

LETTERS

From the *Slavic Review* Editorial Board:

Slavic Review publishes signed letters to the editor by individuals with educational or research merit. Where the letter concerns a publication in *Slavic Review*, the author of the publication will be offered an opportunity to respond. Space limitations dictate that comment regarding a book review should be restricted to one paragraph of no more than 250 words; comment on an article or forum should not exceed 750 to 1,000 words. When we receive many letters on a topic, some letters will be published on the *Slavic Review* web site with opportunities for further discussion. Letters may be submitted by email, but a signed copy on official letterhead or with a complete return address must follow. The editor reserves the right to refuse to print, or to publish with cuts, letters that contain personal abuse or otherwise fail to meet the standards of debate expected in a scholarly journal.

To the Editor:

David Kerans's review of my article in *Rural Adaptation in Russia*, edited by Stephen K. Wegren (*Slavic Review*, vol. 65, no. 3) grossly misrepresented it. Kerans claimed my article "insists" that peasants did not resist collectivization in significant numbers, but I documented incontestably that 2–3 million peasants protested the policy. My sources, however (and not my "insistence"), showed that this was a small minority of the peasants, a point Kerans ignores. He described my evidence for peasants' hard work in kolkhozy as "thin," but he overlooked the fact that my unambiguous evidence of a greatly improved harvest in 1933 (previously published in *Slavic Review*) came from 77,000 farms with 33 million peasants in 1932 and 154,000 farms with most of the peasant population in 1933; recently published evidence further substantiates this. Kerans stated "the absence of resistance does not testify to peasants' approval," which attributes to me an argument I did not make, as I documented both peasants' resistance and their hard work. He dismisses my evidence of hard work by claiming it reflects more "terror of starvation" than approval of the system, but this ignores my clear evidence of peasant support for the system. He criticized me for not placing my argument in the context he preferred, but he ignored both my use of the dominant categories in the existing literatures and my argument that that literature misused evidence. I encourage interested readers to read my work and the rest of *Rural Adaptation in Russia* and not prejudice it on the basis of this inaccurate and biased review.

MARK B. TAUGER
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David Kerans replies:

In so many ways, Mark Tauger's response to my review of his article only further exposes the flaws in his publication. To recap my view, "[Tauger] . . . continues to show more sympathy with the government reform efforts . . . than most other specialists. . . [and] insists that peasants did not resist or even resent the collective farm system in significant numbers." His article does exactly this. To argue that his sources regarding *protests* "document incontestably" a low level of *resistance* to collectivization is unbecoming in two respects: protest and resistance are not synonymous, and Tauger ought to admit to exercising judgment about the meaning of the numbers. Tauger's treatment of work habits in the context of political attitudes is indeed too thin to be convincing. He does not betray a deep acquaintance with sources on the topic (either archival or published). Nor does he evidence a firm grasp of the realities of village life that would condition the range of peasant attitudes and responses to collectivization. And he does nothing to place mass collec-

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tivization in the context of the reform efforts during the two preceding years, where peasants' stances on the topic are so richly documented. These limitations, coupled with a narrow marshaling of ideas on resistance, lead Tauger to define resistance narrowly and to overstate his conclusions. His underappreciation of the existing literature on state-society relations in the period is a real but separate problem. Tauger's article nevertheless makes some contributions, which I identified from the outset.

DAVID KERANS
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