[T]he first encounter of many peasants of Kharkiv province with the Ukrainian People’s Republic was the arrival to their village of a detachment of German troops seeking food and fuel, and wielding the weapons to extract them. For example, on 25 March 1918 a German dragoon regiment passing through the village of Nova Vodolaha (Valky district) demanded from the village’s agronomist, A. G. Storozhev, oats and hay for their horses. Storozhev refused, asserting that this forage was for local peasants’ cattle. Ignoring his protests, the German cavalrmen forced him to give up about 90 poods of oats and hay, while other soldiers took more oats themselves without asking permission. The soldiers stayed in the village overnight, and Storozhev discovered in the morning that they had taken another 50 poods of various foodstuffs. On their way out of town that morning they also seized the village’s breeding bull, worth about 3,000 rubles at the time. For all this, the regiment paid 150 German marks and promised to send an inventory listing everything else they had taken and for which they would pay later. Neither Storozhev nor any of the villagers of Nova Vodolaha ever received the inventory, let alone the promised money.

— chapter 3, pages 96–97