

NYTimes
JAN 29 1974
**Soviet Offers to Sell Grain to U.S.
To Replenish Depleted Supplies**

By THEODORE SHABAD

A Soviet trade official offered yesterday to sell wheat to the United States to help replenish grain stocks that have been drawn down to low levels after heavy exports over the last two years.

Vladimir S. Alkhimov, a visiting Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, said at a news conference that there would be "no problem" in the wake of last year's bumper grain crop in the Soviet Union to help tide Americans over until the 1974 harvest is brought in.

The Soviet official did not mention any prices. The Russians bought American wheat after their 1972 crop failure at bargain prices of about \$1.65

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United Press International
Vladimir S. Alkhimov at news conference here.

**U.S., Which Sold Grain to Soviet
Is Now Offered Russian Wheat**

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a bushel. Wheat is now \$5.80 a bushel, and some observers foresee increases to \$8 or more this spring.

Mr. Alkhimov made his comments after leaders of the American baking industry warned that a wheat shortage this spring could drive the price of bread as high as \$1. Officials of the Agriculture Department have described such fears as "irrational," although conceding that some wheat imports

Referring to complaints in the United States that wheat had been sold to the Russians at low prices in 1972, the Soviet official reported: "We bought the wheat at market prices. They may have been low, but look at Alaska, which we sold you for \$7-million back in 1867. That was cheap, too, but you don't hear us complaining."

The purchase of the desolate territory by Secretary of State William H. Seward was dubbed "Seward's Folly." But Alaska's rich gold, fish and oil resources have since yielded benefits for the United States.

Council Organized

Mr. Alkhimov, speaking in English, briefed newsmen on current Soviet trade developments at the New York office of the newly formed U.S.-U.S.S.R. Trade and Economic Council, 280 Park Avenue. The council, a businessmen's group that seeks to foster trade between the two countries, plans to open a Moscow office in March.

Although the council was originally conceived by major United States corporations as serving business interests outside the government sector, it does in effect combine private business on the American side and government officialdom on the Soviet side. Virtually all economic activity in the Soviet Union is controlled and operated by its Government.

The council's board of directors, consisting of 26 American corporate officers and 26 Soviet officials in industry and foreign trade, is planning to meet in late February in Washington to discuss trade opportunities between the two countries. Mr. Alkhimov said the Soviet delegation would be led by Nickolai S. Patolichev, the Minister of Foreign Trade.

When asked about any new major business deals that might be under negotiations, Mr. Alkhimov said American companies were discussing the possible construction of modern hotels in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Yalta, together with the training of Soviet service personnel, to promote tourism. He declined to identify the companies involved.

A significant increase in foreign tourism, provided adequate facilities and services can be provided, has been suggested as a source of foreign exchange that would enable the Soviet Union to reduce its trade deficit with the United States.

Moscow's needs for American technology and farm products have not been matched by an ability to sell Soviet products in the United States.

During the news conference, Mr. Alkhimov parried the now customary questions about Soviet emigration policy, particularly toward Jews, in light of Congressional efforts to prohibit trade benefits to any country that does not permit its citizens to emigrate freely.

Emigration Figures

The Soviet official noted that Jews have been leaving in substantial numbers — more than 30,000 last year — and said that 96 per cent of emigration requests were being approved, with the others barred "on grounds of national security or some other reasons."

Drawing on his own experience to rebut charges of discrimination against Jews, Mr. Alkhimov recalled that he fought side by side with a Jew in the 900-day siege of Leningrad in World War II. The Jew, named Mikhail Reingold, was killed in the fighting.

"How could I possibly have something against Mikhail Reingold?" Mr. Alkhimov said in an effort to show that all of the more than 100 ethnic groups in the Soviet Union are treated alike.