviet state recognized horses as necessary participants in their collectivization drive, and attempted to draft horses and peasants to their cause by circulating these posters.

\textit{1930s Ukrainian Famine}

The 1930s Ukrainian Famine occurred as a consequence of collectivization and dekulakization. While this paper does not specifically examine the famine, it is important to mention when discussing Soviet collectivization and livestock slaughter due to the role it played in peasant motives of livestock slaughter and peasant culture. During the famine, it became harder for historians to identify peasant’s motives when slaughtering their livestock. However, it can be logically assumed that they were slaughtering their animals in order to eat their meat. It is important to note the difference between these motives, though. Earlier in collectivization and in other regions of the Soviet Union, peasants were not slaughtering their animals for food, but in order to resist the state and its collectivization drive. During the Ukrainian Famine, it is understandable that the motives of slaughtering changed from resistance to necessity. Because of

\textsuperscript{159} Ibid.
the lack of seed and crops in the region due to collectivization and the Soviet state’s paranoia that the peasants were hoarding the seed, the rural countryside began to be unable to support its peasant populations. The lack of seed and food led to the slaughter of livestock for meat and otherwise dire conditions in the rural.

Some scholars argue that Joseph Stalin purposefully starved this region in 1932-1933 as a means to stifle Ukrainian nationalism. Because of this motive, the Ukrainian Famine is also known as Holodomor, meaning “death by hunger.” This death by hunger began with collectivization, and resulted in the peasants being unable to farm enough food for their own families, let alone an entire village.

According to historian Sergei Maksudov, the Soviet state knowingly brought the Ukraine into a state of famine by imposing high grain tariffs on the Ukrainian people in the 1930s. As a result of these high grain tariffs, the Ukraine began to starve and fell into famine. By starving the Ukrainians, the state was also weakening not only their bodies, but their spirit and desire to resist collectivization. Maksudov argues in his article that the famine made those who survived into passive individuals who submissively carried out the will of the state. In short, the Ukrainian peasants lost their will to resist because the Soviet state broke their humanity and turned them into fearful subjects who served the state in order to survive.

Conclusion

Both the peasants and their animals were victims of the Soviet state’s collectivization drive. The peasants fought to get their animals, specifically their horses, back by storming the

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161 Ibid.
collective farms. Ultimately, they were unable to fight the Soviet state and its collectivization officials, and peasants instead turned to another form of resistance; slaughtering their horses and livestock so the state could not take their animals. While some may view this as a waste of animals, the peasants held an incredible amount of power in slaughtering their horses. By slaughtering their horses, they were crippling the Soviet state by taking away tractive power, transportation, and military power. The image of the horse changed during this period as well, and instead of showing the horse as a bourgeois prop, the horse was a depicted as an active and equal figurine in these works of art. As a result of this equality between horse and human, the horse became an active participant in the resistance against collectivization.
CHAPTER FOUR POST-WAR SOVIET RURAL AND THE RUSSIAN HORSE POPULATION

After the violence and tragedies that occurred due to collectivization in the 1930s, the rural countryside hardly had a moment to reflect and rebuild before the German invasion of the Soviet Union during World War II began in June 1944. During the occupation and war that ensued caused the Soviet rural regions to continue to lose horses because the German soldiers stole them to utilize for their army. The peasants and agricultural sectors were unable to focus on breeding horses until the 1950s. At the end of World War II in 1945, officials in the Soviet Union horse industry was destroyed and had no choice but to completely revamp its horse breeding programs in order to revive the nearly decimated horse population. This opportunity allowed the Soviet Union to create internationally respected breeding programs and horses, and this also led to the Soviet Union becoming a leader in the world equestrian community including competition, breeding, and racing industries.

The relationship between horse and human evolved and changed in the postwar decades. Beginning in the 1950s, the horse would now be categorized less as a work animal due to the Red Army cavalry being disbanded in 1947 and with the gradual mechanization of agriculture. As a result, the horse would be classified as a leisure animal and a sport animal although the horse would continue to be used for work and transportation in the countryside during these decades, nationally the horse would come to be more valuable as a sport animal and trade-good than as a work animal. Relaying on newspaper articles, Soviet stud farm histories, and art work, this chapter will examine the 1940s to the modern day, chronicling the journey of the horse breeding industry in the Soviet Union and later the Russian Federation, and how the Russian
rural regions and government revived the Russian horse population after decades of tragedy and loss.

*The Aftermath of the 1941 German Invasion*

The German invasion of the Soviet Union during in the 1940s was detrimental to the industry and culture of the Soviet Union. World War II wreaked havoc on the Soviet Union, with modern day estimates from the National World War II Museum approximating 24 million civilian and military deaths combined.\(^\text{163}\) Some websites and journals, such as the *War Chronicle*, estimate a more conservative number at 20 million total deaths, while other sources give more liberal estimates upwards of 25 million total deaths. Regardless, these casualties and the destruction of Soviet cities, countryside, architecture, and culture weighed heavily on the minds and hearts of the Soviet survivors.

R.L. DiNardo wrote about the lack of horses in the Soviet Union from the Third Reich perspective. According to DiNardo, “The situation was made more delicate by the perilous state of the Soviet Union’s horse population, on which forced collectivization and the ensuing terror famine had inflicted grievous losses.”\(^\text{164}\) The German army was hesitant to take any Soviet horses upon its invasion because of the devastating lack of horses. They knew that the Soviet farmers used horses to plow the lands, and since the German army planned to take food from the Soviet Union, the Germans took Soviet horses only when needed.\(^\text{165}\)


\(^{165}\) Ibid.
The Soviet Union was dependent on horses as well for its army. DiNardo estimates that a standard Soviet rifle division had about 14,500 men and 3,400-4,000 horses.\textsuperscript{166} However, the quality of the horses used to pull artillery and serve as transportation is questionable. DiNardo writes that the quality of Soviet horses was adequate, but the German army was unable to capture quality horses in large numbers. Horses deemed unfit for service by the German army were slaughtered for meat, instead of being given back to the Soviet people.\textsuperscript{167}

Ultimately, of course, the German invasion failed. According to DiNardo, in part, “The German invasion of the Soviet Union failed in part because of the German Army’s heavy reliance on horses.” The German army retreated, but not without great consequence to the Soviet people and their horses. Upon its retreat in 1944, the German army slaughtered or stole horses so that the Soviet people could not use them. German soldiers also took other forms of livestock with them, including about 300,000 horses with them when they retreated.\textsuperscript{168}

Not only did the Soviet Union lose a tremendous amount of horses, but other East European countries did as well. DiNardo estimates that Poland lost about 36 percent of its horse population due to the German invasion, and notes that the German army also took horses from Lithuania.\textsuperscript{169} Upon its invasion of the Soviet Union, the German army controlled an area of the Soviet Union that held roughly 11 million horses. Out of those 11 million horses, the German army killed or seized 7 million.\textsuperscript{170}

Soviet agriculture in general suffered tremendously during the war. The \textit{New York Times} estimated that the Germans slaughtered, took, or drove off 7 million horses and 17 million sheep

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\textsuperscript{166} Ibid., 45.  \\
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid., 46-49.  \\
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid., 65.  \\
\textsuperscript{169} Ibid., 72.  \\
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid.
\end{small}
\end{flushright}
and goats. Combined with the numbers of livestock slaughtered during the first decade of collectivization, the Soviet horse population had become lower than during the 1930s. It seemed that the horse population might never recover.

*People and Horses During and After Collectivization*

Collectivization was not only a disastrous event to the Soviet countryside and entire society, but it was also incredibly inefficient. The entire system harmed agriculture more than it helped. Soviet collective farms could not even get rid of their animals or piece of equipment without the approval of the state. By the 1950s, privately owned horses were a rarity, and this affected peasant culture in a multitude of ways. However, the Soviet rural regions began to gradually mechanize agriculture in the post-war decades, and as a result peasants were not using horses as much on the collective farms.

Scholar Liubov Denisova wrote that the lack of privately owned horses in the 1950s and 1960s meant that lack of transportation for rural populations continued to be a problem, and Denisova argues that without a horse or other form of transportation, it was difficult for a peasant woman to get to a hospital when she was in labor. Denisova continued and wrote that usually collective farm officials would not allow a peasant woman to borrow a collective farm horse to use to get to the nearest hospital. Denisova uses the example of a woman named M. Zolotareva, who was granted permission to use a collective farm’s horse and wagon to deliver sacks of grain to a destination 30 kilometers away, but when she requested to use the same horse and wagon to

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travel to a hospital that was also 30 kilometers away to give birth to her baby, her request was
denied by the collective farm official.\textsuperscript{173}

Denisova does not explain in her work why the woman was not allowed to use the horse
to give birth. Denisova speculates that it is because collectivization officials viewed childbirth as
a private issue separate from the collective farm, and therefore felt no responsibility to help out a
woman in labor.\textsuperscript{174} Additionally, collective farms did not have many horses to spare. As
discussed in the second chapter, Soviet government officials promised the collective farms
tractors, but due to a multitude of reasons, tractors were not an immediate solution to the lack of
horse draft power. As a result, collective farms continued to rely heavily on horses into the
middle of the twentieth century. The collective farm officials that were denying women horses to
take to the hospital may have been considering their horses’ workload. Due to the low numbers
of horses on the farms in the 1940s and 1950s, the horses did have a heavy workload, and these
animals had to be used sparingly in order to preserve their health and soundness.

Despite the low numbers of horses evident in these personal accounts, newspaper stories
published in the late 1940s did not reflect this problem. Instead, many articles boast cheerful
headlines with positive messages declaring that the Soviet Union’s horse population and animal
husbandry industry as a whole were on the upswing. An \textit{Izvestia} article published in 1949
declared, “Kirgic Animal Husbandry on the Upswing.” In this article, the journalist claimed that
by 1948, the number of horses, cattle, sheep, and goats had surpassed the pre-war level.\textsuperscript{175}


\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.

However, after examining the statistics of horses lost in the war, it is difficult to believe that the horse population, as well as other livestock, had recovered within seven years.

This rhetoric has been seen before, such as in the example in the 1930s animal husbandry pamphlet published by the Soviet state in the 1930s, discussed in Chapter 3. The pamphlet stated that the Soviet Union met or surpassed global expectations for horse population statistics, as well as the quality of the horses being bred. However, foreign statistics and stories from the Soviet collective farms proved otherwise. The 1953 U.S.-Soviet agricultural exchanges occurred largely because the Soviet Union desperately needed a new crop to grow in order to feed its livestock population so in turn it could feed the Soviet people. As much as the Soviet Union would try to hide its low horse population and inefficient agricultural conditions, eventually government officials were forced to look internationally for solutions.

Some Russian newspaper articles indicated the measures the government and agricultural industry took in order to raise horse and other livestock animal numbers. One Izvestia article explored the condition of the grazing lands in the Soviet Union used for the animal husbandry industry. The article called for farmers and government officials alike to be aware of the land conditions to ensure quality grazing conditions for the animals. Factors such as lack of water sources would cause the grass to die in certain areas because too many animals would crowd around the water source, thus killing the grass. “Slow water delivery means that sheep spend hours at watering places, with consequent destruction of the grass…” the article states. Pasture land and grazing may appear to the present-day reader to be an odd issue for the Soviet state to have involved itself in; however, proper pasture management and grazing policies would result in successful livestock birth rates and healthier animals overall. In order to increase the horse

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population, it became necessary for the state to involve itself in pasture and grazing policies in the Soviet rural regions.

Additionally, the state planned and issued stricter guidelines and goals for harvesting animal roughage. One Pravda article mentioned that a three-year plan for the development of animal husbandry had been implemented. This plan, according to the Pravda editorial, would require that collective farms across the country harvest 88,800,000 tons of rough feed to be used to feed livestock.177 This three-year plan held such importance to the agricultural sector that a conference was held on the plan at the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences and Pravda wrote an article summarizing the event. The conference was attended by one thousand people and academic agriculturalists such as T.D. Lysenko, who spoke and explained that the Party and the state had noticed the lag in research regarding animal husbandry and sought to change this.178

Judging by these two articles regarding the three-year plan for the development of animal husbandry in the Soviet Union, animal husbandry was an industry that required government attention. This is understandable, considering the drastic decline not only in the horse population, but also in other livestock animals. While the Soviet Union tried to cover up its low horse population by printing optimistic pamphlets and some newspaper articles, the facts cannot be ignored that the Russian horse and livestock population by the later 1940s and early 1950s was in great despair. Soviet officials were trying to solve this issue quietly, by forming three-year plans and by visiting the United States in the 1950s to learn how to grow corn. These actions speak louder than the Soviet newspapers’ cheerful articles which state that the horse and livestock

populations were fine. While the horse population would recover over time, it was not as rapidly as some of the Soviet newspaper articles suggested.

The Soviet horse population began to gradually recover in the post-war decades, which is made evident by examining specific Soviet stud farms. Large and famous stud farms such as Tersk Stud, which in 1945 was managed under the name Stavropol Horse Stud Number 168, began importing and exporting horses again in 1955. Stavropol Horse Stud N 168, which Tersk Stud will be referred to as in this chapter, began breeding only Arabian horses in 1945. This shows that the stud farm was recovering from the war enough to focus not only on a breeding program, but a specific and high quality breeding program that allowed for them to focus on breeding a specific type of horse.\textsuperscript{179} In 1949, Stavropol Horse Stud N 168 was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labor. This was an award given to Soviet institutions that made great achievements in numerous industries, including agriculture. Additionally, the Stavropol Horse Stud N 168 type of Arabian horse became recognized as a new horse breed, called the Tersk Horse.\textsuperscript{180}

In the 1960s the Tersk Horse and the stud they originated from began to receive international attention from the horse community. In 1967 at the Royal Exhibition in London, the Arabian horse type, “The Russian Arab,” (which the Tersk Horse was categorized) was first recognized. In 1975 and 1976, horses bred at the Stavropol Horse Stud N 168 received prizes at the Royal Exhibition in London. As a result of these awards and recognition, horse people in European countries and the United States took notice of the Russian Arabian type and the Soviet horse breeding industry and began to make connections with these stud farms. In 1981, a Tersk stallion from Stavropol Horse Stud N 168 was sold to American Armand Hammer for $1 million.

\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.
USD. In 1983, an American company leased a stallion from Stavropol Horse Stud N 168 for fifteen years. Due to the age of the animal, the stud decided to leave the stallion in the United States for the remainder of his life. In total, the Soviet Union received $2.4 million USD for leasing him to the American Fidelis company. In 1985, another American company bought a stallion from Stavropol Horse Stud N 168 for $2.35 million USD.  

Interestingly, despite tense relations between the United States and the Soviet Union 1950 to 1991, American private companies and individuals appreciated the quality of the Russian horses in spite of their nation’s political hostility. Private American companies and individuals sought out Russian horses from Soviet state-run institutions, and created business partnerships with the Soviet state-run farm in order to obtain these animals. This is remarkable, considering the fear of Communism prevalent in the United States during the Cold War era. In the case of horse trade, business came before political tensions between Soviet and American equestrians. As a result, the Russian horse was a cultural ambassador in Cold War international cultural diplomacy.

Stavropol Horse Stud N 168 managed to survive the fall of the Soviet Union and the crash of the ruble in the 1990s. However, it was not privatized until 2007, which was when it returned to the name Tersk Stud. The Tersk Stud continues to be a famous and well respected horse breeding institution to this day.

Other breeds and stud farms had more difficulty recovering from the decades of devastation than did the Tersk Stud. Vadim A. Parfenov, the curator of the Russian Riding Horse breed and docent of the Department of Horse Breeding in Timiryazev Academy, wrote a brief article about the history of the Russian Riding Horses and published it on the Olimpia Horse

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181 Ibid.
Breeding Farm website. Parfenov wrote that the Soviet Union lost a lot of its Russian Riding Horse stallions and mares during collectivization and World War II. After World War II ended, it was difficult to get the horse breeds necessary to begin breeding the Russian Riding Horse again. While it was difficult, stud farms in the Soviet Union managed to procure the correct stallions and mares in order to save the Russian Riding Horse from extinction.\(^\text{182}\) Parfenov speculated that it was difficult to create a breeding program for the Russian Riding Horse because the stallions they needed were located in the Ukraine. In addition, the Russian Riding Horse was not as popular among equestrians, both within the Soviet Union as well as internationally, as the Russian Arabian type horses.\(^\text{183}\) The Olimpia Horse Breeding Farm, founded in 2010, seeks to breed quality Russian Riding Horses to help make this breed more popular, and these horses are valued by equestrians worldwide.

The Starozhilovo Stud began using the Trakehner horse after World War II to recreate the Russian warmblood horse. In 1978, the Starozhilovo Stud collaborated with the faculty of horse breeding of the Timiryazev Academy in the Moscow region to recreate this Russian horse breed. In 1999, the Starozhilovo Stud was given an official state license from the Russian Federation Ministry of Agriculture as originator of the Russian warmblood horse breed. The Starozhilovo today is credited for breeding quality sport horses, many of which excel in the sport of dressage.\(^\text{184}\)

Older stud farms such as Starozhilovo Stud and Tersk Stud managed to survive the brutal events of the twentieth century. However, these stud farms worked diligently to preserve their horse breeds and managed to recover their horse populations. Through these stud farm histories,


\(^{183}\) Ibid.

it is evident that while the Soviet Union’s horse populations did not recover rapidly, progress was made. Some horse breeds and stud farms not only recovered, but managed to exceed expectations and became internationally recognized and respected equestrian institutions. It is important to note that these farms were not privatized during the Soviet era, meaning that the state was responsible for these farms and its horses’ success. The Soviet was concerned enough about the country’s horse population to provide money and resources to these state-run farms in order to rebuild the Soviet horse populations.

*From the Battlefield to the Arena: Soviet Horses in Sport*

Despite the lack of horses in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, the Soviet horse became prevalent in international horse shows and other equestrian exhibitions. As Soviet farming technology gradually improved and as the Soviet Union thawed after Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953, the Soviet people were exposed to how other countries utilized horses. While the horse would remain important to the Soviet Union as a draught animal and as transportation, it began to slip into the sports realm. The state-run horse studs were now able to focus on breeding quality horses for sport and shows instead of breeding cavalry horses. As a result, there were now horses in the Soviet Union that could be utilized for sport. Horse racing had been a popular sport in Russia throughout history, especially in Moscow. However, at the end of the 1940s and in the early 1950s, other equestrian sports became popular, and as a result, the Soviet Union was able to send an Olympic equestrian team to the 1952 Helsinki Olympic Games for the first time since 1912.

It seems problematic that there remained such a shortage of horses in the Soviet Union even in the 1950s, but yet the country managed to send a team of riders and horses to the 1952 Olympic Games. However, there is a possible explanation for this occurrence. The Red Army
maintained its cavalry unit throughout World War II, but in 1947, the Soviet Union disbanded its cavalry units and replaced horses with machinery such as tanks. As a result, state-funded stud farms, which bred cavalry horses for the Red Army since the state took over the breeding farms in the 1920s, no longer needed to produce cavalry horses. All the cavalry horses that once worked for the Red Army no longer had a job. These horses would have been too valuable and too highly trained to be sent to the collective farms to be used for menial labor. One could speculate that these ex-cavalry horses were then used for equestrian sports. The three equestrian sports in the Olympic Games; dressage, show jumping, and eventing, are all derived from elements of cavalry training, meaning the Soviet ex-cavalry horses and ex-cavalry riders would be well versed in these sports to begin with. It would make sense to then use the surviving war horses and horses being bred from state stud farms for the Soviet Union Olympic equestrian teams. This connection would explain how the Soviet Union was able to send an equestrian team to the Olympics every four years, despite having a limited horse population.

The Olympic Games and other international equestrian competitions and exhibitions were a good way for the Soviet Union to show the world the quality of its horses and riders. However, because of their long absence from the equestrian sports portion of the Olympic Games, the 1952 Soviet equestrian team did not win any medals at the Helsinki games. The Soviet Union won its first equestrian medal at the 1960 Rome Olympics. Soviet rider and ex-Red Army cavalry man Sergei Filatov won the individual gold medal in dressage with his eight-year old horse, Absent. An Akhal Teke horse born in 1952 at the Lugovskoi Stud, Absent became a national hero for the Soviet Union, as well as receiving international attention. Absent becoming a national hero speaks to Human-Animal Studies theory that animals have autonomy and are important historical actors. In this case, Absent was an athlete that the Soviet Union could take pride in. Absent and
another Soviet rider, Ivan Kalita, would place in fourth individually at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. *EuroDressage* called Absent the “black national hero,” presumably due to the horse’s coat color, in a 2009 article. Absent is still celebrated today by the dressage community internationally.

The Soviet Union also had human equestrian heroes and heroines that became internationally known during the 1950s and 1960s. Sergei Filatov is credited as the rider who brought the Soviet Union to the international arena of dressage, but while he is famous for his success with the horse Absent, he was not well thought of among other Soviet dressage riders. Dr. Elena Petushkova, a Soviet biochemist and dressage rider, spoke to Filatov’s true character when he was training horses and riders in the Soviet Union. “…we very soon discovered a serious and fundamental weakness in his training methods-namely his cruelty,” Petushkova wrote. “It is hard to say whether this resulted from his habit of being carried away, when he forgot about everything except what he was trying to achieve, or whether it stemmed from the arrogance and self-confidence of a champion who could not tolerate the disgrace of anything that opposed his will.” As a result, Filatov gradually removed himself from the dressage scene of the Soviet Union, and according to Dr. Petushkova, wandered from dressage club to dressage club, becoming a nomad because no riding club could tolerate his harsh training methods.

While Filatov’s dark personality emerged and this impacted his national and international hero status, Petushkova remained a beloved dressage heroine, both within the Soviet Union and abroad. Petushkova started riding at a late age; when she was sixteen, she saw an announcement

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187 Ibid.
that a riding school would be opening in Sokolniki Park and enrolled for lessons. Despite her late start, Petushkova quickly advanced through the levels of dressage. Petushkova worked under numerous riding trainers, including Sergei Filatov. It was under Filatov that Petushkova began competing at the Grand Prix level. Filatov insisted that Petushkova receive a more experienced mare. With this mare, Petushkova was on track to receive the honor Master of Sport in a competition in Leningrad, when unfortunately her mare died due to inflammation of the lungs, leaving Petushkova unable to compete.  

The next horse Petushkova worked with was the horse that she became internationally famous with and won many competitions with the stallion Pepel. Petushkova noted that Pepel was a difficult horse to work with at first; she could not even get him to stand quietly in his stall to be saddled and bridled. But by 1965, the pair had come to an understanding and were nominated to compete at the European Championships. In 1967, Pepel and Petushkova placed sixth at the European Dressage Championships—the highest placing a woman rider had ever received at this competition. In 1970, at the World Championships, Pepel and thirty-year-old Petushkova won the championships and also the admiration of the international dressage community. The Soviet Union had become a dressage superpower on the international stage.

However, Petushkova remarked in her various interviews and biography that she did not think about the prizes and competitions she and her horses had been awarded. She wrote, “From the very beginning I never thought about being a top level sportswoman. I just thought about the happiness of riding a horse. The happiness of finding a common language with an animal. Of course I tried my best all the time but not to place highly, but just because if you are doing anything then you must do your best.”

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188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
deeply for horses, and respected them a great deal. She wanted to find a way to communicate with them and understand them, rather than force them to her will.

The Soviet riders were in a unique position that was different from riders in Western nations. The Soviet state paid for the horses, their feed, board, and veterinary care, as well as competition fees for the riders. In the West, riders funded their own horses, horse care, and competition fees, even when representing their nations in international competition. However, this meant that the Soviet state made all decisions regarding the horses and riders. It was left up to the state-funded riding clubs to decide which riders would work with which horses, and the state riding clubs would decide when the horses would retire; they could switch horse and rider matches at any time. Unfortunately, Petushkova experienced this first hand. The riding club decided to retire sixteen year old Pepel after he and Petushkova won the silver medal at the 1968 Mexico City Olympic Games and the gold medal at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games. The famous stallion was retired to a riding club in the Soviet Union where he would serve as a riding school master for future generations of Soviet riders. However, Petushkova noted that when she went to visit him, he had received poor care at this riding school. Petushkova remarked on his matted coat, sweaty appearance, and the dejected look in his eyes after the stallion had been ridden in an intensive training session. Unfortunately, while Petushkova knew Pepel the best out of any Soviet equestrian due to her long career with the stallion, all the decisions about his care and career were left up to the state since the Soviet government owned him.¹⁹⁰

Despite the challenges Soviet riders such as Elena Petushkova faced in order to compete internationally, they exceeded their goals and contributed to creating a positive international perception of the Soviet Union. Due to Petushkova and Filatov’s successes during the Cold War

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.
years, it is worth noting that they were respected by their counterparts in Western nations for their skill in the sport of dressage. They were able to cross the political and cultural rift between the Soviet Union and the West by competing in international dressage competitions. Not only were the riders important to this relationship between the USSR and Western nations, but their horses played a crucial role. Without horses such as Absent and Pepel, the Soviet Union would have been unable to compete successfully at the international level in a sport that previous to the 1950s the USSR had been absent from.

In the 1950s and after, the relationship between human and horse occupies not only the rural and military occupied spaces, but now encompasses the national space. Once these horses began competing in the Olympics and other international competitions, any Soviet citizen who watched the Olympics or followed equestrian sports had the opportunity to interact with them, even if it was from afar. These sport horses were now being thought of as heroes of the Soviet Union due to their international success, and they were adored by many ordinary citizens. Some, especially those in urban centers, might never had an opportunity to interact or think about horses previously to these international competitions. However, it became hard to ignore the role of the Soviet horse once they began winning at prestigious horse shows. This shift made horses a being that every citizen had the opportunity to relate to and admire, instead of just the likes of cavalry men or peasant farmers.

_Horses in Imagery_

Due to the success of Soviet-funded breeding programs and Soviet riding clubs nationally and abroad, the general public nursed a greater appreciation for the Soviet horse than ever before. This appreciation, respect, and interest is evident through the printing of Soviet horse stamps. These stamps would be used to mail letters, and therefore would be seen and purchased
by ordinary Soviet citizens. It was also a way for citizens’ to display their respect, interest, and admiration for these horses even if they did not have the opportunity to ride or work with them firsthand. There are two categories of horse-themed stamps published in the 1960s through the 1980s in the Soviet Union: equestrian sports and horse breeds. Given the success in Soviet horse breeding and Soviet horse sports, it is not surprising that the Soviet Union decided to commemorate these successes in stamps.

Beginning with the horse breeds category, the Soviet Union published breed stamps in 1968 that honored the Russian Arabian, the Thoroughbred, the Orlov Trotter, the Akhal Teke, and the Budyonny horse. All of these horses hold a place in Russian history and equestrian culture, some even being unique to Russia, such as the Don horse, Orlov Trotter, the Russian Arabian, and the Akal Teke horse. All of the stamps feature a portrait of the horse and an image of the horse working in its known discipline. Figure 8 depicts the Thoroughbred horse. The stamp had a bright blue background and portrays two racing horses and the portrait of a Thoroughbred. The portrait provides the viewer with a glimpse into the Thoroughbred’s personality, much like a portrait of a human would. The viewer can see the concentration and determination on the Thoroughbred’s face through its flattened ears, open mouth, and its serious eyes. The Thoroughbred is depicted as a competitive horse that is unwilling to lose to its competitors.191

Figure 8: 1968 Thoroughbred Racing Stamp
Figure 9: 1968 Arabian Stamp
The Arabian horse is depicted as gentler, graceful, and serious on its stamp. In Figure 9, in the Arabian horse’s portrait, the Arabian’s graceful arched neck is depicted, along with its defined ears, curved jaw, and dainty teacup sized nose, all of which are Arabian breed standards. The Arabian in the bottom right is depicted as performing a dressage movement. The Arabian horse in this stamp is portrayed as a graceful but fiery creature, and the intense red background is likely to invoke a sense of passion in the viewer.192

The Orlov Trotter is a breed that originated in Russia. Developed by Count Alexei Orlov in the eighteenth century, the Russians took pride in its success as a trotter both nationally and abroad. Figure 10 depicts the Orlov Trotter. This stamp has a blue background, though not nearly as intense and bright as the blue on the Thoroughbred stamp. The Orlov Trotter is a heavier type of horse than the Thoroughbred, and is considered to not be as hot, or as energetic, as the Thoroughbred. As a result, this blue may evoke a calming sense in the viewer. The Orlov Trotter’s portrait portrays a calm but curious eye, a thick and well-muscled neck, and a heavier head than those of the Thoroughbred and Arabian. In the right corner, two Orlov Trotters are depicted in harness racing, for which the Orlov Trotter is best known.193

The stamp shown in Figure 11 depicts the Akhal Teke horse. This horse originated from central Asia, and the stamp honors this by showing a rider wearing a turban. The Soviet Union struggled with bridging a sense of unity to its citizens in the Central Asian and Islamic regions of the state. It could be argued that this stamp was an attempt to recognize these people living within the Soviet Union and to promote unite and nationalism. The stamp background is an orange-red, with the rider depicted in a bright green, which draws the viewer’s attention to the

Figure 10: 1968 Orlov Trotter Stamp
rider. The Akhal Teke’s portrait showcases the horse’s expressive eyes, dainty muzzle, and its ears. The breed is known for having what is called “hooked ears,” which means the ears curve inward and touch over the top of the horse’s poll.\(^{194}\)

The last stamp in the 1968 Soviet horse breed series honors the Budyonny horse. Bred by Bolshevik military officer Marshall Semyom Budyonny, this horse was bred for the cavalry and later as a sport horse. The Budyonny horse is an athletic animal that excels in racing and jumping. In Figure 12, the Budyonny is shown over a dark green background. The Budyonny, has a thick neck, an even head set, and a large and serious eye. Its nostrils are flared and its muscles are rippling, suggesting that the Budyonny horse is prepared to compete in any sport. In the middle of the stamp, a Budyonny horse and its rider are shown landing a jump. The rider is painted in red, which could perhaps suggest the Budyonny’s success in international jumping competitions. In international horse shows, riders who have competed successfully in international competitions before are encouraged to wear a red hunt coat in order to demonstrate their prestige and experience. By painting the rider red, perhaps the artist who created the stamp was hinting at the Budyonny’s success as an international sport horse.\(^{195}\)


Figure 11: 1968 Akhal Teke Stamp
Other equestrian-themed Soviet stamps depict the Soviet Union’s success at international competitions. The stamp in Figure 13 celebrates the Soviet Union’s participation in the equestrian portion of the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, where the Soviet Union won the bronze medal in dressage. 196

In 1982, the Soviet Union released three stamps that celebrated riding disciplines. One dressage stamp, one jumping stamp, and one racing stamp. These stamps are compiled into one image in Figure 14.197

These stamps portray horses in three new and modern ways that are completely different than images from the Soviet 1930s and the Russian Imperial Age. These images depict horses as high-quality animals bred for a specific sport or specific purpose that required certain physical traits and personalities. These stamps are easily accessible and can be purchased or viewed by anyone because they are not high art that would only be viewed at a museum. They do not require the buyer to be rich or socially elite in order to purchase. Because of this, the Soviet horse and the Soviet Union equestrian accomplishments can be enjoyed by anyone.

Figure 12: 1968 Budyonny Stamp
Figure 13: 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games
Figure 14: 1982 Racing, Jumping, and Dressage Stamps
Conclusion

At the end of World War II, the Russian horse population appeared as if it would never recover. Over twenty years of war, revolution, invasion, and collectivization had reduced the horse population to a dangerously low number. While this was a dark point and a challenge for the Soviet agriculture and equestrian community to overcome, they rose to the challenge and exceeded expectations. By losing so many horses, the Soviet Union was given the unique opportunity to reassess its breeding programs and to start over. Despite having a low horse population, with the disbanding of all Red Army cavalry units in the late 1940s, the Soviet Union was able to use the ex-cavalry horses in national and international equestrian competitions and exhibitions. As a result of the Soviet Union’s growing presence in the world horse breeding market and in international equestrian sports, foreign nations began to take notice of the quality horses and top notch riders the Soviet Union began to produce in the 1950s and onwards.

This international attention allowed ordinary Soviet citizens who may not have previously had the chance to interact with horses the chance to follow equestrian sports and horse breeding imports and exports. This changed the focus of the human-horse relationship from peasant and horse or soldier and horse to a national space where anyone was welcome to watch and admire the Soviet horse. As a result, more people were able to interact with the Soviet horses, even if they were not able to do so firsthand. Soviet citizens could have a relationship with the Soviet horse by watching Soviet riders and horses compete, by touring or working at a state-run stud farm, by taking riding lessons at a state funded riding club, or by buying Soviet horse themed stamps. Through these stamps, the horse became a commodity. The average citizen could now participate in the Soviet equestrian realm in a way that was not feasible in the Russian Imperial Age or in the Soviet 1930s.
This active participation is evidence that the Soviet horse population was recovering. There was now a strong incentive for Soviet breeding programs because the Soviet people valued the horse more than ever before. The Soviet state played an essential role in the recovering horse population because the state funded all of the riding clubs, stud farms, and invoked policies such as the three-year plan for the development of animal husbandry in order to increase the number of horses in the country. While at times state involvement could be problematic, such as in the instance of Petushkova and the retirement of her horse Pepel, it would not have been possible for the horse population to recover without the support, involvement, and motivation of the Soviet government.

The Soviet horse also served as a cultural diplomat that brought the Soviet horse industry international attention. Surely the international respect the Soviet Union received from foreign powers made the horse industry in the Soviet Union a priority for state authorities. The amount of money the Soviet Union received from its horse breeding programs on state stud farms alone made the mission to help recover the Russian horse population a worthy venture. However, there was also the international attention received from Olympic riders and horses such as Sergei Filatov andAbsent and Elene Petushkova and Pepel.

The Russian horse population continued to face challenges in the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the ruble. As a result, many Soviet-era stud farms went bankrupt and were forced to close.198 Despite the variety of Russian horse breeds, many Russian officials in recent years have commented that the Russian Federation only benefits from the Arabian horse because of its popularity worldwide.199 As a result, Russian horse breeds such as Orlov Trotter,

199 Ibid.
the Vladimir Carrier, and the Russian Carrier are on the verge of extinction, according to a 2011 Sputnik News article.\footnote{Ibid.}

Even today, the Russian horse population has recovered to some extent, but it is not to its Imperial Age numbers. According to the DVM360 veterinary magazine, as of 2007, the United States now has the most horses in the world, at 9.5 million horses. The Russian Federation has 1,319,358 horses. Countries such as China (7,402,450), Mexico (6,260,000), Brazil (5,787,249), Argentina (3,655,000), Colombia (2,533,621), Mongolia (2,029,100), and Ethiopia (1,655,383) all have more horses than the Russian Federation.\footnote{“U.S. has 9.5 Million Horses, Most in World, Report Says,” DVM360 Magazine, (October 1, 2007), http://veterinarynews.dvm360.com/us-has-95-million-horses-most-world-report-says, DOI March 4, 2016.} While the current Russian horse population is impressive, it is important to note that at the turn of the twentieth century, Russia had the highest horse population in the world at 23,085,975 in 1884.\footnote{“Horse Matters: Horse Breeding in Russia.” (Vol. 15. Lansing, MI: American Periodicals Series II., 1884), 1} Of course, factors such as loss of farmland due to urbanization must be accounted for; however, the events of the twentieth century such as collectivization seriously crippled Russia’s horse population and its ability to rebuild it to Imperial Age levels.

Despite this, Russia has remained an active participant in the world-wide equine industry. Soviet officials did their best to replenish the horse population, and they succeeded to the point where the Soviet Union was able to support an Olympic equestrian team and participate in the international import and export of horses. While the Soviets did not meet their goal of matching Imperial Age horse statistics, they greatly improved the horse industry and the quality of Soviet horses.

\footnote{Ibid.}
THESIS CONCLUSION

The role of the Russian horse has proven to be influential and an essential factor in Russian history through the modern day. One can see how the horse has been important as a figure for the Imperial Russian autocracy, then the Soviet peasantry, and then the ordinary Soviet citizen. The history of Russian peasants and its role in collectivization cannot be fully explained without examining the relationship between peasant and horse. The peasants were not just slaughtering these animals because they were starving, but because they were making a deliberate decision to revolt against the Soviet state and its collectivization drive. By slaughtering their horses, peasants were exercising their agency and control over the horses, something the Soviet collective farms desperately needed in order to properly function in the 1930s. By examining this relationship, it is evident that the peasants and their horses were necessary actors in the historical event of collectivization. This relationship also showcases the peasants’ power and autonomy. The peasants held a unique power over the Soviet state, despite the fact that the state was forcing them to collectivize. The Soviet Union was in desperate need of horses, and the peasants were the group of people who had access to the majority of the country’s horses. As a result, they were able to slaughter the horses and other livestock in revolt. The horses were also active participants in the revolt against collectivization. From the perspective of Human-Animal Studies theory, peasants and horses were important to the success of the Russian countryside and agricultural sector, and as a result the Soviet state required both groups to become part of the collective farms. However, while the horses did not make the choice to participate by being slaughtered by their peasant comrades, they were an active group of living beings in the resistance against collectivization. Unfortunately, this passive resistance
by slaughtering horses did not keep the Soviet state from forcing the peasants and horses to collectivize, and by the 1950s, the majority of the Soviet peasants were on kolkhozy.

Other factors brought about the near demise of the Soviet horse population, including the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the 1921 Russian Civil War, both World Wars, and the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. At the conclusion of these events in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Soviet horse industry was left with only one choice: to start over. The Soviets were able to replenish their state stud farms by importing breeding horses from Poland in the 1940s, and many stud farms began to focus on breeding one type of horse breed, allowing them to perfect the breed. This allowed for the Soviet Union to create and perfect Russian horse breeds and types that would be desirable on the world market.

The relationship between humans and horses grew. Pre-1917, people used their relationship with horses for farming, transportation, and military events. During the 1930s collectivization drive, the peasants utilized their relationship with horses for resistance and in some cases in order to eat, such as during the 1931 Ukrainian Famine. However, beginning in the 1950s, Soviet equestrians were able to use their relationship with horses to gain global attention and respect, as well as provide equestrian and horse heroes for Soviet citizens who did not work directly with horses. This type of international exposure and national interest would probably not have been possible had it not been for the opportunity to start over in the postwar decades.

In conclusion, as deleterious as the collectivization resistance of slaughtering horses was to the Russian horse population, it resulted in the Soviet Union creating a world-class horse industry. The Soviet Union created excellent stud farms that produced top notch horses that were celebrated around the world.
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