



SHEVCHENKO  
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**Famine in Ukraine  
1932-1933:  
Genocide by Other  
Means**

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**TARAS HUNCZAK  
and  
ROMAN SERBYN**

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FAMINE IN UKRAINE 1932-1933:  
GENOCIDE BY OTHER MEANS

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1932-1933:  
Genocide by Other Means**

Edited by

**Taras Hunczak and Roman Serbyn**

NEW YORK, 2007

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New York, NY 10003  
USA

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Library Card Control Number: 2007936443

# Ukrainian Genocide

7-10 million people starved  
to death during the  
artificially-created famine

1932-1933

Famine Commemoration

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## Preface

The Ukrainian tragedy of 1932 – 1933, as a man-made famine, has been documented in detail by numerous authors and recognized by many governments, including the United States Congress, as intentional policy of genocide by the Kremlin against the Ukrainian people. Some scholars, nevertheless, refer to what was basically a policy of genocide against the Ukrainian people in Kuban (Northern Caucasus) and in Ukraine as “the Soviet Famine”. If that was the case, i.e., if the famine effected the entire Soviet Union, then one might ask the question: Why did Stalin issue a Decree on January 22, 1933 closing the borders of Russia and Belarus to the Ukrainians? Wouldn’t Stalin’s Decree suggest that the food situation was much better in those two republics? Perhaps we should ask ourselves another question: What lesson does the intentional policy of starving to death primarily, but not exclusively, of the Ukrainian farmers, whom Stalin considered to be the carriers of national identity, convey to us and to the future generations?

The objective of this small collection is to provide the reader with a concise and comprehensive statement about the Ukrainian tragedy – the man-made Famine of 1932 – 1933. The first two essays in the collection were delivered as lectures in November 2006 in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium of the United Nations by Professor of History at Columbia University Mark von Hagen and Professor Emeritus of Rutgers University Taras Hunczak. The next two scholarly articles, written by Professor Roman Serbyn and Professor Yuri Shapoval provide the important details, which serve as the basis for reliable generalizations. The chapter by Dr. Oleh Wolowyna, a leading specialist in Ukrainian demography, analyzes the state of Ukrainian population after 1933. The book also addresses the role of Walter Duranty in misleading the American people and the World about the tragedy of 1932 –1933.

We have also decided to include in the book some major documents, which convey the real intention and determination of the communist leadership in committing the genocide in Ukraine.

We wish to thank Mykola Darmochwal for his technical assistance in the preparation of the book and Dr. Orest Popovych for his editorial assistance.

We are also grateful to Dr. Assya Humesky and Serhiy Zhykharev for their translations and to Tamara Gallo Olexy for providing some of the eyewitness accounts of the tragedy of 1932 - 1933.

**Taras Hunczak and Roman Serbyn**

## **Introduction**

### **"Genocide by any other Name"**

The twentieth century is scarred by mega-killings of countless millions of civilians by their own governments. Many of these multi-murders - state crimes - called for an appropriate label, a classification that set them apart, hence the term 'genocide' which, since 1948 with the passing of the United Nations Genocide Convention has entered into professional and general vocabularies, but not without occasional sharp controversy as to the accuracy of the labeling. That is the case with the 1932-1933 Stalinist induced State Famine which struck the Ukraine region the heaviest.

Flagrant mendacious denials aside, the problematics surrounding the interpretation whether what transpired in the early thirties was a bona fide genocide or something else needs to be explained. The Great Hunger, or Holodomor, first has to be seen in the broader context of extreme state violence that raged throughout the recently formed Soviet Union, of which, at the time, Ukraine was a reluctant constituent part. Since 1928 Stalin - having outflanked his major rivals - was engaged in a dual strategy: 1) consolidation of uncontested, personal dictatorial power; and 2) transforming the Soviet Union into a centralized modern industrial economic giant and military power. Both required the application of radical violence to achieve compliance since there were still numerous sources of potent opposition to Stalin's vision of a revolutionary society, among them Ukrainian ethnic- motivated secessionism.

One wave of violence that swept across the USSR was the purging from the Communist Party of the Old Guard which had made the 1917-1918 October Revolution and whose loyalties had been with Lenin and the other luminaries such as Bukharin and Kamenev and not with Stalin. Among those erased from the ranks of the Party were those harboring pro-Ukrainian aspirations. Another wave of state violence affected all those in the agricultural segment of the economy. Since 1928 the government sought to transform the farmers with their small private plots of land into rural proletariat living and working collectively in huge state

farms. The opposition bordered on a bloody civil war in which tens of millions of farmers - at the heart of which was the Ukrainian farmer - were uprooted, killed or deported to Siberia where they were worked to death on huge industrial projects. Lastly, a third storm of violence rocked the Soviet Union, the program of accelerated industrialization. As the ranks of factory workers expanded the government had to provide sufficient supplies of food. That meant forcibly requisitioning grain causing serious and, finally, lethal shortages as famine set in from Belarus in the west to the vast steppes of Kazakhstan in Central Asia, Caught in the middle - suffering countless millions in countryside and cities alike - was the Ukrainian population.

At the very geographic heart of this maelstrom of multi-tiered state induced mass violence lay the Ukrainian people, whose suffering was out of proportion to that of other populations and regions, naturally evoking the question whether within the overall victimization throughout the Soviet Union there was not a specific Ukrainian suffering. Had they, so the question goes, been targeted as Ukrainians per se? Seen through the prism of Soviet reality the answer is both yes and no. There is no doubt that Stalinism and its brutal vision and practices of social engineering made little distinction between those who stood in his way, regardless of regional distinctions. Nevertheless, on closer examination, the severity of the death toll in Ukraine gave rise to another interpretation.

As this book eminently demonstrates, the experience of violence in Ukraine pointed to more than implementing state goals by all means available. The mega killings and mass deportations as well as the murder of political elites and willful destruction of cultural monuments had an existential dimension amounting to genocide. As the documents unambiguously reveal, underlying the Great Famine was the official intention to threaten the very existence of Ukrainianism. Thus, within the war to re-shape the Soviet Union lurked another war, the USSR versus Ukraine. The statistics and raw data indicate this; the contemporary documents confirm it. That it was genocide before the term was coined ten years later in 1943 is no longer to be doubted. What Stalin committed was the crime of extermination. The Great Famine was an integral part of that crime.

**Henry R. Huttenbach** (Professor Emeritus, CCNY-CUNY--  
Founder and editor of *Journal of Genocide Research*

## **The Famine of 1932-1933: Genocide by Other Means\***

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Western World - having experienced the Renaissance of humanism, which freed the individual from the Medieval spirit of conformity and, building upon that experience, proceeded to establish the principle of the natural rights of man in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries, ending the quest for individual and national freedom in the era of Romanticism of the 19th century - entered the 20th century with great expectations. Unfortunately, the 20th century witnessed great disappointments, tragedies and bloodshed the likes of which the world had never seen before.

There were two world wars, which cost humanity millions of lives and wasted great resources. Even worse, totalitarian regimes were created that destroyed millions of innocent lives. It is they - the Nazis and the Communists - who pursued the policy of ruthless oppression, which was accompanied by a policy of genocide. What a sad and tragic picture for humanity the 20th century represents when we consider the mass killings of the Armenian people or the long lines of Jews and Gypsies escorted by the Nazis to their execution.

The Holocaust is not just history, it is a tragedy that forever should remain a part of our consciousness - it is part of me since I witnessed it. Equally tragic, however, was the genocide perpetrated against the Ukrainian people by means of the artificially created famine of 1932-1933 in which anywhere from 7 million to 10 million people perished. The real numbers of victims will probably never be known.

The immediate origins of the tragedy could be found in Stalin's program of "Socialism in one country," which called for economic transformation of the country, particularly of the countryside. What Stalin inaugurated was, in effect, a war on the Ukrainian villages waged by intro-

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\* The lecture was delivered by Prof. Taras Hunczak at Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium at the United Nations, on November 21, 2006.

ducing a policy of collective agriculture, which was to replace individual farming, thus depriving the Ukrainian farmers of their individual freedom as members of free society. The objective was obvious - Stalin wanted to make individual farmers hostages of the Communist regime, expecting, in his own words, "to establish a system whereby the collective farmers would deliver, under penalty, to the state and the cooperative organizations, the entirety of their marketable grain."

The policy of collectivization was officially announced in November 1929. Practically, this meant that individual farmers were to surrender their land, their livestock and farming implements to the collective farms. An essential component of forced collectivization was Stalin's policy of "liquidation of the kulaks [wealthy farmers] as a class" since they were, according to Communist propaganda, exploiters of the working class. This policy involved confiscation of property of the well-to-do farmers and their elimination as members of village communities.

Between January and March 1930 some 61,887 farms were taken over by the communists. Those who protested were executed on the spot, others were sent to concentration camps, and many families were sent to Siberia, where they were dumped often without food or shelter. Many did not survive. Some were just ordered to leave their districts. Of the more than 1 million Ukrainian farmers expropriated in the early 1930s, about 850,000 were deported in freight trains to the Russian far north. Many never reached the destination.

In the meantime, collectivization was pursued - encompassing all other farmers, regardless of their status. In response, farmers rebelled in most regions of Ukraine. But the farmers were no match for the army and the secret police who were sent against them. Now collectivization was carried out by force - according to one report, the homes of the middle, and even poor farmers, were destroyed in the darkness of night and the farmers were forced, at gunpoint, to join collective farms. Confiscated property was often stolen by urban party activists, while the militia roamed the village streets arresting anyone in sight.

### **Stalin's quotas**

These terrible conditions artificially created in Ukrainian agriculture, and complicated by a drought, did not, however, cause the Famine in Ukraine. After all, even Stalin stated that "the total yield of grain in 1932 was larger than in 1931." The Famine was caused by Stalinist draconian requisition quotas imposed on Ukraine, forcing the devastated vil-

lages of the country to deliver millions of tons of grain to the state. Since the farmers could not meet the quotas, Moscow ordered that some 12,000 special brigades be sent to the villages in order to collect the "hidden" food reserves.

Overseeing Stalin's ruthless policy of grain procurement were his closest henchmen, Viacheslav Molotov and Lazar Kaganovich, who traveled through the plundered villages, giving directions on how to rob the starving population. Their orders were effectively executed by the local collaborators who, together with the members of the special brigade and party activists, went from house to house, searching for hidden grain and other food - even taking the last loaf of bread that was on the table. As a result, already in 1932 people were dying of hunger.

But Stalin was not moved. He issued an order to "develop the grain procurement campaign ... and speed it up". The first commandment was "fulfill the grain procurements."

### **"Enemies of the people"**

On August 7, 1932, a law was passed, personally edited by Stalin, concerning the protection of socialist property, a law that the people called the "five wheat-ear" law. Since the famine was raging in the countryside, people went to the fields gathering ears of grain that was left behind after the harvest in order to survive. According to Stalin's law, anyone who gleaned an ear of grain or bit the root off a sugar beet was to be considered an enemy of the people subject to execution or imprisonment for 10 years. Accordingly, in the beginning of 1933 some 54,645 people were tried and condemned; of those, 2,000 were executed.

The famine raging in Ukraine, in the ethnic Ukrainian region of the Northern Caucasus, known as Kuban, and in the region of the lower Volga River reached its high point in 1933. It has been estimated that already in the beginning of the year a family of five had about 170 pounds of grain to last it until the next harvest. In other words, each member of the family had to survive on about 4 pounds a month. Lacking bread, people ate pets, rats, bark, leaves, tree bark and garbage from the well-provisioned kitchens of party members. There were numerous cases of cannibalism. According to a Soviet author, "the first who died were the men, later on the children and the last of all, the women. But before they died, people often lost their senses and ceased to be human beings" (as cited by Robert Conquest).

## **Eyewitness accounts**

There are many eyewitness accounts of the Ukrainian tragedy of 1932 – 1933.

Whiting Williams, a British journalist, published in the journal **Answers** in 1934 an account about his painful personal experience. He wrote: "Once I saw with my own eyes the victims of famine. Men and women were literally dying of hunger in the gutter ... They ('wild children') sat in the streets, their eyes glazed with despair and privation, begging as I have never seen anyone beg before ... There was one youngster I saw in Kharkov (Kharkiv). Half-naked, he sunk, exhausted, on the carriage-way, with the curbstone as a pillow, and his pipe-stem legs sprawled out, regardless of danger from passing wheels. Another, a boy of 8 or 9, was sitting among debris of a street market, picking eggshells out of dirt and examining them with heartbreaking minuteness in the hope of finding a scrap of food still sticking to them ... There were hordes of those wild children in all the towns. They live and die like animals ..."

It might be interesting to note that the Communist Party did not want the farmers to leave the villages and for that reason new passports were issued without which one had no right to be in the city. But the passports were not given to the people in the villages. Hence, they were like the serfs of the 19th century now hostages of modern times. All that was left for them was to starve to death in their villages or to flee to other parts of the Soviet Union. But Stalin prevented this from happening. On January 22, 1933 he issued a Directive whose objective was to prevent a farmer exodus from Ukraine and from the predominantly Ukrainian Kuban region to Russia and Belarus. As a result of this Directive, according to the Russian scholar N.A.Ivnitsky, 219,460 individuals were arrested and 186,588 of them were sent back to their starving villages.

And they were starving - dying by the millions, while the Soviet government in 1932 and 1933 was selling 1.73 and 1.63 million metric tons of grain on the Western markets, and the Western liberals, such as Bernard Shaw and The New York Times correspondent Walter Duranty, were praising Stalin for the great progress that the Soviet Union was making. In his report of March 31, 1933, Duranty went so far as to say that "there is no actual starvation, but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition." And yet, he knew the truth.

In a conversation on September 26, 1933, with William Strang, the British consul in Moscow, Duranty said that "as many as 10 million peo-

ple may have died directly or indirectly from the lack of food." We should note that for his reports, which since 1920s had been deceiving the American people, Duranty was awarded the Pulitzer Prize. Among Stalin's American defense team one also finds Maurice Hindus and novelist Upton Sinclair for whom "revolution" justified even famine.

As the Famine escalated, so did the government accusation against the farmers of sabotage with political overtones, which was gradually transformed into nationalism. The question arises: Why accuse the starving farmers of nationalism? Was it just a convenient phrase, or was there a purpose behind it? I think that the answer can be found in Stalin's concern with the rather remarkable sense of independence of the Ukrainian elite - particularly of such individuals as Mykola Khvyliovyi, Mykola Skrypnyk, Oleksander Shumskyi and many others who, while Communists, defended Ukrainian independence. To crush the sense of independence of the political elite, Stalin had to destroy the source of their strength. That source was the Ukrainian village. Stalin understood the problem. He stated it clearly in his "Marxism and the National-Colonial Question," where he wrote: "Farmers present by themselves the basic force of the national movement ... Without farmers there can be no strong national movement. This is what we mean when we say that the nationalist question is, actually, the farmers' question."

Following Stalin's line of reasoning, his objective in the ruthless pursuit of famine becomes quite obvious: destroy the village, its infrastructure and the farmers, and you have destroyed the basis of social, cultural and political identity of the nation. Stalin's concern with Ukraine is clearly stated in his letter to Kaganovich, of September 11, 1932, in which he affirmed that "... at this point the question of Ukraine is the most important. The situation in Ukraine is very bad ... If we don't take steps now to improve the situation, we may lose Ukraine... The objective should be to transform Ukraine, in the shortest period of time, into a real fortress of the USSR" (as cited by Yuri Shapoval).

### **The real objective**

That the real objective of Stalin's policy was political was clearly stated in 1933 by one of his lieutenants, Mendel Khataievich, one of the individuals in charge of the grain-procurement program, who proudly declared: "A ruthless struggle is going on between the farmers and our regime. It's a struggle to the death. This year was a test of our strength and their endurance. It took a famine to show them who is the master

here. It has cost millions of lives, but the collective farm system is here to stay. We have won the war." [Robert Conquest, p.261]

The above statement was reinforced by Pavel Postyshev, who was sent from Moscow to Ukraine at the end of 1932 and was given by Stalin dictatorial powers in order to implement his policies. At the November 1933 meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Postyshev reported: "Under the direct leadership and directions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and personally of comrade Stalin we smashed the Ukrainian nationalist counter-revolution." Indeed, they crushed the body and the soul of the nation. The Royal Consulate of Italy in Kharkiv, Ukraine, reported that *through barbaric requisitions...the Moscow government has effectively engineered not so much a scarcity...but rather a complete absence of every means of subsistence throughout the Ukrainian countryside, Kuban, and the Middle Volga*, (May 31,1933). In another report of July 19, 1933 the Consul General of Kharkiv reports of a tremendous population decline, particularly in the countryside. He came to a dramatic and a tragic conclusion when he wrote: *The Ukrainian people area about to go into an eclipse, which could well turn out to be a night without end, because Russian imperialism, with its present tender mercies (i.e. tender communist mercies), is capable of wiping a nation – nay, a civilization – right off the face of the earth if we aren't careful.* (Report to Congress: *Commission on the Ukraine Famine*. Washington 1988,pp. 446-447)

When Postyshev was speaking in his report in November 1933 that the Ukrainian counter-revolution was smashed he was actually referring to the Ukrainian national cultural and political renaissance of the 1920's. What is noteworthy is that both Khataievich and Postyshev said nothing about their success in grain procurement, but they reported with pride about their victory over the Ukrainian people at the expense of seven to ten million innocent lives.

From the above statement it should be obvious that the purpose of the Famine, which destroyed the villages and the entire social structure together with millions of innocent victims, was - as stated by Khataievich and Postyshev - to establish the mastery of the Communist regime, at whatever cost. The famine, therefore, was an instrument of genocide by other means.

It was precisely against such crimes, as were committed against the Ukrainian people, that the United Nations adopted on December 9, 1948 the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of*

**Genocide.** Particularly applicable to the Ukrainian tragedy is Article II of the Convention which defines genocide as *...any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group...* Point “c” of Article II provides further details of the Convention definition of genocide by stating that genocide is a policy of *deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.*

Stalin and his henchmen in Moscow and in Ukraine did just that, building their empire on the bones of millions of innocent victims, while the world was watching and doing nothing.

**Taras Hunczak**

# The Terror-Famine and the State of Ukrainian Studies\*

Dear friends and colleagues; I am deeply honored and humbled by your invitation to take part in this year's commemoration of the Ukrainian famine-genocide of 1932-33.

Two years ago in June I was invited to be interviewed on the Kyiv television station 1+1 to discuss the famine and my involvement in the Walter Duranty case. Why, the interviewer asked me, after a second time in ten years, did the Pulitzer Prize Committee refuse to revoke Walter Duranty's prize? Why did *The New York Times* refuse to recommend that revocation? Could it be that Ukraine for the educated public in the US (and more broadly) still is a relative unknown? And might this in turn reflect the underdeveloped state of Ukrainian studies itself and its international authority and prestige? The short answer to these questions is yes, and I'd like to devote these remarks to exploring these connections. In brief, most North American and European scholars and politically engaged commentators and leaders still view Ukraine merely or primarily as a province or region of the Russian Empire or Soviet Union and therefore fail to see how the famine could be understood as ethnocide, genocide, or even as a crime against a nation or people. And this fact has to be taken as a clarion call to the Ukrainian studies community, that our job to raise awareness of Ukrainian history, politics and culture is far from done. The unwillingness or refusal to acknowledge the famine as a crime against humanity and genocide is inextricably linked to the persistent denial of Ukrainian sovereignty and independence today and Ukrainian distinctiveness in the past.

## Soviet taboos

Clearly, one of the most important factors explaining the persistent ignorance about the famine, as well as its specifically Ukrainian aspects,

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\* The lecture was delivered by Mark von Hagen, Professor and Chairman of the History Department at Columbia University, at Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium at the United Nations, on November 21, 2006.

has been the long-lived Soviet taboos on discussing or researching the subject. We now know that explicit instructions were issued from the centers banning the use of the word famine, and not only in party and military documents, but in medical records and statistical accounts. Even those instructions were top secret and recipients were ordered to return them after having absorbed the instructions so that there would be no trace of the order at the local level.

A census of the Soviet population in 1937 was ordered “suppressed” and conducted anew two years later because of the “truths” it revealed about the party’s devastating rural policies, among other matters. And this was a census conducted by a Central Statistical Administration that already had been thoroughly purged and politicized in the late 1920s and early 1930s.

And so it is clear that one of the other fatal consequences of the famine—beyond the sheer human and demographic losses for generations to come--was that it was a major contributing factor, if not the largest such factor, to the culture of the Big Lie in the Soviet Union made infamous by Alexander Solzhenitsyn. That so many people were forced to deny such a large tragedy that they had witnessed left an indelible stamp of bad faith and falsification not only in the popular memory, but even in the state and party’s own archival records.

We know now of more and more cases of protests from farmers, party leaders, writers (including the Nobel Prize winner Mikhail Sholokhov), and even an occasional breaching of the taboo, such as a novel by Mikhail Alekseev, *Drachuny*, printed in a literary journal, *Sibir*, during the post-Stalin years. But the fact remains that not just historians, but ordinary citizens, were prohibited from discussing the famine in public settings, and were intimidated into silence on the topic in more private surroundings. And, by now, most of those eyewitnesses who might have told their stories about the famine after the Soviet-era bans had been lifted have died, many prematurely because of the epidemics and debilitating disabilities that accompanied the severe malnutrition.

The ban on mention of the famine for nearly 60 years of Soviet history meant that Ukrainians and Russians, both the broader publics and their historians’ communities, remained largely ignorant of the details of this tragedy and particularly its man-made character. A telling example was the late Viktor Danilov, a close personal friend and clearly the pre-eminent Russian (and Soviet-era) specialist on the farmers in the interwar period, who resisted almost to the end of his life any suggestion that the

famine in Ukraine had any anti-national aspects, whether in the intentions of the Moscow leadership or in the ultimate demographic and cultural consequences for the population of Ukraine. Part of this proclivity to denial was based on severely limited access (virtually none) to the relevant Soviet-era archival funds, where the political dynamics of the murderous years 1932-33 would be reflected.

This situation, incidentally, has begun to be remedied with the publication of several new works in Russia and Ukraine, most notably *The Tragedy of the Soviet Countryside*, co-edited by Viktor Danilov and a team of western and post-Soviet historians; Yale University Press will bring out a three-volume English-language selection of the full Russian-language five-volume series. Many other volumes of documents on the collectivization and famine in Ukraine have appeared, including a new set of microfilms, 130 reels, from Primary Source Microfilm and the former Ukrainian Party archive in Kyiv selected by TsDAGO director Volodymyr Lozyskyi. It is now possible to trace what was known by whom and when for the years of unfolding famine; and it is harder than ever to deny that Moscow's orders and general level of callousness were the primary cause of the loss of millions of lives. Archive Director Lozyskyi relates his own story of confronting the taboo as late as 1990, when the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party prepared a set of galleys for a first book of archival documents. That initial draft was squashed by the Moscow party ideologues, especially Ivashko who has just transferred to Moscow from Kyiv, but the book did appear after independence and serves as a very useful guide to the decision-making processes between Moscow and Kharkiv in the 1930s, as well as between Moscow and Kyiv in the 1990s.

Still, more than a dozen years after the end of the Soviet Union, the famine has not been successfully integrated into the latest textbooks on Soviet history, and most authors avoid any "overly sensitive" interpretations, especially in Russia.

The inability to make sense of the famine is part of a larger set of problems. One is the reluctance to confront the broader history of collectivization itself; the other is the still broader problems of accountability for the crimes of the Stalin era. As far as collectivization is concerned, key issues are brushed over such as the ruthlessness and brutality with which it was imposed on the farmers, the demoralizing impact it had on many of the once idealistic party members who took part in it, and the cost in long-term low productivity of agricultural labor. The persistent

fight over the wisdom of collectivization is reflected in the stalled legislative efforts to privatize the collective farms through the CIS or the unwillingness of collective farm chairmen to implement the privatization and breakup laws where they exist.

The famine as part of the crimes of the Stalin era has been similarly brushed over, even as commissions have worked assiduously to posthumously “rehabilitate” innocent victims and clear their records of trumped-up criminal charges. But not one official in a CIS country, to my knowledge, has ever been brought to justice for the crimes committed. Stalin escaped justice in death; his fellow Politburo members executed NKVD Chief Lavrentii Beria after Stalin’s death, but for crimes that nearly all of them were guilty of nobody was punished. The post-Stalin “rehabilitation” process turned out to be a convenient way to offer the innocent victims a cleaning of their records, albeit posthumously, but allowed the guilty to escape, it would seem, forever. With a former KGB officer in the Kremlin, and one who has himself promoted the rehabilitation of Stalin in the renaming of Volgograd back to Stalingrad and of the reputation of his predecessor and apparent model, Yuri Andropov, it is not likely that we will see any such justice for the foreseeable future. The same is true for Belarus, where the national dictator heralds from the collective farm sector and has not even allowed the name of the KGB to be changed nor the monument to Felix Dzerzhinsky to be dismantled in the center of the capital, Minsk. Ukraine might have the best chance to come to terms with some of these issues, since Ukrainian historians have often cast the Stalin-era tragedies as imposed by an alien Moscow government on an unwilling Ukrainian population. But even in Ukraine, there have been few calls for, and no movement toward, bringing to justice the murderers and camp guards of the Stalin years. And the recent appointment of a former Communist deputy to the Rada, Olha Ginzburg, as head of the National Archives of Ukraine, has put all of us who care about Ukrainian history on guard lest the Ukrainian Communist Party seek to turn back the remarkably open access that has been achieved under the last two National Archivists, Ruslan Pyrih and Hennady Boriak.

Russian reluctance to confront this tragic part of its history was reflected in the efforts last year by the Russian representative to the United Nations to block the resolution introduced by the Ukrainian delegation to have the famine recognized as a crime against humanity. Russian national pride, reinforced by ignorance of large swaths of Russian history and acceptance of national myths of Russian benevolence, will continue

to shape the non-reception of Ukrainian historians' claims about the national aspects of the famine in Ukraine. Moreover, in their efforts to bolster Russian-Ukrainian relations, the leaderships of both countries have sought to paper over inconvenient or unfortunate episodes in their overlapping and intertwined pasts. For example, the Pereiaslav Rada was the occasion for a presidential decree in Ukraine, which suggested celebration and commemoration rather than genuine scholarly scrutiny of new evidence or approaches.

The emphasis, not surprisingly, has been on marking events that celebrate Russia's and Ukraine's common destinies and to downplay periods of conflict, opposition, or, especially, separate destinies.

It is still too easy for most Russian historians and other scholars of culture to dismiss any place for Ukraine in their narratives other than as a colony or region of empire, with Kyivan Rus unequivocally claimed as the origins of Russian culture. The persistence of the triune model of Slavic history introduced by nineteenth-century Russian historians has been remarkable in the face of thirteen years of independence. In this sense, the acknowledgement of the famine in Ukraine and its meaning is part of a broader problem of the domination of the field by historians of Russia and by historical myths dating to the nineteenth century.

For historians of Russia in the West, the opinions of their nineteenth-century predecessors and contemporary colleagues have been formative, and only recently begun to be challenged with alternate narratives and archival-based research. For the time being, famine-denial is still an option, at least in the sense of the man-made aspect of the famine. I don't think there are historians who actively deny that famine took place; instead they deny any national aspect or its man-made features.

This situation, surprisingly, remains only moderately different in Ukraine itself, where historical consciousness is still shaped by Soviet-era myths, which means largely Russian national ones. Average Ukrainians, especially young ones today, know little about the famine or its broader meaning—this despite a barrage of pre-1990 Diaspora and post-Soviet Ukrainian publications, documentaries, some fiction, and an annual commemoration across the country. Clearly, it will take several decades to integrate the dramatically broader range of interpretation and evidence that have emerged in Ukraine since independence; and the historical profession is not as assured of the prominent role, if also a tortured one, that it enjoyed or suffered in Soviet times. This, too, then is a problem of the state of Ukrainian studies, namely, the low level of his-

torical consciousness among contemporary Ukrainians, as well as the continued underutilization and lack of knowledge about the now generally available archival and other sources.

Unfortunately, by now, there is little that can be recovered by oral history methods, due to the deaths of the few survivors of the famine; most of those who have been tapped lately were small children and barely aware of the tragedy unfolding around them, unlike the participants in the US project funded by Congress and led by the late James Mace.

The Institute of History of Ukraine at the National Academy of Sciences has created a famine study center, but it consists of only a handful of scholars and has a miserly budget, even by contemporary academic standards. Even this as yet paltry effort is in large measure due to the involvement of Deputy Director Stanyslav Kulchytsky, who has written extensively and edited several volumes on the famine as the most senior and authoritative specialist on the Soviet period. It will be years, if not decades, before this center begins to make its impact felt on the general level of awareness of the famine.

Before leaving the topic of Soviet taboos and myths, I'd like to consider one considerably more intangible matter that shaped and helped to silence the collective memory of the famine, namely, World War II, including the genuine collective memory and the officially promoted commemorative memory of the war. Both sets of memories have served to occlude the experience of famine in 1932-33. The horrors of Nazi Germany's occupation, including the Holocaust, but also the deportation of Ostarbeiter and the postwar experience of repatriation to Stalin's Soviet Union, reshaped the remembered experience of the famine itself for those who survived. This remembering was further compromised by the Soviet state's policy of resettling millions of Russian and Ukrainian farmers from non-famine regions of the USSR to the worst affected provinces. For many of the resettler population, the memory of those whose graves they trod regularly in their everyday lives was largely absent. This perpetrated and reinforced the imposed silence that reigned in Ukraine and elsewhere for so many subsequent decades.

The myth of the war that was promoted by the Soviet state recast the central drama of modern Ukrainian history as one of heroic fighters for the defense of the socialist fatherland against the perfidious Nazi invaders, on the one hand, and villainous traitors who collaborated with Nazi occupiers or fought alongside the German army on Soviet territory, on

the other. This was the central structuring myth of post-Stalin collective memory and has tenaciously persisted among older generations until today. The genuine German atrocities of the Nazi occupation regime were often exaggerated or embellished by the ideological apparatus; whether intentional or not, it also had the consequence of “relativizing” the famine experience, defanging it to some degree and allowing Soviet ideologues to cast the famine problem as an artificial one created by pro-Nazi Ukrainian nationalists in the West.

### **Duranty syndrome more broadly**

One of the most successful components of the Soviet big lie was, of course, Walter Duranty’s infamous denial of the famine on the pages of the *New York Times*. We have known for some time that Duranty was fully aware of that very famine and reported to the British diplomatic authorities in Moscow that the number of victims could reach 10 million. Clearly, Soviet censorship and the threat of being barred from reporting on a show trial in Moscow whipped most of the capital’s reporters into discipline and the demanded denial. Duranty went further in challenging the credibility of Gareth Jones, a promising, young reporter for *The Manchester Guardian*, and another British correspondent, Malcolm Muggeridge. But Duranty was not alone in his denial, not then at the time or since. Most of the foreign correspondents in Moscow joined his authoritative voice as the *New York Times* bureau chief.

After conducting an investigation for the *New York Times* of Duranty’s reporting for 1931, the year for which he won the prize, I came to see his denial of both the famine as well as the trumped-up nature of the charges brought in the great show trials of the late 1930s as part of the same syndrome. I have been frequently asked why I thought he wrote as he did about the Soviet Union, and I’m not sure I have been able to answer for myself that question with any satisfaction. On the one hand, he was a self-admitted cynic since, he claims, his experience in World War I had shattered any illusions about noble humanity (as it did for many others too). But more to the point, by the late 1920s, Duranty was in the thrall of Joseph Stalin and his world-historical project to make over the Russian (and Ukrainian) farmers into modern citizens, whether they wanted to be made over or not. Clearly, Duranty was right that Stalin was a world-historical figure, but he excused most of the cruelty of Stalin’s “modernization” in his characteristic translation of Stalin, “you have to break eggs to make an omelet.” In other words, the magnitude of the

transformation that Stalin had embarked upon was inevitably bound to have some collateral damage, as we hear often these days. As far as I can tell, Duranty was not an admirer of Stalin out of leftist sympathies, but for his sheer ruthlessness and determination. For Duranty Stalin was certainly no worse a national leader than Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon Bonaparte, or Genghiz Khan in their times.

This was not the era of sympathy for the underdog in history, but of great men, and, most often, cruel and tyrannical great men. Duranty tried his best to convey the vantage point of the Moscow Politburo on the unfolding events. This vantage point was reconstructed by citing the Soviet leaders—Stalin, Viacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, most prominently—and Soviet statistics, already fatally compromised by the politicization of the social sciences in the late 1920s.

With some qualifications, this uncritical view of Soviet modernization was one shared by left and right. Recall, for example, the influential biography of Stalin by the Trotskyist historian-journalist Isaac Deutscher, his empathy for Stalin all the more surprising because of Trotsky's titanic struggle with the Soviet dictator. This was part of the literature of totalitarianism as much as it was of the countervailing revisionist trends of the 1960s and 1970s. Trotsky himself, after all, was a critic of the Stalinist pace and method of collectivization and industrialization, as well as the consolidation of dictatorial powers in an ever more distant communist party leadership; Nikolai Bukharin warned against similar dangers, but both were political losers and their points of view were dismissed as irrelevant as they themselves became non-persons in the new Stalinist order and were air-brushed out of all Soviet publications.

Something similar is true for the fate of the oral histories of the famine collected by the late James Mace and his team of associates from among the Diaspora survivors and their relatives. How could so much testimony be ignored for so long, and not just ignored but denied as the work of Ukrainian nationalist propagandists (both in the USSR and outside) has to do with the powerful workings of the reigning narratives: great men trumped the common people, modernization was impossible without barbarism. Those who dared get in the way were either destroyed or admitted their defeat in emigration and outright flight. Émigrés' testimonies were generally viewed with considerable suspicion in the Sovietological field; Ukrainian testimonies were doubly suspect be-

cause of the cases of collaboration in Nazi war crimes that came to light after World War II.

Of course, there are limits to oral histories of survivors as historical sources. While they poignantly convey the tragedy as suffered by individuals, such sources cannot answer questions about the motivations of the top leadership or the degrees of their culpability. Survivors knew only the horrible consequences of their policy decisions and mistakes. Still, this is an important component of historical memory that was too easily dismissed by generations of western historians, not to mention the ritualistic denunciation of these materials by Soviet historians and their allied propagandists.

Can we expect any improvement in this situation outside Ukraine and Russia?

I'm afraid that the evidence suggests that we are witnessing increasing parochialism in an era of growing globalization. The level of geographical and historical knowledge among especially American young people seems to be headed in a relentlessly downward direction. Those trends are reinforced by the decline in the number of foreign correspondents and quality of international coverage generally. It is still the practice that no major US broadcast or print media companies have permanent representatives in Kyiv. During the recent election in Ukraine, most of the correspondents parachuted in from Moscow for a day or so before the election to make their reports.

And there is another cause for pessimism, the special decline in interest in former Soviet space, and little change in the traditional Moscow-centric coverage.

### **An Optimistic Ending Note**

Still, not all my experience has been negative, and I hope the positive moments partially reflect others' efforts and experiences as well. I'd like to end on an upbeat note that might warrant some measured hope in a longer-term change in attitudes and levels of knowledge about Ukraine and its history. When I first took the executives of Primary Source Microfilm to Kyiv, I offered them lectures in Ukrainian history morning, noon, and night, in order to place both the city's present in some context, but also to illustrate my point that Ukraine is a region full of history and its archives, accordingly, full of fascinating documents. It helped immensely that Ukrainian archival authorities were more forthcoming with exciting projects than many of their Moscow counterparts. For years we

had tried unsuccessfully to get a collection in Moscow for the World War II period, a subject of considerable interest among Americans more generally and American historians more particularly. Moscow military archive directors are still obsessed with secrecy and with thwarting foreigners' access to the unvarnished history of the war, whereas the first collections that Ukrainian archivists offered dealt precisely with this difficult period, including the fates of *Ostarbeiter* from Ukraine in the Third Reich, collaboration by important Ukrainian intellectuals with German occupying authorities, and the NKVD's ruthless filtration of returning or returned Ukrainian citizens from forced labor or prison in the Reich. The accessibility of Ukrainian archives under the two most recent National Archivists, to repeat an earlier point, has been welcome and remarkable.

What lessons, then, can we learn from the place of the history of the terror-famine in Ukrainian studies? Above all, that we need to be persistent and patient in educating the public, not only in university settings, about the dramatic episodes and periods of Ukrainian history, to remind audiences of the specific Ukrainian experiences that distinguish it from Russian or Polish or Belarusian history and place it as a distinctive alternate path of development in Europe. Perhaps the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the famine will bring a different outcome in the Duranty affair, but only if we, who are actively involved in Ukrainian studies, continue to do our work as scholars and to find effective ways of bringing our research to the broader thinking public. Thank you for your attention.

**Mark von Hagen**

## Walter Duranty: A Liar for a Cause

Reading about the tragic anniversary of Famine and about Duranty it occurred to me that there had to be a reason for his duplicity in his reporting of the tragic Famine-Genocide, which claimed millions of innocent lives. To learn more about him I read his book *I WRITE AS I PLEASE*, a book he finished writing in 1935 and Simon and Schuster published it in the same year. Reading the book was like traveling with Duranty to Moscow, where he became the New York Times Correspondent in 1920, and listening to his discussions with his friends and various governmental representatives, one gets a clear picture of who the man really was.

The book is a memoir of Duranty's experiences as a journalist beginning with WW I and ending in 1935. His experiences deal primarily, though not exclusively, with the Soviet Union, which, for him, is Russia. He recounts his numerous journeys to various countries, particularly to France where, as a result of a train disaster in 1924 he lost his foot.

Duranty tells the reader that as a journalist he tried, from the very beginning "to lean over backwards in being fair to the Bolsheviks." Indeed, he pursued this line of reasoning so consistently as to become, ultimately, the apologist for the crimes committed by the Communist Party. Duranty was a great admirer of the first Five-Year Plan, which, according to him, "succeeded far better than anyone abroad expected." Discussing the plan, he says that in "the final issue the crux of the struggle came in the villages where an attempt was being made to socialize, virtually overnight, a hundred million of the most stubborn and most ignorant farmers in the world." One should note that Duranty does not speak about collectivization. To him "socialization" is a much more acceptable term. Also, in the best Bolshevik tradition, Duranty refers to the farmers who resisted collectivization as "kulaks".<sup>1</sup> A reader, who is familiar with the period, would note that there is not one word about the 1932 -1933 Famine in Ukraine. He reports that on his way to Moscow he

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Duranty, *I Write as I Please*. Simon and Schuster, New York 1935. Pp. 280 – 283.

stopped in Ukraine where he observed “less evidence of damage, [damage from what? T.H.] but there were empty cottages in the villages that are usually so crowded, and marked scarcity of animals and poultry”.<sup>2</sup> Surely, he knew why the cottages were empty. Talking with William Strang, a British Representative of the Foreign Office, about the same trip to Ukraine Duranty not only discussed the problems (privately) in some detail, but expressed the opinion “that as many as 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union during the past year”.<sup>3</sup> His report to the American readers, however, sounded considerably differently. Obviously, responding to a request for a clarification of the situation, Duranty responded that “there is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation, but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition”.<sup>4</sup> No wonder Stalin, whom Duranty met on Christmas day in 1933, expressed his approval of Duranty’s performance when he said to Duranty “You have done a good job in your reporting of the U.S.S.R.”.<sup>5</sup> Was that kind of reporting the basis of the Pulitzer Prize or was it the close relation of Duranty with Herbert Pulitzer, the son of Joseph Pulitzer, in whose name the Award was established in 1917?<sup>6</sup>

What explains Duranty’s attitude, and therefore his reporting to the American people, is his obsession with the question of “whether the Soviet drive to Socialism is or is not successful irrespective of costs. I say to myself, **he continued**, I saw the War and that cost was worse and greater and the result in terms of human happiness was nil.... Here at least it seems the results are better in that the Russian farmer who...will within five years or less benefit enormously from being forced to accept a modern form of agriculture instead of the wasteful clumsy methods, which he and grandfather and great-grandfather have followed since the days of Ham”.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p.324.

<sup>3</sup> For details of the conversation see, Marco Carynyk, Lubomyr Y. Luciuk and Bohdan S. Kordan, Eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932–1933*.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Duranty, “Russians Hungry, But Not Starving.” *The New York Times*, March 31, 1933.

<sup>5</sup> Duranty, Op. Cit. p.166.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. pp.74,140-144,148.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.301.

What we see is the frequently recurring theme in Duranty's writing, that "the end justifies the means".<sup>8</sup> But what is important to note is that the "end", which met with Duranty's approval, represented, for the most part, the policies of the Bolshevik regime. He was very enthusiastic about the Five-Year Plan (which launched collectivization), referring to those who implemented it as "the most determined and vital elements of the Soviet people united in support of their strong and resolute leadership."<sup>9</sup> In Duranty's narrative there is an understated recognition that there were some problems in agriculture, but he says that what impressed him most was the fact "that there was no sign of faltering on the part of the Kremlin".<sup>10</sup>

So, who was this man, who was invited in July 1933 by Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, a Democratic candidate for President to a luncheon? The question is not irrelevant when we consider that only four months later, on November 16, 1933, Roosevelt, the newly elected President, recognized the Soviet Union. Was Duranty, as some Britishers thought, "in the pay of the Soviet Government"<sup>11</sup> or was he a willing convert? At the end of his book Duranty reveals his true political and moral identity when he says:

*"Looking backwards over the fourteen years I have spent in Russia, I cannot escape the conclusion that this period has been a heroic chapter in the life of Humanity. During these years the first true Socialist State, with all that that implies in planned economy, in the ownership of production and means of production, in communal effort and in communal pride and interest in everything that the community rather than the individual accomplished, was constructed and set moving despite incredible difficulties. I am profoundly convinced that the U.S.S.R. is only just beginning to exercise its tremendous potentialities."*<sup>12</sup>

With such political CREDO there could not have been any room in the reports of Duranty about the Famine-Genocide of 1932-1933, about political terrorism, concentration camps and mass murder. Practicing what he believed in, Duranty reported from Moscow about "progress" under communism, deceiving the American people about the tragedy of

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pp.167,287,314,315.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. pp.315-316.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p.322.

<sup>11</sup> *Foreign Office and the Famine*, op.cit., p. 204.

<sup>12</sup> Duranty, op.cit. 340.

millions who perished under the totalitarian system and, perhaps, misleading the Roosevelt Administration into recognizing the Communist regime in 1933—the worst possible time. If that was the case, Duranty achieved his objective, having created and successfully propagated the image of progressive Soviet society, and for that he received his Pulitzer Prize. **After all, he was a liar for a cause.** One might ask, why was the prize not taken away?

**Taras Hunczak**

# **The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 and the United Nations Convention on Genocide**

## **The State of the Question**

The historicity of the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933 is no longer challenged. What is still disputed is the number of victims, the reasons of the catastrophe, and its nature. Estimates of loss of life from starvation and related diseases vary from three to ten million. Historians identify a number of factors which brought on the famine or contributed to its intensification: adverse climatic conditions and field pests, incompetence of local administrators and farmer opposition, difficulties connected with the transition from private to socialized economy and governmental mismanagement of the agricultural sector, criminal intention on the part of Stalin and his cronies. Some historians deny or minimize the moral responsibility of the Communist leaders, reject the accusation of their intention to starve the population, or even of pursuing policies, which they knew would result in horrendous human losses. In a recent major study on the subject, the authors write: "We do not at all absolve Stalin from responsibility for the famine. His policies towards the farmers were ruthless and brutal. But the story which has emerged in this book is of a Soviet leadership which was struggling with a famine crisis which had been caused partly by their wrongheaded policies, but was unexpected and undesirable."<sup>1</sup> It is my contention that the famine was both expected and desirable. Proponents of the view that the famine was a deliberate act of the Soviet régime continue to disagree on the nature of the crime and the identity of the victims: there is no consensus on whether the famine in Soviet Ukraine should be classified as genocide, and if so, if its intended victims were targeted as Ukrainians or farmers. The question of the Ukrainian famine has always had academic and political dimensions. And today, it still elicits partisan feelings among scholars and politicians.

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<sup>1</sup> R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcraft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). P. 441.

The Ukrainian famine has not yet been recognized as genocide by the United Nations. When the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the event was commemorated in November 2003 by the United Nations General Assembly, a declaration signed by some 60 countries stated that “the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine” took seven to 10 million innocent lives, and explained that these people were victims of “the cruel actions and policies of the totalitarian regime.” The catastrophe was called “a national tragedy for the Ukrainian people,” but there was no allusion to genocide. The declaration erroneously attributed the cause of the famine to “civil war and forced collectivization” and misleadingly merged the Ukrainian catastrophe with the “millions of Russians, Kazaks and representatives of other nationalities who died of starvation in the Volga river region, North Caucasus, Kazakhstan and in other parts of the former Soviet Union.”<sup>2</sup> The Ukrainian delegation agreed to this watered-down version out of fear that Russia would block a more strongly worded declaration. Ambassador Valeriy Kuchinsky of the Ukrainian Mission to the United Nations later stated that it was, nevertheless, “an official document of the General Assembly,” whose importance resided in the fact that “for the first time in the history of the United Nations, Holodomor was officially recognized as a national tragedy of the Ukrainian people, caused by the cruel actions and policies of a totalitarian regime.”<sup>3</sup> The recognition did constitute a precedent and the Ukrainian Ambassador took advantage of it to return to the famine two years later. During the General Assembly discussion of the resolution on the International Holocaust day, Kuchinsky recalled the Holodomor and urged the audience that it was, “high time that the international community recognized that crime as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation.”<sup>4</sup>

There is no unanimity on the famine among Ukrainian historians. Some, like Valeriy Soldatenko of the Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies, continue to reject the notion of a man-made famine in Ukraine. Others, like Yuri Shapoval of the same institution, blame the communists for the crime and consider it genocide in accordance with the 1948 United Nations Convention. Stanislav Kulchytsky of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine maintains that the famine was genocide and that the Ukrainians must ensure that the international community officially recognizes it as “an act that falls under the

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<sup>2</sup> *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 16 November 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Kuchinsky at the UN discussion of Holocaust Day, 1 November 2005.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” However, in another passage of the same publication, Kulchytsky declares: “in reality, this famine cannot be classified as genocide as defined in the Convention.”<sup>5</sup> The author draws a sharp distinction between the Ukrainian famine, on the one hand, and the Jewish Holocaust and Armenian massacres, on the other. “We will never prove to the grandchildren of those Ukrainian citizens who starved to death, let alone to the international community, that people died in 1933 in the USSR as a result of their national affiliation, i.e., in the same way that Armenians died in the Ottoman Empire in 1915, or Jews in the European countries that were occupied by Hitler’s Reich.” Convinced that the Ukrainian famine cannot satisfy the criteria set by the United Nations Genocide Convention, he comes to a rather surprising conclusion: “And there is no need to prove this, because the mechanism of the Soviet genocide was different. The terror by famine that Stalin unleashed on Ukraine and the Kuban was an act of genocide against Ukrainian citizens, not Ukrainians.”<sup>6</sup>

Further on, I shall return to Kulchytsky’s notion of “terror by famine” and the designation of “Ukrainian” as civic and ethnic identification. At this point I wish to point out that Kulchytsky’s dismissal of the United Nations criteria for genocide is not useful in arguing the Ukrainian case before international legal bodies, and it is of no help when debating the issue with scholars who, unlike Davies and Wheatcroft, base their rejection of the Ukrainian genocide on the United Nations Convention<sup>7</sup>. Kulchytsky often quotes the United Nations Convention but then dismisses it without submitting it to a thorough examination, to see if it applies to the Ukrainian case. Absence of rigorous analysis is characteristic of much of Ukrainian scholarship, which too often contents itself with simply assert-

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<sup>5</sup> Stanislav V. Kulchytsky, *Holod 1932-1933 rr. v Ukrayini yak henotsyd* (Kyiv, 2005), pp. 3, 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Den'* (Kyiv) 24 November 2005. In the book version, the phrase “not Ukrainians” was dropped. (2005, p. 85).

<sup>7</sup> Davies and Wheatcroft reject Robert Conquest’s affirmation in his pioneering study *Harvest of Sorrow* that “Stalin wanted a famine”, that the Ukrainian famine was “deliberately inflicted for its own sake”, and that “the Communist ideology provided the motivation for an unprecedented massacre of men, women and children”. To further discredit Conquest’s previous statement, the authors quote from a recent letter from Conquest, in which he states that he does not think that “Stalin purposely inflicted the 1933 famine”, but rather that Stalin “could have prevented it, but put ‘Soviet interest’ other than feeding the starving first - thus consciously abetting it”. Davies & Wheatcroft. *Ibid*.

ing that the Ukrainian famine falls within or outside the United Nations parameters of genocide.

Generally speaking, opponents of the Ukrainian genocide thesis have a tendency to fall back on the United Nations Convention in their denial of the genocidal nature of the Ukrainian famine. The discussion that took place at the VII World Congress of the International Committee for Central and East European Studies, held in Berlin in the summer of 2005, was a case in point. At the session dedicated to the question “Was the Famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933 Genocide?” Otto Luchternadt, Professor of Law at the University of Hamburg, Germany, presented a paper “Famine in Ukraine and the Provisions of International Law on Genocide.” Luchternadt’s own summation of his argument, printed in the Congress Abstracts, reads as follows:

“The question whether the Ukrainian Golodomor (Holodomor) [*sic!*] Was genocide, can only be answered along with the Anti-Genocide Convention (9.12.1948), because it exclusively offers the relevant criteria, i.e. the definition of genocide as a crime under international law. While the objective elements of the offense were completed without any doubt by state terrorist measures against a substantial part of the Ukrainian population during the so-called Dekulakization, the subjective element was not fulfilled, because killings, deportations, and mistreatments were not committed with the required specific *intent* to destroy, in whole or in part, the Ukrainians as a national group as such. The victims of the Dekulakization policy were defined by a social approach, not by a national one. So, the Golodomor-case touches on a crucial problem of genocide definition: due to the Soviet United Nations-policy it doesn’t protect social and political groups. [Emphasis added - R.S.]”<sup>8</sup>

Let us disregard, for the moment, the author’s erroneous reading of history: (a) *dekulakization* — confiscation of property of the richer farmers — was mostly over when the great famine began: b) only a small minority of the farmers who starved to death could be classified as having previously belonged to this group) and his misdirection in subject identi-

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<sup>8</sup> ICCEES VII World Congress Abstracts, *Europe — Our Common Home?* (Berlin, 25-30 July 2005), pp. 247-248. The importance of the intent as defined by the convention is shown in Michael Ellman, “The Role of Leadership Perceptions and of Intent in the Soviet Famine of 1931-1934,” *Europa-Asia Studies*, vol. 57, no. 6 (September 2005), pp. 823-841.

fication (victims of *dekulakization* instead of the famine). What is more germane to our discussion is that Luchternadt, like most of the scholars, who today reject the notion of a Ukrainian genocide, bases his denial of the Ukrainian genocide on the United Nations document.

Advocates of the recognition of the Ukrainian famine have not yet succeeded in convincing the international community of the justice of their claim. Yet Andrea Graziosi, a recognized expert in the field, has come to the conclusion that this will happen, due to new information revealed by new documents.<sup>9</sup> What the Italian historian does not say is whether he believes that this claim can be made on the basis of the United Nations Convention. I think it can. In this paper I shall argue the following three points:

1. The Ukrainian famine was genocide.
2. Documents show that deliberate starvation was directed against Ukrainians.
3. The evidence meets the criteria set by the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide.

## **The United Nations Convention on Genocide**

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948 and came into force on 12 January 1951. Soviet Ukraine became a signatory of the Convention on 16 June 1949 and ratified it on 15 November 1954. Independent Ukraine continues to respect the international Convention and has inscribed “Article 442. Genocide” into its own Code of Criminal Law.

The term “genocide” was coined in 1943 by Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) “from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing). In its composition it thus corresponds to such words as tyrannicide, homicide and infanticide.”<sup>10</sup> A Polish Jew, born in what today is Lithuania, Lemkin studied law at the University of Lviv, where he became interested in crimes against groups and, in particular, the Armenian massacres during the First World War. In October 1933, as lecturer on comparative law at the Institute of Criminology of the Free University of

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<sup>9</sup> *Den*, 8 November 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation - Analysis of Government - Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), p. 80.

Poland and Deputy Prosecutor of the District Court of Warsaw, he was invited to give a special report at the 5<sup>th</sup> Conference for the Unification of Penal Law in Madrid.<sup>11</sup> In his report, Lemkin proposed the creation of a multilateral convention making the extermination of human groups, which he called “acts of barbarity,” an international crime.

Ten years later, Lemkin wrote a seminal book on the notion of genocide. The author’s approach was much broader than the one later adopted by the United Nations, as the following excerpt from his book shows:

“Generally speaking, *genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation*, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the *destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups*, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be *disintegration* of the political and social institutions, *of culture, language, national feelings, religion*, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even *the lives of the individuals* belonging to such groups.” [Emphasis added - R.S.]<sup>12</sup>

The annihilation of a national group did not necessarily imply physical extermination of the whole group; the killing of individual members of the group and the destruction of the group’s national foundations were sufficient to constitute genocide. Lemkin’s book became a guiding light for the framers of the United Nations Convention on Genocide.

The Convention voted by the United Nations General Assembly contains 19 articles, dealing mainly with the problems of the prevention and punishment of genocidal activity. Most relevant to our discussion is the preamble and the first two articles. The preamble acknowledges that “at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity,” while the first article declares that genocide is a crime under international law “whether committed in time of peace or in time of war.” The all-important definition of genocide is contained in Article II: “In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts com-

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<sup>11</sup> “Les actes constituant un danger général (interétatique) considérés comme delites du droit des gens,” *Librarie de la cour d’appel et de l’order des advocates* (Paris, 1933).

<sup>12</sup> Lemkin, *ibid.* p. 80.

mitted with *intent* to destroy, in whole or in *part*, a *national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.*" [Emphasis added - R.S.]<sup>13</sup> The delegates of various countries who sat on the drafting committees arrived at this definition after much discussion. It was a compromise, which satisfied few people and continues to be criticized by legal experts, politicians and academics. However, it remains the only legal definition sanctioned by the United Nations General Assembly and operative in international courts.

A major objection to the definition is the restricted number of recognized genocide target groups. Coming in the wake of the Second World War and informed by Lemkin's work and the evidence of the Nazi concentration camps, the definition was necessarily tailored to the Jewish Holocaust. Jews fit all four categories: national, ethnic, racial and religious. They did not form a distinct political or social group, but this was not the reason for the exclusion of the two categories, which, after all, were part of Lemkin's concern. The exclusion of social and political groups from the Convention, to which Luchterhandt alluded, was the result of the Soviet delegation's intervention. Today, the limitation of the definition to the four categories of victims implies that one cannot argue for the recognition of a specific Ukrainian genocide if its victims are identified only as farmers. Since it is clear that of the four human groups listed by the Convention, the Ukrainians did not become victims of the famine because of their religious or racial traits, this leaves the two other categories — "national" and "ethnic(al)", on which the case for genocide must be built.

There has always been a certain ambiguity about the distinction between the two groups labeled "nation" and "ethnic(al)" by the Convention. William Schabas, internationally recognized legal expert on genocide, believes that all four categories overlap, since originally they were meant to protect minorities. He argues that "national minorities" is the more common expression in Central and Eastern Europe, while "ethnic minorities" prevails in the West.<sup>14</sup> But if both terms were used to designate the same group then there would be redundancy, a fact that Schabas fails to account for.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html>

<sup>14</sup> William A. Schabas, *Genocide in International Law. The Crime of Crimes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), "Chapter 3. Groups protected by the Convention".

A recent court case cited by Schabas provides, in my opinion, a more appropriate interpretation of “national group”: “According to the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the term ‘national group’ refers to ‘a collection of people who are perceived to share a legal bond based on common citizenship, coupled with reciprocity of rights and duties’.”<sup>15</sup> What we have here is a “civic nation” formed by all the citizens of a given state, regardless of their ethnic, racial or other differentiation, as distinct from “ethnic nation,” or people belonging to the same ethnic community, who may or may not live within the same state. Relevant to this discussion is a statement made in 1992 by a Commission of Experts, applying the Genocide Convention to Yugoslavia: “a given group can be defined on the basis of its regional existence ... all Bosnians in Sarajevo, irrespective of ethnicity or religion, could constitute a protected group.”<sup>16</sup> The “regional” group is thus analogous to a civic nation. Such a clarification of the terms “national” and “ethnicity” in reference to the term “group” used by the United Nations document removes all ambiguity and redundancy in the Convention. It also helps our understanding of the role of the government-induced starvation during the Ukrainian genocide, a policy directed against the Ukrainians farmers — as citizens of the Ukrainian SSR and a specific ethnic group in the UkrSSR and RSFSR.

According to the United Nations Convention, the decisive element in the crime of genocide is the perpetrator’s intent to destroy a human group identified by one of the four traits mentioned above. When applying this notion in concrete cases, certain aspects of the question of intent must be taken into consideration. First, it is not an easy task to document intent, for as Leo Kuper pointedly remarked, “governments hardly declare and document genocidal plans in the manner of the Nazis.”<sup>17</sup> This is particularly true with reference to the totalitarian Communist regime. Yet, documents, which directly reveal Stalin’s criminal intent, have survived in Soviet archives and are now available; furthermore, there is also a large body of circumstantial evidence, which points in the same direction.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, contrary to a common misapprehension, the Convention’s definition of genocide is not predicated on the intent to destroy the *whole*

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>17</sup> Leo Kuper, *Genocide. Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (Penguin, 1981), p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> On circumstantial evidence, see Ellman, *op. cit.* pp. 829-830.

group; it is sufficient that the desire to eliminate concern only a part of the group. The Convention thus implies the possibility of victim selection within the designated group. Practical application to the Ukrainian case would mean the recognition of the probability that the choice of victims was limited to a sizable portion of the Ukrainian farmers and the more nationally conscious elements of the Ukrainian cultural and political elites, both in Ukraine and in the RSFSR. Most of the victims of the genocide were starved to death, but others were executed or perished in the Gulag.

Thirdly, the Convention (Article II) lists five ways in which the crime is executed:

1. Killing members of the group;
2. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to the members of the group;
3. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
4. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
5. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

It should be noted that while the first and the third points specify physical annihilation, the other three speak of weakening the group, or what Lemkin referred to as the *destruction of essential foundations of the life of national group*. All of these acts can be documented in the Ukrainian experience.

Fourthly, the Convention does not demand the establishment of the motive behind the crime, even though knowing the reasons for a crime can help to establish the criminal's intent. The Soviet delegate contested this omission during the framing of the Convention, arguing that "a crime against a human group became a crime of genocide when that group was destroyed for national, racial, or religious motives"<sup>19</sup>. A compromise was found and to the enumeration of the four victim groups the committee added the qualifier "as such". The lack of precision was convenient for it allowed each country to give its own interpretation to the clause. The Soviet side explained this addition as recognition that "in cases of genocide, the members of a group would be exterminated *solely*,

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted by Schabas, *op. cit.* P. 248.

because they belonged to that group"<sup>20</sup>. This interpretation became part of the Soviet definition of genocide and has persisted in the post-Soviet Ukraine until the present day. The online Great Ukrainian Dictionary defines genocide as "destruction of distinct groups of population for racial, national or religious motives".<sup>21</sup> This explains why Ukrainian scholars today focus on the question "why Stalin destroyed?"<sup>22</sup>, while the Convention demands proof of Stalin's *intent* to destroy.

The analysis offered by Schabas is close to that of the old Soviet position. While admitting that "there is no explicit reference to motive in article II of the Genocide Convention" and pointing out that "intent and motive are not interchangeable notions"<sup>23</sup>, Schabas nevertheless focuses on the expression "as such", and insists that the crime of genocide must be "motivated by hatred of the group"<sup>24</sup>. To a large extent this is so. With the help of a criminal ideology, perpetrators of genocide can transform a targeted group into an object of blind hate, which then, in itself, becomes a motive for total or selective destruction of members of that group. In other words, members of a group "X" become singled out for destruction because they are members of that group. As Lemkin wrote: "Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group."<sup>25</sup> However, there are underlying motives, which bring about group hatred, and these do not disappear — they are only pushed into the background.

Two Canadian scholars with long experience in genocidal studies have divided genocides into four groups according to the objectives of the perpetrators:

1. To eliminate a real or potential threat;
2. To spread terror among real or potential enemies;
3. To acquire economic wealth; or

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* P. 249.

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.slovyk.net/> The absence of the term "ethnic" from the definition is explained by the common usage in Eastern Europe to label as "national" what in the West would be called "ethnic".

<sup>22</sup> S. Kulchytsky titled a recent article "Why Stalin destroyed Ukrainians?" (Den'. Nov. 2005).

<sup>23</sup> Schabas, p. 245.

<sup>24</sup> Schabas, p. 255.

<sup>25</sup> Lemkin. *Ibid.* P. 80.

4. To implement a belief, a theory or an ideology.<sup>26</sup>

All these aims were present in the Ukrainian genocide: a) to avert the threat to the integrity of the Soviet empire from the Ukrainian national revival; b) to terrorize the Ukrainian people into submission to Stalin's will; c) to seize Ukrainian grain to feed Soviet industrial centers and export abroad; d) to eradicate the vestiges of capitalist economy and consolidate socialism.

Mention should be made of five other expressions that are often used in connection with the Ukrainian famine: artificial famine, famine-genocide, Holodomor, Holocaust and terror-famine (or terror by famine). The first designation corresponds to the oldest description of how the Ukrainians saw the event - a famine artificially created by the Communist regime. The second appellation is of a more recent usage; it reflects the desire of the Ukrainians to secure appropriate international recognition of the crime. Holodomor combines two words, *holod* - hunger/famine and *moryty* - to exhaust, to kill; it has come to signify "deliberate extermination by starvation", and in this sense has entered other languages. Holocaust (original meaning - immolation by fire) is used by some Ukrainians by analogy to the Jewish genocide but Ukrainians consider it inappropriate for the Ukrainian famine. Finally, "terror famine" was used by Robert Conquest<sup>27</sup> and then popularized in Ukrainian historical literature by Stanislav Kulchytsky. The designation is, in my opinion, a misnomer, and should be avoided, particularly in Western languages, where the term has a different connotation than it had in the Soviet Union and has survived in the post-Soviet Ukrainian lexicon. The online Ukrainian dictionary defines terror as "the most severe form of struggle with political and class adversaries with the application of violence up to physical annihilation".<sup>28</sup> But this is not the basic understanding of the term "terror" in the West, where it usually connotes "extreme fear".

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<sup>26</sup> Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide. Analyses and Case Studies* (New Haven and London : Yale University Press, 1990), p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Conquest. *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*. U. of Alberta Press, 1986.

<sup>28</sup> In the Soviet Union, the term "terror" had a specific ideological coloring, which has survived in Ukraine and which explains Kulchytsky's predilection for the word. Oxford Dictionary of Current English (1993) defines "terror" as "extreme fear", "organized intimidation" and explains that it comes from the Latin *terreo* - to frighten.

## Prelude to Stalin's Revolution

In his programmatic "Political Report of the Central Committee", read at the XV Party Congress, on 3 December 1927, Stalin characterized the international situation as "the eve of a new revolutionary upsurge both in the colonies and in the metropolises." He then affirmed that, "*the period of 'peaceful co-existence' is receding into the past, giving place to a period of imperialist assault and preparation for intervention against U.S.S.R.[Stalin's emphasis]*". Implied was the need of the Soviet Union to prepare for the eventuality. Always ready to invoke the authority of his mentor, Stalin reminded his audience: "We must not forget Lenin's statement that as regards our work of construction very much depends upon whether we succeed in postponing war with the capitalist world, *which is inevitable*, but which can be postponed either until the moment when the proletarian revolution in Europe matures, or until the moment when the colonial revolutions have fully matured, or, lastly until the moment when the capitalists come to blows over the division of the colonies.[emphasis added - R.S.]"<sup>29</sup> Stalin's continued belief in the inevitability of war and his allusion as to the eventual initiator of the conflict are noteworthy. The capitalist world would attack the Soviet Union, but all three of the envisaged scenarios for the outbreak of war show the latter in an advantageous position. One could hardly believe that the Soviet Union would ignore such favorable conditions and would wait to be invaded, rather than take the initiative to spread the socialist revolution abroad. The thesis of a victorious defensive war ending was picked up by the Commissar for National Defense. K. Voroshilov stressed the need to organize "such defense of the Soviet Union [...] that would guarantee a *victorious retaliation* to the united forces of our eventual adversaries" [emphasis added - R.S.].<sup>30</sup> What the Soviet leaders were hinting at was, in fact, a "preventive war" in which, as Stalin explained ten years later, the Bolsheviks would take the initiative and attack first, "if the war was just, if the situation was propitious, if the conditions were favorable".<sup>31</sup>

The passages from Stalin's speech, shows that far from abandoning the idea of world revolution, Stalin's "socialism in one country" was only a preliminary stage for a much greater undertaking. Stalin realized that

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<sup>29</sup> J.V. Stalin. Works. Vol. 10. Moscow, 1954. Pp. 291, 295, 296.

<sup>30</sup> Quotation in S.V. Kulchytsky. *Ukraina mizh dvoma viinamy (1921-1939)*. Kyiv, 1999. P.143.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. P. 144.

the Bolsheviks' initial attempt to export their revolution into Europe failed primarily because of the weakness of the Red Army. After triumphing over Trotsky and the Left opposition, and consolidating his personal power at the 15th Party Congress, Stalin could turn his energies to the transformation of his sprawling empire into an industrial giant and a military superpower. But, as Voroshilov had pointed out, this would have to be done, "based on our resources".

Soviet industrial development demanded a huge outlay of capital. But since the West would not lend to a country that refused to honor old tsarist debts, the U.S.S.R. would have to finance her projects with her own resources, by exporting raw materials. Traditionally the tsarist empire sold huge quantities of grain and Stalin decided to do the same. However, Soviets exports were meager. In a lecture delivered on 28 May 1928 to the students of the Institute of Red Professors, the Communist Academy and the Sverdlov University, Stalin examined the unsatisfactory situation in Soviet foreign trade and gave his solution the problem, based on the analysis of the following table:<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Pravda, 2 June 1928. All quotations from that lecture are taken from J.V. Stalin. *Works*. Vol. 12. Moscow, 1955. Emphasis added by R.S. Note, throughout the text the author uses, when referring to the weight of grain, abbreviation "m.p." This means "million of poods". One pood = 36 lbs. One pood of grain could sustain one person for a month.

## GRAIN PRODUCTION IN TSARIST RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET UNION COMPARED

	Gross Grain Production		Marketable Grain (sold outside the village)		
	Millions of poods	%	Millions of poods	%	% of grain marketed
<b>Pre-war</b>					
Landlords [large estates]	600	12.0	281.6	21.6	<b>47.0</b>
Kulaks	1,900	38.0	650.0	50.0	34.0
Middle & poor farmers	2,500	50.0	369.0	28.4	14.7
<b>Total</b>	5,000	100.0	1,300.6	100.0	26.0
<b>Post-war (1926-27)</b>					
State & collective farms	80.0	1.7	37.8	6.0	<b>47.2</b>
Kulaks	617.0	13.0	126.0	20.0	20.0
Middle & poor farmers	<b>4,052.0</b>	85.3	466.2	74.0	11.2
<b>Total</b>	4,749.0	100.0	630.0	100.0	<b>13.3</b>

Statistics showed, argued Stalin, that at the height of the New Economic Policy the Soviet Union produced almost as much grain as did the tsarist empire before the war. Yet, he complained, "the amount of marketable grain we are producing is only one half, and the amount we are exporting is only about one-twentieth, of the pre-war figure"<sup>33</sup>. The Soviet Union finds itself in a situation where "the slow development of the output of our agriculture *for the market*" is "accompanied by a rapid increase in the demand for *marketable grain*". The increase in demand for commercial grain (sold outside the village) came from the growing urban centers, the expanding industrial work force and the need to pay for foreign machinery and technology.

Before the revolution, it had been the big landlords and the rich farmers (kulaks), who delivered 47% and 34% of their produce respectively to the market and together satisfied 72% of market demands. Mid-

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<sup>33</sup> In 1913, Russia exported 10.5 million tons of wheat. Progressive Policy Institute. *Trade Fact of the Week*. July 2, 2003. [http://www.ppionline.org/ppi\\_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=108&subsecID=900003&contentID=251846](http://www.ppionline.org/ppi_ci.cfm?knlgAreaID=108&subsecID=900003&contentID=251846)

In 1926-27 fiscal year, USSR exported 153 million poods (2.5 million tons), but in 1927-28 only 27 million poods (less than half million tons).

dle and poor farmers could only sell 15% of their production and supplied only 28% of the market needs. After the revolution, as poor farmers appropriated more land, the privately owned landed estates disappeared and kulak holdings were diminished. Under the NEP, large landholding belonged to state and collective farms, which, together with the kulaks, now provided respectively 47% and 20% of their produce for the market. But this did not amount to much, as they only produced 15 % of all the grain. The middle and poor farmer now harvested 85 % of the grain, but only sold 11% of it outside the village. What had happened, but what Stalin failed to mention, was that the farmer was keeping more grain for himself, eating better and feeding his family more adequately, but contravening the main goal Stalin set for Soviet agriculture, which was the financing of industry and not farmer welfare.

Stalin could not openly attack farmer consumption, so he blamed the paucity of marketable grain on the decline of large farms: "The reason is primarily and chiefly [...] the passing from large-scale landlord and large-scale kulak farming, which provided the largest amount of marketable grain, to small- and middle-farmer farming, which provides the smallest amount of marketable grain." Stalin's solution was the reduction and, eventually, the elimination of middle and small farms. Since a socialist state could not patronize the kulak, large-scale farming that should replace the small exploitations could only be collective and state farms. In 1928 Stalin still spoke of a gradual transition: the kulak would be taxed more heavily, the middle and poor farmers would be helped to raise the yield of marketable grain, and collectivization was to be encouraged not enforced. Stalin expected the increase the yield of collective farms within several years to the point of getting an additional 100 million poods of grain for the State. An equal amount of additional procurement would come from the enlarged state farms, and the same quantity from the remaining individual farmer farms. "Thus", concluded Stalin, "the state can in three or four years' time have at its disposal 250-300 million additional poods [4-5 million tons - R.S.] of marketable grain".

It is important to note that Stalin's immediate and overriding goal was not to augment the overall amount of grain that Soviet agriculture could produce, but to increase the amount that the state could extract from it. It is in this light that he saw the role of large-scale farming, which would "employ machines, scientific methods, fertilizers to increase the productivity of labor, and thus to *produce the maximum quantity of marketable grain.*" Collectivization would bring agriculture under

state control and allow the government to take greater quantities of grain, regardless of whether the actual production rose or fell. State procurement, or obligatory sale of grain to the state, at ludicrously low price, by both the collective and individual farmers, became the leitmotif of the "Stalin revolution" in agriculture. Stalin realized that most farmers would oppose collectivization, and that the hostility would be particularly fierce in Ukraine and in regions, like the Kuban that had not known the traditional Russian *obshchina*, or farmer commune. He was not ignorant of the fact that strong opposition would inevitably hinder farm work and reduce overall production. That is the reason why he did not stress the total agricultural production but only the *marketable* part of it, that is — the part taken by the state. Pushing Lenin's unfinished socialist revolution to its ultimate denouement in the countryside would serve Stalin's other ambitions: direct control over the farmers and wealth they produced.

Stalin anticipated opposition to collectivization from the Russian farmers for economic reasons, but he could expect even more hostility from the Ukrainian agriculturalists, who would be expected to provide a major portion of the marketable grain and who would sense a national dimension in the regime's new policy. Ukrainians formed the biggest national minority of the multiethnic Soviet empire and their role was particularly significant in the agricultural domain. The official results of the 1926 census put the whole Soviet population at 147,027,000, of which 77,791,000 (52.9%) were ethnic Russians and 31,195,000 (21.2%) ethnic Ukrainians. Of the Ukrainians, 22,927,000 (73.5%) lived in the Ukrainian SSR and 8,268,000 (26.5%) in the rest of the USSR. In Ukraine, the titular nation formed 80.6% of the republic's population of 28,446,000. 20,428,000 ethnic Ukrainians lived in the Ukrainian countryside, where they formed 89.0% of the republic's ethnic Ukrainians and 88.5% of its rural population. Most of the ethnically Ukrainian population in the rest of USSR lived along the Ukrainian border. There were over 3 million Ukrainians in the Northern Caucasus Territory, of which some 900,000 lived in the Kuban okruh, where they formed 62% of the population. Another 500,000 lived in the Don okruh and formed 44% of the population. Ukrainians lived in compact settlements in RSFSR and were also overwhelmingly engaged in agriculture. Ukrainian agriculturalists constituted an important segment of the overall Soviet population and were especially prominent in the black-earth belt, where collectivization would have the gravest consequences since it was the main area producing the highly prized "marketable" grain.

Stalin was well aware of the threat to the unity of authoritarian states from repressed or disgruntled national minorities. On 30 March 1925 he delivered a lecture to the Yugoslav section of the Comintern on the national question in that multiethnic state. Invoking the Russian example, the Gensec discussed two important aspects of the subject: a) the place of the national question in revolutionary movements, and b) the link between the national and the farmer questions. He acknowledged "the inherent strength of the national movement" and its "profoundly popular and profoundly revolutionary character".<sup>34</sup> He told the Yugoslavs that the national question was "in essence, a farmer question". Conversely, the farmer question was "the basis, the quintessence, of the national question". Furthermore, "the farmers constitutes the main army of the national movement", and "there is no powerful national movement without the farmer army". "That is what is meant", theorized the Russified Georgian, "when it is said that, *in essence*, the national question is a farmer question." Stalin's convoluted explanation made one thing clear: farmers' potential in constituting a national army had to be reckoned with.

Important to our appreciation of Stalin's understanding of the national question is his insistence on the fact that the national question was a farmer question and not just an agrarian one, for, as he explained, "these are two different things". The scope of the national question "includes such questions as national culture, national statehood, etc" and thus cannot be limited to the farmer's agrarian interests. Stalin's recognition of the farmer's distinct economic and social functions is noteworthy. It shows that he realized that the farmer's sphere was not limited to the material world. Besides their economic interests farmers had a cultural, social and political life, which they shared with their fellow countrymen from other social classes. This must be kept in mind when discussing the forced starvation of Ukrainian farmers, for they were attacked not only as grain growers but also as the latent "main army of the national movement", seeking "national statehood". It is in this perspective that the appropriateness of the accusation of genocide becomes apparent.

Finally, Stalin coached the Yugoslavs in the proper way to take advantage of the national question in revolutionary movement. It was imperative "to include in the national program a special point on the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to secede". Lest the

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<sup>34</sup> All quotations from J. V. Stalin, "Concerning the National Question in Yugoslavia," in *Works*, vol. 7 (Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1954), pp. 71-72. Emphasis in the original except where indicated.

Yugoslavs understand this as endorsement of Croat separatism, Stalin hastened to add: " the *right* to secede must not be understood as an *obligation*" [Stalin's emphasis - R.S.] for "a nation may take advantage of this right and secede, but it may also forgo the right". The latter decision was taken "here in Russia", claimed Stalin. This was more than stretching the truth: Bolshevik Russia did not relinquish the colonial empire of the Romanovs. The only right to self- determination that the Bolsheviks did not challenge was the former Russian colonies' right to reintegrate the new Sovietized Russia. Seceding republics were quickly invaded by the Red Army and only a few managed to save their independence. Ukraine was conquered by the Red Army and incorporated as a seemingly independent Ukrainian SSR, but foreign occupation was only too evident from the dominance of non-Ukrainians in the Party and State cadres<sup>35</sup>.

To gain acceptance of its rule, the Communist Party introduced a policy of "indigenization" (putting roots) of the regime, which in regions inhabited by Ukrainians took the form and the name of "Ukrainization". In practice, it meant recruiting Ukrainian cadre for local administration and using the Ukrainian language in the mass media, education and local administration. Ukrainization had several important effects: a) it promoted the use of the Ukrainian language, b) it favored the development of Ukrainian culture, c) it helped Ukrainize previously Russified urban and industrial centers of Ukraine, and d) it strengthened national consciousness. Although Ukrainization helped gradually erase Ukrainians' awareness of foreign occupation, voices were raised about Ukraine being economically exploited by Russia and Ukrainian writers began turning to the West for inspiration, while Ukrainian politicians made claims on Moscow, demanding the transfer of predominantly Ukrainian regions of the RSFSR<sup>36</sup>. The Ukrainization program encompassed the Ukrainian population living outside Ukraine. M. Skrypnyk, Ukraine's Commissar of Education, used his commissariat to help with the Ukrainization of the Ukrainian minority in the RSFSR. Kuban', where the descendants of the Zaporozhian Cossacks had set up a short-lived Ukrainophile Kuban Rada

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<sup>35</sup> The composition of the KP(b)U in 1922 showed that Ukrainians composed only 23.3 % of the membership. Russians: 53.6 %; Jews 13.6 %, others: 9.5 %. No Ukrainian ever headed the KP(b)U under Stalin. Bohdan Krawchenko. *Social change and national consciousness in twentieth-century Ukraine*. Edmonton, 1987.

<sup>36</sup> James Mace. *Communism and the dilemmas of national liberation: national communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933*. Cambridge, Mass., 1983.

in 1918, opened Ukrainian schools and began using the Ukrainian language in the public domain. Soviet Ukraine was becoming a "Piedmont" not only for the Ukrainian lands in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania, but also for the adjoining regions of the RSFSR.<sup>37</sup> Stalin could not be oblivious to this national revival in Ukraine, nor could he ignore the danger, under these conditions, of an all-out war on the farmers.

### **Stalin's War Against the Farmers**

The decision to establish a Five-Year Plan for the National Economy was taken at the XV Party Congress in December of 1927. Due consideration was given to agriculture; the congress called for "accelerated work on land management", "the transformation of all agriculture to a higher level", and "the introducing collective methods of farming".<sup>38</sup> The state would not "refrain from taking funds from the village in order to build industry; that, at the present time, would slow down the rate of development and would upset the balance to the detriment of the country's industrialization." But the transfer of funds from agriculture to industry would have to be moderate so as not to cause a "political break with the farmers".<sup>39</sup> At the same time, the Party declared that it would achieve its goals by applying the old Bolshevik tactic: "relying on the poor farmers, a firm alliance with the middle farmers, and an offensive against the kulak".<sup>40</sup> The stage was thus being set for the Stalin revolution, and in preparation for eventual farmer opposition to it, the regime began confiscating in 1927 the small arms that the farmers had kept since the turbulent years of the Bolsheviks' struggle for power. Having expelled Trotsky and Zinoviev, and discredited the leftists in the Party, Stalin could not yet adopt a more radical leftist economic platform for fear of alienating his interim allies on the right. The break would come two years later.

At the November 1929 Plenum of the Central Committee, Stalin successfully eliminated Bukharin and the moderate right, and launched an all-out campaign for industrialization and collectivization. The published resolution presented the drive for collectivization as a response to the spontaneous movement of the farmers. "*In actual fact*, we are experi-

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<sup>37</sup> On the "Piedmont principle" see Terry Martin. *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca and London, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Robert H. McNeal (ed.). Resolutions and decisions of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Vol. 3. Toronto, U of T. Press, 1974. P. 323.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. P. 320.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. P. 324.

encing such a turbulent growth of collectivization and such a headlong rush to socialist forms of agriculture on the part of the poor and middle farmer holding that the kolkhoz movement has already reached the point of transition *to total collectivization of entire districts*."<sup>41</sup> The document claimed that the number of households in kolkhozes rose from 445,000 in 1927-28 to 1,040,000 in 1928-29. The plenum decided to mobilize 25,000 specially selected industrial workers to help with the organization and management of kolkhozes. Most were young party activists; they were assigned chairmanships of large kolkhozes or given other administrative jobs. Additional cadres were periodically dispatched, and by the spring of 1930 Ukraine had some 50,000 activists with special powers to organize, punish, and terrorize the farmers.

Collectivization was at the heart of a revolution aimed at solving several problems at the same time. In terms of Marxist-Leninist ideology, the New Economic Theory (NEP), Lenin's "strategic retreat", would be stopped and socialism (kolhospnyky called it serfdom) would be brought to the remaining vast majority of the Soviet citizenry. The Machine and Tractor Stations, created to service the kolhosps with equipment and technical know-how, facilitated the extension of party control over the countryside by means of reliable personnel, posted in supervisory positions. Collectivization would thus give the Party control over the farmers, which, in contrast to the urban dwellers, had continued until then to lead a relatively autonomous way of life, in both the economic and cultural domains. But the appropriation of agricultural resources by the state remained the most pressing objective. Stalin's ruthless collectivization would soon throw the countryside into a frenzy of reorganization, abuse and repression. The principal loser will be the farmer, demoted from independent producer to agricultural worker, akin to the city proletariat but bound to the more primitive conditions of country life.

On 27 December 1929 Stalin escalated the regime's war against the farmers by declaring that the output of the collective and state farms could now replace that of the kulaks, and announcing a shift "from the policy of *restricting* the exploiting tendencies of the kulaks to the policy of *eliminating the kulaks as a class*".<sup>42</sup> On the instigation of the GPU, the Ukrainian Politburo adopted a resolution on 23 January 1930, to liquidate the kulaks and set up a commission headed by Stanislaw Kosior, the

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<sup>41</sup> Resolutins Vol. 4. P. 25. Emphasis in the original text.

<sup>42</sup> Stalin. *Works*. Moscow, 1955. Vol. 12. P. 474

general secretary of the KP(b)U, with V. Balytsky, L. Postyshev, and two others as members.<sup>43</sup> On 30 January 1930 the Central Committee in Moscow approved a secret resolution for dekulakization and deportation. It stipulated the number of kulak households to be 3 to 5 percent in grain-producing areas and 2 to 3 percent in non-grain-producing regions, and established quotas for each region. Kulaks were further divided into three categories. The first category consisted of "counterrevolutionary kulak activists". They were to be incarcerated in concentration camps, and the most dangerous amongst them — "organizers of terrorist acts, counter-revolutionary action, and insurgent organizations" — were to be executed. Their families could join the deportees or request permission to remain in the region where they were living. The second category consisted of the remaining counterrevolutionary kulak activists, the more affluent kulaks and the semi-gentry (polupomeschchiki); they were subject to deportation to the far corners of the U.S.S.R. or to other destinations in their own regions. The least anti-Soviet elements made up the third category; they would be resettled in their own region, but given land of inferior quality and not allowed to join the collective farms. Two observations are in order: a) political rather than economic criteria was used to define the first and, to some extent, the second category of kulaks; b) the formulation was sufficiently vague to leave room for the initiative of the GPU and for local authorities to interpret them at their discretion. A display of "kulak mentality" by opposing collectivization was enough to rate a poor farmer the category of kulak. In this way the regime could keep the specter of kulaks alive even after their effective demise.

In 1929, only 73 thousand Ukrainian farmsteads (1.4%) employed hired labor — a basic criteria for the kulak category. Yet during the winter of 1930 over 90 thousand Ukrainian households were dekulakized. Obviously, many of the farms belonged to the middle and even poor farmers. Dekulakization continued throughout the whole period of collectivization and in 1934 Kosior reported that 200 thousand farms had finally been dekulakized in Ukraine. With an average of about 5 persons per family this gives a total of one million people. The process was accomplished with much abuse and cruelty from the twenty-five thousands and their local helpers from among the village komsomol and the committees of poor farmers. Dekulized families were thrown out into the

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<sup>43</sup> Vasil'ev & Viola, *Kollektyvnyzatsiia i selianskyi opir na Ukraini (lystopad 1929 – berezen 1930 rr.)* Vinnitsia, 1997. P. 76.

winter cold, their property was stolen, and women were often sexually abused. Many formerly well-off farmers ended up begging and perishing from hunger and cold. The fate of the deportees was as bad if not worse. During the first wave of dekulakization — in the winter and spring of 1930 over 115,000 men, women and children were deported from Ukraine. A smaller group was sent out a year later, but the process was continuous and by end of the period several hundred thousands Ukrainians had been exiled to Northern Russia and Siberia. Deportations were organized like military operations, with the participation of military units, of the GPU and the militia cadets. A great number of the deported, especially children and old people, perished in transition, in the unheated freight trains, and at the inhospitable destination points.

Dekulakization attained several objectives. Seized kulak property went to the collective farms as part of the poor farmers' contribution, and to reward the activists who confiscated it. Expulsion from the village deprived the farmers of the more dynamic elements, who led the opposition to collectivization. Deportation outside Ukraine removed the more nationally conscious element of the population and weakened the republic's capacity to resist the return to a policy of Russification. Deportees provided gratuitous labor for the development of Russian forest industry and eventually the Russified descendants of the survivors would augment the Russian population. At the same time, dekulakization was ruining the well-established farms of Ukraine and Ukrainian agriculture in general. While many poor farmers and agricultural workers sought their own gain from their neighbors' calamity, many other middle and even poor farmers opposed the spoliation of the country, as they opposed forced collectivization of its inhabitants. On the other hand, the threat of inclusion in the doomed kulak class could be, and was, used by the authorities to drive middle and poor farmers into collective farms, and by unscrupulous activists to exact all sorts of favors and services from the frightened farmers who refused to join the kolkhoz.

Mounting state violence applied to collectivization produced desired results. In November 1929, out of the total of 5,144,800 Ukrainian households, only 522,500, or 10.4 % were members of collective farms. Plans for Ukraine, worked out in Moscow in November 1929, foresaw the collectivization of 33.8 % of the households for the summer 1930, and 53.8 % for the fall of that year. But the increased tempo of both the constantly adjusted plan and the work on the ground pushed the percentage of collectivized households to 30.7 % by 1 February 1930 and to

62.8 % (and 68.5 % of arable land) a month later. The spectacular success was achieved with unbridled violence and at the cost of many farmer lives. The regime had created a reign of terror in the village. Some of the abuses even made it into official reports of the more conscientious inspectors. V. Balytsky reported that in the south of Ukraine collectivization went under such slogans as "let them all die, but we will collectivize the okruh [administrative unit - RS] to 100 %".<sup>44</sup> The farmers reacted with passive and active resistance. Many fled to urban and industrial centers, notably to the mines of Donbas. Enforcers of dekulakization and collectivization were attacked. Anti-Soviet posters appeared, with social, political and national content. Between 20 November 1929 and 7 April 1930 the authorities picked up 834 fliers (in 349 versions) with such messages as: "Free Ukraine from Moscow rule", "Time to rise against Moscow yoke" "Mazepa was a great Hetman", "Ukraine is perishing my brothers Ukrainians", "Petliura told us the truth — time to wake up, time to rise"<sup>45</sup> Women often lead the opposition to the formation of kolkhozes, and later in their dismantling, hoping that the authorities would be more tolerant towards them than to their men folk. Riots turned into widespread uprisings, and by the end of February 1930 they engulfed the Dnipropetrovsk, Sumy, Starobilsk and other regions of Ukraine. The military had to be used to quell the disturbances; in Shepetivka, for example, soldiers killed or wounded 49 farmers and were left behind 15 dead of their own. Other parts of the Soviet Union were also thrown into convulsions; Stalin decided it was time for a tactical reprieve.

On 2 March 1930, *Pravda* carried Stalin's article "Dizziness from Success". Looking for scapegoats for the turmoil he caused, the Gensec accused the cadres of letting success go to their heads and blamed local "overzealous socializers" for all the excesses. He reminded them that collective farms "must not be established by force" and stressed that conditions were "not yet ripe for agricultural communes", which, in fact, he favored and which were being forced on the farmers. The "*predominant* form at the present moment [...] is the *agricultural artel*", Stalin ex-

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<sup>44</sup> Valerii Vasil'ev, Linn Viola. *Kollektyvizatsiia i selians'kyi opir na Ukraini* (lystopad-1929 — berezen 1930 r.r.). Vinnytsia, 1997. P. 195.

<sup>45</sup> Liudmyla Hrynevych, "Vyavlennia natsionalnoi identychnosti ukrainskoho selianstva v roky kolektyvizatsii" *Holod 1932-1933 rokiv v Ukraini*. Kyiv, 2003. Pp. 421-422. The section (pp. 416-429) provides interesting information on the national consciousness and feelings of the Ukrainian farmers during the period from 1928 to 1933.

plained. Stalin's declaration did not reassure the farmers. In Ukraine disturbances spread towards the Rumanian and Polish borders, and by 10 March 1930 they were recorded in 110 raions. On 15 March *Pravda* published the CC VKP(b) resolution "On the Struggle against Distortions of the Party Line in the Kolkhoz Movement". Stressing once more "the *voluntary* principle in kolkhoz construction", the document reiterated the basic agricultural problem, namely "the *grain* problem". It condemned what it called the distortions in applying the party line by the cadres, because "the continued *rapid growth* of the kolkhoz movement, and the *liquidation of the kulaks* as a class, are *impossible* without the immediate liquidation of these distortions". In other words, rapid collectivization and the destruction of the kulaks were to be pursued, but the farmers had to be prevailed upon to make it an expression of their will.

Gradually, the farmers began taking Stalin's "Dizziness from success" pronouncement and the new party directives literally and to abandon en masse the unpopular collective farms. In the process, they took with them their cattle, their farming implements, and their land. In the next six months 65 % of the collectivized households left the kolkhosps:

#### DECOLLECTIVIZATION IN UKRAINE: 1930<sup>46</sup>

<u>Date</u>	<u>collectivized farms %</u>	<u>collectivized arable land</u>
10 March	64.4	70.9
10 April	44.3	53.2
1 May	41.3	49.8
1 June	36.1	45.8
1 August	29.5	36.5
1 September	28.4	34.8
1 October	28.7	34.1

The precipitous decollectivization was a spectacular condemnation of the kolkhosps by the farmers. But the collectivization drive was only slowed down, not abandoned, for while the tactics changed, the main objectives remained the same: industrialization was paramount, it needed capital obtained from export, which in turn required collectivization of agriculture to facilitate increased procurement of so-called commercial grain.

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<sup>46</sup> *Holod 1932-1933 rokiv v Ukraini*. Op. cit. P. 377.

Industrialization remained the strategic imperative to which Stalin returned from time to time in his allocutions. Addressing Soviet industrial managers on 4 February 1931, he complained that the Soviet Union was still lagging 50 to 100 years behind the advanced countries and warned of the consequences that awaited weak states. Appealing to Russian patriotism, he illustrated his point with lessons from the country's past: "One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered because of her backwardness. She was beaten by the Mongol khans [...] the Turkish beys [...] the Swedish feudal lords [...] the Polish and Lithuanian gentry [...] the British and French capitalists [...] the Japanese barons. All beat her because of her backwardness, military backwardness, cultural backwardness, political backwardness, industrial backwardness, agricultural backwardness."<sup>47</sup> It was incumbent on the Soviet Union to increase the tempo of its industrial development and catch up to the advanced states, especially since the U.S.S.R. had become the fatherland not only for the Soviet workers and farmer, but also for the world proletariat. "It is said," claimed Stalin, "that our country is the shock brigade of the proletariat of all countries. [...] We are engaged on a cause which, if successful, will transform the whole world and free the entire working class. [...] We must march forward in such a way that the working class of the whole world, looking at us, may say: There you have my advanced detachment, my shock brigade, my working-class state power, *my fatherland* [...]"<sup>48</sup>

Before sending the individual farmers off to free the "proletariat of the world", the Soviet authorities cajoled and coerced them back to the kolkhozes. By 10 March 1931 48.5 % of Ukrainian households were collectivized with 52.7 % of the arable land and the figures rose to 68.0 % and 72.0% respectively, seven months later. By October of the same year 87% of the households of the steppe region, the main source of Ukraine's grain, was collectivized. By the end of 1931, when the first wave of massive famine broke out, most of Ukraine's farmers had lost their individual farms.

Various methods were used to force the farmers to join the kolkhozes. Middle farmers were threatened with being declared kulaks and deported. Village meetings were convened and the farmers ordered to vote for the kolkhozes. Stubbornly defiant were threatened with confisca-

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<sup>47</sup> Pravda. 5 February 1931. J.V. Stalin. *Works*. Vol. 13. Moscow 1955. P. 40. Emphasis added by R.S.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* P. 42. Emphasis added.

tion, exile, and even execution. Terror and lawlessness reigned in the countryside. Various forms of physical abuse were used (beatings, locking naked in unheated jails, etc.). Local activists and their henchmen from the committees of poor farmers lorded over the defenseless farmers. Various economic pressures were used as well. Levels of direct taxation and state procurement were set higher for individual farmers than the kolkhozes. Fields left fallow by individual farmers were confiscated and transferred to the kolkhoz. Arrears in grain deliveries were punished with heavy fines, confiscation and sale of property.

Farmers reacted with active and passive resistance to forceful collectivization, dekulakization and deportation. Villagers organized semi-military groups and violently confronted the authorities. Most numerous and most intensive confrontations took place in the beginning of the collectivization campaign, when the farmers had not yet been weakened by malnutrition and constant struggle. In the early spring of 1930, the OGPU recorded 6,528 mass farmer uprisings in the U.S.S.R., of which 2,945, or 45 %, took place in Ukraine. But the farmers' scythes, pitchforks, axes and some rusty cut-off rifles (authorities had order the confiscation of arms from the farmers back in 1927) were no match for the regular weapons of the OGPU and the Red Army. Still, many bloody skirmishes did take place as the armed resistance of the farmers was gradually eliminated. Many abandoned the countryside and fled to the industrial centers, especially to the Donbas region. Farmers killed their cattle rather than turn them over to the kolkhoz, where the conditions were so poor that the mortality of the farm animals was very high. Cows, which the kolhospynyks were allowed to keep, became the mainstay of many a family, but as the table below shows, only a small minority of families owned one.

PROPERTY OF HORNED CATTLE<sup>49</sup>

Sector	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
Radhosps	58,000	52,500	119,000	507,200	605,00	577,400
Kolhosp	20,300	35,700	330,100	731,400	1,167,900	950,600
Kolhosp member	142,400	287,100	1,175,000	2,757,100	1,958,500	1,970,600
Independent farmer	8,354,200	7,221,700	4,606,400	2,231,900	1,102,700	775,700
Total	8,579,900	7,597,000	6,230,500	6,227,600	4,834,100	4,274,300

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<sup>49</sup> *Holod 1932-1933 rokiv v Ukraini*. P. 455.

Similarly to horned cattle, almost half the horses were lost over the same period, declining from 4,967,200 in 1928 to 2,267,400 in 1933<sup>50</sup>, when only 565,600 of them belonged to individual or collective farmers.

### **Stalin's War Against the Ukrainians**

After the Bolsheviks came to power in Russia, their “war for bread” in Ukraine acquired a national dimension. Two months after the October Revolution in 1917, Karl Radek, a Bolshevik leader, harangued Russian workers with the slogan “If you want food, cry ‘Death to the Rada.’”<sup>51</sup> When Ukraine was reconquered by the Red Army in 1919, Lenin could not hold back his satisfaction: “Now we can get enough grain.”<sup>52</sup> Moscow's draining Ukraine of its grain was the principal reason of the first major famine, which swept southern Ukraine in 1921-1923. For although a severe drought destroyed the harvest of 1921 and 1922 in the grain-producing regions of Ukraine and Russia, it was Moscow's colonialist policy towards Ukraine that was primarily responsible for the death of perhaps as many as a million Ukrainians from hunger and associated afflictions. There was enough food in the Ukrainian republic to ensure the survival of all its inhabitants, but Moscow ordered Ukraine to expedite foodstuffs to Moscow and Petrograd and to alleviate the famine on the Volga. When Moscow appealed to the West for famine relief, it only spoke of Russia. It was due to the persistent pressure from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Commission, concerned about the fate of the large Jewish population in Ukraine, that Ukraine eventually received aid from the West, but only half a year or so after Russia. There is no evidence that the Ukrainian part of this widespread famine was planned by the Soviet authorities, but there is ample proof that they took full advantage of it in their struggle with the Ukrainian national movement.<sup>53</sup> There were other famines, which claimed many lives of the

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, P. 454

<sup>51</sup> *Pravda*, 15 January 1918. Cited by E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*. Vol. I. London, 1966. P. 301.

<sup>52</sup> Lenin, *Sochineniia*. (5th ed.) Vol. 37, P. 468.

<sup>53</sup> For details see: Roman Serbyn, “The Famine of 1921-1923: a Model for 1932-1933?”, in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (eds.), *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*. Edmonton. 1986. Pp. 147-178; R. Serbyn, “The Origin of the Ukrainian Famine of 1921-1923 in the Light of Recent Research”, in W. Isajiw (ed.), *Famine-Genocide in*

Ukrainian people, to mention only those of 1921 – 1923 or 1946 – 1947,<sup>54</sup> but the most costly in human life was the famine of 1932-1933. It is also this famine, which can be characterized as genocide.

As most of the farmers found themselves in kolkhosps, their livelihood became increasingly dependent on the collective farm. By the end of 1931, 90% of the kolkhosps were of the artel type, which the "Dizzy with Success" article had described as "the basic means of production, primarily for grain-farming". In the artel, Stalin explained, "labor, use of the land, machines and other implements, draught animals and farm buildings — are socialized", but "the house-hold plots (small vegetable gardens, small orchards) the dwelling houses, a part of the dairy cattle, small livestock, poultry, etc., are *not socialized*."<sup>55</sup> The "not socialized" sector of the kolkhosp economy was supposed to supplement earnings from the collective farm, which paid their members mainly in kind, and in proportion to earned "labor days" (*trudodni*). As pressure increased on the kolkhosps to fulfill exorbitant grain procurements, payments to the farmers fell in arrears<sup>56</sup> and the latter became completely dependent on the "not socialized" sector, which, however was also subject to taxation. Heaviest taxes fell on those farmers who had remained outside the socialized system. To survive, the kolhospnyks slaughtered their farm animals, "stole" what they could from the farm products they helped to raise, and resorted to surrogates.

By the end of 1931 famine began to break out in the Ukrainian countryside; during the first half of 1932 it spread over the republic, taking in its wake several hundred thousand Ukrainian farmers, and only abated with the coming of new crops. How did the Ukrainian authorities react? On 26 April 1932, Kosior informed Stalin about "individual cases and even individual villages that are starving" but blamed it on "local bungling, errors, particularly in the case of kolkhozes." And, lest he displease his Moscow masters, the boss of Ukraine dismissed the tragedy, affirming, "All talk of famine must be categorically discarded."<sup>57</sup> Yet

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*Ukraine. 1932-1933. Western archives, testimonies and new research.* Toronto, 2003. Pp. 165-183;

<sup>54</sup> See *Holod v Ukraini 1946 – 1947 : Dokumenty i materialy*. Kyiv 1996.

<sup>55</sup> J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 197-205, Foreign Languages Publishing House: Moscow, 1955.

<sup>56</sup> Kosior later admitted that in 1931, 48 % of all collective farms did not pay any *trudodni*. Kulchytsky, Tsina "Velykoho Perelomu". P. 201.

<sup>57</sup> *Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini: ochyma istoriykiv, movoiu dokumentiv*. Kyiv, 1990. P. 148.

famine there was and on 10 June H. Petrovsky, the head of the Ukrainian state and V. Chubar, the head of the Ukrainian government, sent separate letters to notify Molotov and Stalin of the appalling conditions in the Ukrainian countryside, and to ask for help. Chubar admitted that cases of starvation among independent and collective farmers had already been signaled in December and January and that by "March-April there were dozens and hundreds of malnourished, starving, and swollen people and people starving to death accumulating in every village; children and orphans abandoned by their parents appeared". Raions and oblasts organized aid from internal resources, but were obliged to do this "under conditions of acute shortage of food products, especially bread".<sup>58</sup> He further recognized that the 3,000 tons of millet released by the CC VKP(b) in April helped but it was insufficient to liquidate the famine, and if another million poods of foodstuffs are not released by Moscow, the harvesting campaign in Ukraine will be jeopardized. Finally, he drew attention to the kulaks, who had been dekulakized in 1930 but not deported from their regions, and were now drawing support from resentful middle and poor farmers. Worthy of note are two other pieces of information: "Petliurite and other anti-Soviet moods increased. The extraordinary growth of petty and grand larceny is aggravating the situation."

Even more revealing and significant for our understanding of the famine was Petrovsky's letter. He had previously assisted at the sowing in several regions and saw that the obligation to deliver 510 million pood of grain that the Ukrainian authorities had accepted was beyond the republic's capability. Having just returned from an inspection of the countryside, he now realized the catastrophic state in which the farming population found itself. He visited many villages and everywhere saw that a considerable part of the people, mainly the poor and middle farmers, were starving, subsisting on surrogates. Farmers scolded him, posed embarrassing question, reproached him, saying "why did you create an artificial famine, [...] why did you take away the seed material - this did not happen even under the old regime, why is it necessary for Ukrainians to travel for bread [...] to non-grain producing territories?". Echoing Chubar, Petrovsky reported that "because of the famine, mass thefts are developing in the villages, mainly of poultry — [people] steal chickens, ducks, they take potato peels, butcher calves and cows during the night

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<sup>58</sup> All quotations and references to the two letters are taken from *Komandyry velykoho holodu*. Pp.206-215.

and eat them." Pointing out that grain harvest is still six weeks off, and famine will only intensify, Petrovsky asks: "shouldn't assistance be rendered to the Ukrainian countryside in the amount of two or, at the very least, one and a half million poods of grain?" If assistance is not given, he feared, starvation will drive the farmers to pick unripe grain, much of which may perish.

Petrovsky also paints a bleak picture of the forthcoming harvest. Since the better grain that the farmers had put aside for sowing was seized for state procurement, "the sowing was often carried out with seeds of poorer quality," and "the quantity of seeds per hectare was also lower". Thus, even though "the young crops in these raions are good and the fields are free of weeds, the grain is sparse". Petrovsky was also struck by the large amount of unsowed land. Aware of all these problems, the farmers complained to Petrovsky that "the new grain procurements will be even more difficult to meet than last year's". "And this may very well be so", agrees Petrovsky. Much will have to be done to remove the ill effects of the harshness, rudeness, disgraceful practices towards the independent farmers, especially the middle farmer. The brash behavior of the activists, coupled with the famine has brought new support for the dekulakized farmers and made them more aggressive. Finally Petrovsky draws attention to the exodus of Ukrainian farmers. They are forced to seek food beyond the republic's borders, at "the Dno station, in the Central-Black Earth Oblast', in Belarus, and Northern Caucasus", where grain is more readily available, and at much lower prices. Since the exodus clogged up transportation, Petrovsky had suggested that farmers organize group purchases through the co-ops, but the Commissariat of Transport has drastically reduced the sale of train tickets to farmers. Bewildered Ukrainian farmers needed Petrovsky: "Why are they banning trips for grain?"

The two Ukrainian party stalwarts wrote Stalin to alert him to the grave economic situation in Ukraine, secure immediate aid for the starving population, and obtain a reduction in grain procurement plan for the coming harvest. Both complained of abuses during grain collection and the spread of famine, which drove the desperate farmers to larceny and to favorable attitudes to kulaks and Peliurists. If the two leaders believed their pleas and their warnings of turmoil in the Ukrainian countryside would soften Moscow's attitude, they were mistaken. The effect on Stalin, Kaganovich and Molotov was just the opposite. Running the office during Stalin's vacation in Sochi, Kaganovich read the letters first and on

12 June informed his boss of their contents. Criticizing both Ukrainian leaders, he nevertheless admitted that some aid would have to be given to Ukraine, leaving to Stalin the decision as to the amount. In passing he noted that there was no word from Kosior (their man in Kharkiv). In a follow-up note, two days later, Kaganovich informed Stalin that Chubar had arrived to personally plead for help, but that it was decided to give only 50,000 poods to Moldavia, then an autonomous republic in Ukraine. Stalin's response, a day later, was more brutal and more ominous of things to come. He condemned the false "self-criticism" and staged self-righteousness of the two Ukrainian leaders, who only wanted to get "new millions of poods of grain from Moscow" and "a reduction in the plan for grain procurement". Neither plea was acceptable. Ukrainians must mobilize their own forces and resources for already "Ukraine has been given more than it should get".<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, on 16 June the Politburo considered Ukraine's plea and granted 2,000 tons (122,000 pood) of oats from the unused seed loan, 100,000 poods of corn from unused allocation for sowing in Odesa Region, and another 300,000 poods of grain for kolhosps and radhosps in the sugar beet regions — in all 522,000 poods of cereals, or about 8,500 tons.<sup>60</sup> This was much less than the million and a half poods requested by Ukraine, but it undoubtedly saved lives and helped with the farm work.

Politburo's "largesse" must have provoked Stalin's ire, for two days later, in a letter to Kaganovich, Molotov and the Politburo he came back with a harsh criticism of past errors and new instructions for the coming harvest. The Gensec blamed "mechanical equalization", which assigned procurement quotas to the collective farms without taking into account the ability to deliver, and as a result of which, "the *fertile* districts in Ukraine, despite a fairly good harvest, have found themselves in a state of *impoverishment* and *famine*."<sup>61</sup> This is the only known acknowledgement by Stalin of the Ukrainian famine. He criticized regional authorities for being out of touch with the countryside. "The results of these errors are now having an effect on the sowing situation, especially in Ukraine, and several tens of thousands of Ukrainian collective farmers are still traveling around the entire European part of the USSR and are demoral-

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<sup>59</sup> *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 136.

<sup>60</sup> For the allocation of the food aid, see *Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini*. Kyiv, 1990. P. 183, 187-188.

<sup>61</sup> *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 138 (Underlined by Stalin).

izing our farms with their complaints and whining."<sup>62</sup> Stalin proposed a top-level conference to be convened "on the organization of grain procurement and the unconditional fulfillment of the grain-procurement plan", and insisted that the responsibility for grain procurement "be entrusted personally to the first secretaries of the Northern Caucasus, Ukraine" and all the other grain-producing regions. Thus, "unconditional fulfillment of the plan" and "personal responsibility" down the administrative "vertikal" became the watchwords of the grain procurement campaign, which would result in the genocidal famine. On 21 June 1932 a telegram signed by Stalin and Molotov instructed Kharkiv to carry out "at any cost" the plan for grain deliveries for July to September. Two days later, Moscow answered the Ukrainian Politburo's plea for additional 600,000 poods with a terse resolution: "To remain within the limits set by the CC decision already adopted and to bar any additional grain deliveries to Ukraine."<sup>63</sup>

The III Conference of KP(b)U, which opened on 6 July, was wholly devoted to the upcoming harvest and grain procurement. Stalin sent Molotov and Kaganovich to the meeting "to improve the functionaries' mood, isolate the whining and depraved diplomats (no matter who they are!) and ensure genuinely Bolshevik decisions". The Gensec had enough of "Chubar's corruptness and opportunistic essence and Kosior's rotten diplomacy (with regard to the CC of the VKP) and criminally frivolous attitude toward his job". These two were ruining the country and Stalin suggested that they may have to be replaced.<sup>64</sup> Molotov informed the audience that Moscow had lowered Ukraine's quota to 356 m.p. but was adamant that the plan must be carried out in full. Declarations from regional leaders that the farmers were starving, that much land lay fallow, that the previous year 100 to 200 m.p. of grain was lost during harvesting and that this year it would be as high if not higher, did not bend the resolve of Moscow's envoys.<sup>65</sup> They prevailed upon the confer-

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<sup>62</sup> *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 138-139..

<sup>63</sup> *Holod*. 1990. P. 183 (doc. 63), P. 190 (doc. 68).

<sup>64</sup> *The Stalin-Kaganovich correspondence*. P. 152. Stalin comes back to the idea of replacing Kosior and in a letter to Kaganovic, dated 15 July, suggests that the latter should take the job. In the end Stalin kept both Ukrainians in their posts. *Ibid.* p 158.

<sup>65</sup> For a detailed account of the deliberations see *Komandyry velykoho holodu*. Pp. 152-164

ence to adopt a resolution "to carry out in full and unconditionally" the plan of grain delivery.<sup>66</sup>

While Molotov and Kaganovich were bullying the KP(b)U conference into accepting new starvation measures for the Ukrainian farmers, Soviet newspapers were putting aside letters about the encroaching famine. A summary of letters to *Izvestiia TsIK SSSR and VTsIK* for 6 July contains a number of references to the famine in Ukraine, and among them this revealing message, posted in Moscow by an anonymous author:

*"Why is the Ukrainian SSR starving thus? Why do other republics not know such a horrible famine? How do you explain that there is no bread in the bread-producing country, while in the Moscow markets there is as much bread as you want? Why is the party not waging war against the famine? In Ukraine many people are dying from famine, but the party does not want to see what is happening in Ukraine. In the past, even when there was bread, it was not taken away, like they do now. In case of war we shall not defend the Soviet power."*<sup>67</sup>

Stalin was well informed about Ukrainian affairs and it was largely in response to the situation there<sup>68</sup>, as well as in anticipation of new troubles in that republic that he came up with his infamous decree, dubbed by the farmers as "the 5 ears of corn law". Writing on 20 July to Kaganovich and Molotov, the Gensec complains of widespread theft by "dekulakized kulaks" and others, and proposes to formulate a three-part law: a)

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<sup>66</sup> See part of the resolution in *Holod1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini*. Kyiv, 1990. P. 194-198

<sup>67</sup> *Tragedia*. P. 408. Other letter writers take apart the fallacious statements of Bernard Shaw and Sidney Webb denying the famine in the USSR. *Ibid*, p. 413.

<sup>68</sup> A secret OGPU report from around 20 July 1932 stated that "as for anti-Soviet manifestations, Ukraine occupies first place". "From 1 January to 1 July 1932, 118 counterrevolutionary kulak organizations were discovered, counting 2,479 members. In addition, along the lines of national counterrevolution we have unmasked 35 groups with 562 members." *Tragedia*, p. 421. Another secret OGPU report, dated 5 August, contains a section "National counterrevolution (U[krainian]SSR)" which relates the liquidation of 8 nationalist groups, two of which consisted of former members of the outlawed UKP (Ukrainian Communist Party). These people are said to have a leftist program and conduct systematic activity among members of the KP(b)U, arguing that the Soviet authorities are suppressing the Ukrainian culture. In their platform, claims the report, they declare war on the Soviet regime and the Polish fascism, while in fact keeping links abroad and carrying out directives of the Second Department of of the Polish General Staff in Ukraine. *Ibid*. p. 443.

to equalize railroad freight, collective-farm property, and cooperative property with state property; b) make theft of any of this property "punishable by a minimum of ten years' imprisonment, and as a rule, by death"; c) revoke the use of amnesty for the above criminal cases. *All active* agitators against the new collective-farm system" and "profiteers and resellers of goods" should be removed and sent to concentration camps.<sup>69</sup> He also wants stricter controls over the limited kolkhoz trade allowed by a 6 May law (kolkhozes allowed sell their surplus after 15 January, after fulfilling the state procurement plan) and made more liberal on 20 May.<sup>70</sup> " In a follow-up letter a few days later, Stalin provides an ideological argument for his proposed law: in the same way that capitalism could not triumph without first making "private property sacred property", socialism will not finish off capitalism "unless it declares public property (belonging to cooperatives, collective farms or the state) to be sacred and inviolable".<sup>71</sup> Stalin returned to the topic on 26 July, elaborated the three sections of the future law and insisted that "we must act on the basis of law ('the farmer loves legality'), and not merely in accordance with the practice of the OGPU, although it is clear that the OGPU's role here will not only not diminish but, on the contrary, it will be strengthened and 'ennobled' (the OGPU agencies will operate 'on a lawful basis' rather than 'high-handedly')".<sup>72</sup>

The joint Party-State decree "On the Protection of the Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms and Cooperatives, and on the Consolidation of Public (Socialist) Property" was issued on 7 August 1932. It became the chief legal instrument used by the Soviet authorities to condemn millions of farmers to slow death by starvation. It repeated Stalin's declarations that all public property is "sacred and inviolable" and that individuals attempting to take possession of public property should be considered "enemies of the people".<sup>73</sup> All collective farm property, whether in the field or in storage was decreed equal to that of state property and theft was made punishable by execution, which could be reduced to 10-year imprisonment only under mitigating circumstances.

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<sup>69</sup> *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 164-165.

<sup>70</sup> S. Kulchytsky, *Tsina "Velykoho perelomu"*. Kyiv, 1990. P. 296. On 23 July Stalin sent a telegram to Kaganovich demanding the restoration and enforcement of last year's ban on transporting private bread supplies on by rail or water. *Tragedia*, p. 428.

<sup>71</sup> *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 166.

<sup>72</sup> *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 169.

<sup>73</sup> *Tragedia*, p. 453-454.

Advocating withdrawal from the kolkhoz became tantamount to treason and was punished with three to five years' imprisonment in concentration camps. No amnesty could be applied in any of these cases.

The decree on State property was applicable in the whole Soviet Union but its primary role in connection with Ukraine was underscored in Stalin's letter to Kaganovich, sent just four days later. Stalin ordered the drafting of "a letter-directive from the CC to party and judiciary and punitive organizations about the point of these decrees and the methods for implementation".<sup>74</sup> He considered the task "absolutely imperative" because the law was "good" and would "soon have an impact". The Gensec then addressed the Ukrainian problem. The passage is highly revealing:

"The most important thing right now is Ukraine. Ukrainian affairs have hit rock bottom. Things are bad with regard to the *party*. There is talk that in two regions of Ukraine (it seems in the Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk regions) about 50 raion party committees have spoken out *against* the grain-procurements plan, deeming it *unrealistic*. It is said that the situation in other raion party committees is no better. What does this resemble? This is not a party but a parliament, a caricature of a parliament. Instead of *leading* the raions, Kosior kept *maneuvering* between the directives of the CC VKP and the demands of the raion party committees — and finally has maneuvered himself into a total mess. [...] Things are *bad* with the soviets. Chubar is no leader. Things are *bad* with the GPU. Redens is not up to leading the fight against the counterrevolution in such a large and distinctive republic as Ukraine. [underlined and doubly underlined in original - R.S.]"

Then Stalin brandishes the specter of Ukrainian separatism that haunted many a Russian imperialist: "If we don't undertake at once to straighten out the situation in Ukraine, we may lose Ukraine." He reminds Kaganovich that Pilsudski was not napping and that his agents were stronger than Redens, the head of the GPU in Ukraine, and Kosior, Ukraine's party boss, realized. Stalin expresses only disdain for the whole KP(b)U, composed of 500,000 members ("ha-ha", snickers Stalin),

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<sup>74</sup> Stalin i Kaganovich Peregiska. Pp. 273-275. For a slightly different translation of the document see *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 179-181. A follow-up secret "Instruction on the Application of the TsIK and SNK SSSR of 7 August 1932 About the Safeguarding of State Property", signed by the Chairman and the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of the USSR and the Vice-Chairman of the OGPU, was sent out on 16 September to all republican and oblast authorities. *Tragedia*. P. 477-479.

which contains direct agents of Pilsudski and "quite a lot (yes a lot!) of rotten elements, conscious and unconscious Petliurists". Mindful of the Ukraine's negative reaction to the murderous effects of the just-passed property laws, Stalin warns: "The moment things get worse, these elements will waste no time opening a front inside (and outside) the party, against the party." Things cannot continue in Ukraine without change, and since "the Ukrainian leadership does not see these dangers", Stalin proposes to replace Kosior with Kaganovich and Redens with Balytsky. Several months later Chubar could also be replaced. In this way Stalin intends to transform "Ukraine as quickly as possible into a real fortress of the USSR, into a genuinely exemplary republic." Stalin considers the task urgent, calling for immediate action for without "these and similar measures (the economic and political strengthening of Ukraine, above all its border raions, etc.), I repeat, we may lose Ukraine." Asking Kaganovich for his opinion the Gensec insists that they must "get to work on this matter as soon as possible" — immediately after his return to Moscow.<sup>75</sup>

Kaganovich concurs, complaining that some of the Ukrainian party activists have decided that the grain procurement could not be fulfilled and that the Ukrainians have become innocent victims.<sup>76</sup> He believes that this has created a certain solidarity and "a rotten sense of mutual responsibility" not only in the middle echelon of the party, but also among its leadership. Ukrainians are not taking the resolution of their own Party conference on grain procurement seriously, "since they consider it partly coerced". The CC KP(b) must therefore issue an official order, appraising the Ukrainian affairs and demanding a decisive turnabout. This will straighten out a sizable segment of the active members and improve the situation. Kaganovich also sees a direct link between the international situation, Pilsudski's work in Ukraine, the Ukrainian party's weak organization, and lack of principle and absence of ideological militancy. Kosior has shown "*big* weaknesses and shortcomings". Perhaps, "if we took him firmly in [hand -RS] [illegible] and disciplined him [pomiat' boka], he might learn some lessons". At to Stalin's suggestion that he return to lead the KP(b)U, Kaganovich considers himself qualified for the job: he has

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<sup>75</sup> On 12 August Stalin sends a note to Kaganovich asking him to keep secret for the moment the plan regarding Ukraine sent in the preceding letter. *Tragedia*. P. 276. To stiffen Kosior's resolve, in January 1933, Stalin sent him the more resolute Postishev as his second in command; Redens was replaced Balytsky in February 1933.

<sup>76</sup> Letter of 16 August 1932. *Stalin i Kaganovich Perepiska*. P. 283-284; *Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 183-184.

extensive administrative experience, he knows Ukraine, the economy and the people. True, since he left Ukraine, the people have gotten worse due to the "'mild-mannered' and easy-going administration based on the principle 'don't insult anyone' and on mutual amnesty". What he finds "so annoying" is that "again we have to start from scratch with people in Ukraine!" Kaganovich is lukewarm to Stalin's suggestion that he once more go to Ukraine; besides, he is physically worn out and sees no one to replace him in Moscow. However, he is ready to subordinate his preferences to party interests and to Stalin's decision: "you have not only the official political right, but also the comradely and moral right to direct those you have molded as political leaders, i.e., me, *your pupil*". The question of Ukrainian functionaries has to be given more thought; Ukraine needs "fresh blood (at least a little)".

The "5 Ears of Corn Law" provided the Communist regime with the necessary legal basis for reducing the Ukrainian farmers to the state of slow starvation. Stalin's exchange of letters with Kaganovich reveals the ambiance in which the policy that would bring about the excruciating deaths will be implemented. The overall objective was to maintain a high level of grain procurement. To assure this, all challenge outside and inside the republic had to be eliminated, regardless of the cost. Stalin's raising of the specter of Pilsudski and Petliura agents running loose in Ukraine and infiltrating the Soviet party and state machinery was nothing more than a scare tactic. He was well aware that by the summer of 1932, the weak Polish network and the few local collaborators had been rounded up by the GPU, which also arrested real and imaginary partisans of the assassinated Petliura. Poland may have had some illusions about a Ukrainian insurrection back in 1929-1930, but by 1932, the Poles realized that the starving population was in no shape to revolt. The Soviet-Polish nonaggression treaty signed on 25 July 1932 was ample testimony to the changing relations between the two neighbors.<sup>77</sup> The Pilsudski-Petliura scarecrow will continue to enjoy popularity in Soviet propaganda. While there was no serious threat from the Poles or the Ukrainian nationalists, an insurrection could become a reality if the expected famine (Stalin foresees this possibility in the phrase "the moment things get worse") could bind together the threatened middle cadres of the KP(b)U

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<sup>77</sup> Timothy Snyder, *Sketches from a Secret War*. New Haven, Yale University Press. P. 104.

with the surviving farmers. To prevent this occurrence the KP(b)U had to be purged and kept under close Moscow surveillance.

## The Ukrainian Genocide

Stalin always maintained that the 1932 harvest was good; historians today are more skeptical but consider it quite adequate to cover Soviet Union's internal needs. With the reserves from the previous year, there were enough supplies to feed every citizen of the Soviet Union. Famine was brought about by the exorbitant amount of grain and other agricultural products taken from the Ukrainian farmers, and the way the requisitions were carried out. Ukraine's plan was excessive from the start, but in spite of the protests from Kharkiv and three successive reductions, Ukraine delivered about a quarter of a billion poods of grain, over 90% of its quota.<sup>78</sup> In addition it handed over large quantities of meat, vegetables and other produce. Stalin insisted that state procurement had priority over everything else. Quoting a CC VKP(b) directive, a KP(b)U resolution of 18 November reminds all party organizations that "the complete fulfillment of the procurement plan by the collective farms and the MTS constitutes their primary obligation before the party and the working class, and the first obligation, to which all the other duties of the collective farm must be subordinated, including the duty to set up all sorts of funds: seed fund, forage, food supplies".<sup>79</sup> The authorities perfected and intensified the old tactics for extracting grain from the farmers, and added new measures. Independent and collective farmers gradually gave up active struggle against the regime and only sought to save their lives and that of their families.

Obedience to Moscow was assured in two ways: a) continued frequent delegations to Ukraine and North Caucasus Territory (NCT) of Molotov, Kaganovich and other high-ranking leaders to supervise the local authorities, and b) party discipline enforced from Moscow down the administrative structure. Thus, at the end of October, two commissions were sent, one to Ukraine headed by Molotov, and the other to NCT headed by Kaganovich. Stalin's emissaries supervised party meetings and forced them to pass resolutions on grain procurements, party discipline,

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<sup>78</sup> Kosior spoke of 255 m.p. at the January 1933 Plenum of the CC KP(b)U. *Holod1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini*. P. 352. Davies and Wheatcroft give 3,584,000 tons, or 219 million poods, P. 478. Other authors give similar figures.

<sup>79</sup> *Holod 1932-1932 rokiv na Ukraini*. P. 253.

stricter application of the 7 August property laws, the establishment of "black lists" of collective farms in arrears with grain deliveries, imposition of fines, etc. They also instigated purges in party organizations and administrative structures. Kuban' was particularly touched with the expulsion of 43 % of the 25,000 party members, including 358 out of 716 party secretaries.<sup>80</sup> In Ukraine, during November and first five days of December, the OGPU arrested 1,230 people, including 340 heads of kolhospny while 327 Communists were brought before the courts for sabotaging state procurements.<sup>81</sup> In the 18 November resolution quoted above, the Ukrainian CC reminded the directors of sovkhoz of their "personal responsibility as party members and civil servants for the fulfillment of the grain procurement". "Personal responsibility" for the execution of instructions was a frequent refrain in messages coming from above and this fact cannot be taken lightly by students of the famine for it was an important factor of the mechanism of the Ukrainian genocide.

Dekulakization and deportation continued, on a much smaller scale and mostly out of political or punitive motives. Arrests, beatings, and cruelty of all sorts abounded, as before, only now the victims were weakened and less capable of resistance. Kolkhozes, villages and individual farmers accused of delaying state procurement could be put on "black lists", which meant that they no longer had access to state-run stores, could not buy such essentials as matches, kerosene, salt. They were fined with a year and a quarter's worth of meat tax and after paying that, were still responsible for the unfulfilled grain procurement. "Activists" - the city workers and their komnezam (committee of poor farmers) helpers searched the recalcitrant farmer's house and yard, looking for the hidden grain. What was found was confiscated, if they found nothing for the procurement, they often took whatever edibles were discovered, leaving the farmer with nothing to eat, at all. Farmers who could find some old religious medals or other mementos made of precious metals could trek to the city and exchange them at the torgsin (stores for foreigners) for voucher, with which they could get some food.

The farmers' reaction to the 1932 procurement drive was predictable, at least for Stalin, who, as the ultimate addressee of all important reports, had his finger on the empire's pulse. The kolkhoz property decree was at once a preventive and punitive measure against farmers' ef-

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<sup>80</sup> Davies & Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger*. P. 178.

<sup>81</sup> *Komandyry velykoho holodu*. P. 50.

forts to circumvent the dictator's procurement plan and to put their own survival above his megalomaniacal ambitions. Practically speaking, collective farmers could not wait for their share of the produce, until the state procurement and all the other obligations were fulfilled by the kolhosp, because they no longer had any personal reserves to sustain them in the meantime. Some kolhosp with more conscientious management gave out "advances", for previously earned trudodni. But the practice was rare and eventually was formally forbidden. The other solution was to "steal" the grain grown by the kolhosp. This "theft" of the fruits of one's own labor was severely punished in the name of the protection of "state property". Children as well as adults, accused of "shaving" cereal stalks or picking up ears of corn left behind by the harvester were severely punished. Where the cooperation of millers could be obtained, thrashing machines were adjusted to let some grains get through together with the chaff or fall into the straw which could later be gleaned. Whatever was saved, in one way or another, was often hidden for later usage. There is no way of knowing what portion of the hidden grain was found by the flying brigades of activists, but an official reports state that in Kuban 345,000 poods of grain were found in November, while in Ukraine the search from 1 December 1932 to 25 January 1933 uncovered 1.7 million poods, in 17,000 hiding places.<sup>82</sup>

The hardier farmers would flee their villages, either alone or with their entire families, and seek salvation in urban centers — especially industrialized Donbas — or go to Belarus and the RSFSR. Accounts of Ukrainian farmers overloading trains, filling stations and wandering about Russian and Belarusian towns and countryside abound. The party secretary of the Kantemyrivka raion, on the Russian side of the border with Ukraine's Donetsk oblast', requested the Voronizh oblast' authorities to prevail on Ukraine to stop the massive flow of Ukrainian refugees. The letter forwarded to Kosior states: "Beginning in February of this year [1932], an influx of people from the neighboring regions of Ukraine have flooded our raion, buying, trading and begging for bread. The railway station is crammed with people; crowds of people roam in the villages; whole families with children and frail old people. [...] Only in the last several days 12 individuals were buried who had come for bread from

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<sup>82</sup> *Komandyry velykoho holodu*. P. 49; Kulchytsky, *Holod 1932-1933 v Ukraini iak henotsyd*. Kyiv, 2005. P. 98

the neighboring Ukrainian raions."<sup>83</sup> On 15 July 1932 three Belarusian workers signed their names to a letter in Belarusian, sent to CC KP(b)U, asking rhetorically: "When was it that Belarus fed Ukraine?" They point out that in the past Ukraine fed Belarus', and now multitudes of hungry, ragged Ukrainians invade Belarusian towns of Zhlobin, Homel', Bakhmuch, Bykhat, Mahimt, Orsha, Minsk, Sirotsino. "Why don't they [the papers - R.S.] write the truth, that millions are starving and that grain is perishing in the fields, overgrown with weeds, because the stronger men and women have left in search of bread, so as not to die from hunger"?<sup>84</sup> In fact many starving Ukrainians did die in Belarus and the RSFSR, a fact that is usually omitted in the discussions on the "Russian" victims of the famine.

By the end of 1932 the "war against the farmers" in Ukraine and in the Ukrainian regions of the RSFSR had become an outright assault on the Ukrainian nation. On 14 December, as the long scythe of starvation mowed down Ukrainian farmers by the thousands, Molotov and Stalin signed a secret decree, whose banal title "On Grain Procurement in Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and the Western Oblast"<sup>85</sup>, dissimulated a virulent attack of the hitherto government-approved Ukrainization program. The document deals with three issues: a) solving the problems of grain procurement, b) fighting infiltration by counterrevolutionary elements, c) curtailing the ills of Ukrainization. The decree makes the Party and Government chiefs in the three grain producing regions personally responsible for the completion of grain procurement on assigned dates in January 1933. It also prescribes two exemplary punishments: a) the sentencing of a number of "traitors to the party", arrested in the Orikhiv raion of Dnipropetrovsk oblast "for organizing the sabotage of grain procurement", to five to ten years of concentration camp, and b) the "transfer to northern oblasts" of "the entire population of the most counterrevolutionary Poltavaska stanytsia" of the Kuban region, also implicated in the sabotage of grain procurement. The stanytsia was to be settled with demobilized Russian Red Army soldiers, who would receive the abandoned land, buildings, equipment, and cattle.

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<sup>83</sup> V. Serhiichuk, "Mihratsiini protsesy v Ukraini na pochatku 30-kh rokov iak nasli-dok holodomoru", *Holod-henotsyd 1933 roku v Ukraini: istoriiko-politychnyi analiz*. Kyiv-New York, 2000. P. 126.

<sup>84</sup> *Holod 1932-1933 rokov na Ukraini*. P. 209.

<sup>85</sup> *Tragedia*, Pp. 575-577; also in *Holod 1932-1933 rokov na Ukraini*. Pp 291-194.

Difficulties in grain delivery are presented as a direct result of the Ukrainization process, carried out "mechanically" in Ukraine "without meticulous selection of the Bolshevik cadre". Bourgeois-nationalists and Petliurites could thus join party and state institutions and set up their cells and organizations. Absence of "revolutionary vigilance" by local party organizations let "counterrevolutionary elements" become directors, accountants, storekeepers, foremen in collective farms, and members of village soviets. This gave them opportunity to sabotage harvest and sowing campaigns and organize other counterrevolutionary activities. Northern Caucasus is reproached with the same shortcomings, with supporters of the Kuban Rada figuring in place of Petliurites. Party and State authorities in Ukraine and Northern Caucasus are ordered to extirpate these counterrevolutionary elements, execute them or deport them to concentration camps. Shooting should also be the normal punishment meted out to the saboteurs with party membership cards in their pockets.

But "unbridled Ukrainization" was held responsible for more than just economic ills. Particularly, the "non-Bolshevik 'Ukrainization', which affected nearly half of the raions in the Northern Caucasus," was declared to be "at variance with the cultural interests of the population". The verdict was in two parts. Ukrainization was not formally prohibited in Ukraine, but Stalin wanted to force it back to its primary vocation, that of promoting the "correct Bolshevik implementation of Lenin's national policy", which was one of integration and assimilation. Ukrainian authorities were therefore instructed to "pay serious attention to the proper implementation of Ukrainization", "expel Petliurite and other bourgeois-nationalist elements from party and government organizations", and "meticulously select and recruit Ukrainian Bolshevik cadre". In reality, this was a signal for a gradual curtailment of Ukrainization and a return to a more sophisticated policy of Russification.

Worse fate awaited the Ukrainians of Northern Caucasus. They were submitted to a real national pogrom. The Poltava stanytsia was deported (2,158 families with 9,187 members) by 27 December<sup>86</sup> and resettled on 28 January 1933 with 1,826 demobilized soldiers.<sup>87</sup> Other Cossack stanytsias fared likewise. All Ukrainization was discontinued and re-

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<sup>86</sup> G.G. Yagoda report to Stalin, 29 December 1932. Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD. Moskva 2003. P. 386.

<sup>87</sup> Nicolaas Werth, *Le pouvoir soviétique et la paysannerie dans les rapports de la police politique (1930-1934)*. Rapport du 27 février 1933.

[http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/dossier\\_soviet\\_paysans/sommaire.html/](http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/dossier_soviet_paysans/sommaire.html/)

placed with Russification. The Ukrainian language was banned from all office work in local administration, cooperative societies, and schools. The printing of newspapers and magazines in the Ukrainized raions of the Northern Caucasus was to be switched immediately from Ukrainian to Russian, which, the document claimed, was a language "more understandable to the Kuban residents". Preparation was to begin immediately for the transfer in the autumn of all Ukrainian schools into Russian. In the meantime, the composition of school workers was to be examined and upgraded. On 15 December 1932, Molotov and Stalin signed another ban on Ukrainization, this time for the other regions of the USSR that had previously been subject to Ukrainization. Previous demands from "Ukrainian comrades for mandatory Ukrainization of a whole series of regions of the USSR (for example, in the Far Eastern Territory, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, Central Black-Earth Oblast, etc.)" are condemned. Such requests can only play into the hands of those bourgeois-nationalists who are expelled from Ukraine and seek refuge in newly Ukrainized regions to do their harmful work. For that reason, the authorities of the regions mentioned above are instructed to discontinue Ukrainization, switch all publications to Russian and prepare to transfer all schools to Russian by autumn.<sup>88</sup> It should be noted that the attack on Ukrainization does not even have an economic pretense.

Stalin's anti-Ukrainization decree reveals the extent to which the dictator was ready to go, in sacrificing Ukraine on the altar of great-power ambitions. There is little doubt that the stop on Ukrainization was a sop to Russian chauvinism, especially in ethnically mixed regions outside the Ukrainian SSR. Now, the combination of the regime's national and social repression came to the fore, even if neither could be acknowledged openly. For the next several months after the condemnation of the abuses of Ukrainization and the Ukrainian sabotage of grain procurements, the Ukrainian countryside passed through some of the worst moments in its history. The litany of repressive measures is endless. On the following day, 82 raions were deprived of manufactured goods for not fulfilling their quotas of grain deliveries. Four days later, Stalin orders Kaganovich and Postyshev back to Ukraine to help Kosior, Chubar and Khataievich carry out the procurement plan. On 24 December, collective farms are ordered to deliver all grain, including reserves for seeding and nourishment in fulfillment of the plan. Direct orders to increase repres-

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<sup>88</sup> *Komandyry velykoho holodu*. Pp. 312-313.

sive measures, arrests and deportations increase. Moscow and its emissaries in Ukraine constantly harass KP(b)U and its leaders for falling behind in their duties. A real reign of terror seizes the republic and Kuban, where similar processes were taking place. Personnel changes are effected: in February 1933 Postyshev replaces Terekhov, who had dared to remind Stalin about the famine in his Kharkiv oblast and Balytsky takes Redens's position at the GPU.

It is in this atmosphere that Stalin strikes another deadly blow against the Ukrainian grain growers. The new secret decree, which he himself drafted, is perhaps the best available evidence of the dictator's genocidal intent against the Ukrainian nation. Signed by Molotov and Stalin, and sent out on 22 January 1933 to Ukraine, Belarus and the neighboring regions of RSFSR<sup>89</sup> the document calls attention to the unrestrained exodus of farmers from Kuban and Ukraine to the nearby regions of Russia and Belarus. The central authorities are said to have no doubt that these migrants, who pretend to search for food, are, in fact, social-revolutionaries and agents of Poland, sent by the enemies to agitate, "through the farmers", in the northern parts of the USSR, against the *kolkhoz* system and the Soviet power. The Gensec reminds that a similar movement took place the previous year, but the party, state and police authorities of Ukraine did nothing to stop it. It must not be allowed to happen this year. Stalin then orders the party, state and the repressive organs of the Northern Caucasus and Ukraine to prevent farmers from leaving their own territories for other regions of the USSR and directs them to close border crossings between Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus. Furthermore, the GPU of the Russian oblast's adjacent to the quarantined Ukrainian and North Caucasus regions, and the transport section of the OGPU, are instructed to arrest all farmers from Ukraine and North Caucasus, who have managed to leave their territory, and, after segregating the counter-revolutionary elements, return the others to their villages.

The next day, the Politburo of the CC KP(b)U adopted a resolution to carry out Moscow's orders and forwarded the directive, along with addition instructions, for implementation by the appropriate Ukrainian authorities.<sup>90</sup> The Ukrainian branch of the OGPU was ordered to instruct all railway stations not to sell tickets to farmers with destinations beyond

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<sup>89</sup> *Tragedia sovsetskoi derevni*. P. 634. The first English translation of the document appeared in Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*. Ithaca and London, 2001. P.p. 306-307.

<sup>90</sup> Volodymyr Serhiichuk. *Iak nas moryly holodom*. Kyiv, 2003. PP 156-158.

the Ukrainian borders, without formal travel permission from the raion executive committee or certificates of employment from construction or industrial enterprises. Oblasts were instructed to take "resolute measures" to prevent massive departure of their farmers, carefully check the work of agents recruiting farmers for work outside Ukraine, urge kolhospnyks and individual farmers not to depart without permission for other raions, for they would be arrested there. On 25 January, B. Sheboldaev, the party boss of the North Caucasus Territory, issued a similar order, adding instructions on the employment of internal and border troops and on the setting up of filtration points.<sup>91</sup>

Like the anti-Ukrainization decree of 14 December 1932, the 22 January 1933 directive, which closed the borders to the famished Ukrainian farmers, was not the beginning but the culmination of processes that had started many months before. Petrovsky had complained to Stalin, back in June 1932, about the ban on train tickets for Ukrainian farmers who wanted to obtain provisions in Russia. Evdokimov's telegram from Rostov-on-Don, which Yagoda prepared for Stalin's attention on 23 January 1933, details the elaborate measures taken since November to prevent the flight of farmers from the Northern Caucasus Territory. Among these were roadblocks set up on the main arteries of farmer migration. Transport authorities had arrested 11,774 persons and another 7,534 were incarcerated by other organs. In the same dossier, Balytsky's report from 22 January informed of massive exodus of farmers from Ukraine since December.<sup>92</sup> Departures were registered in 74 raions, 721 villages and 228 kolhosps. In all, 31,693 persons left: 20,129 from Kharkiv oblast', 6,576 from the Kyiv oblast, 3,447 from Odesa oblast, and 1,541 from Chernihiv. Of these migrants about one third were collective farmers and two-thirds individual farmers; 128 were activists. A check at the railway junction stations in the Kharkiv oblast revealed a great demand for long-distance tickets: in January 1933 16,500 such tickets were sold in Lozova station and 15,000 — in Sumy. In the beginning of January 1933, the GPU began to arrest agitators and organizers of these migrations and arrested over 500 of them.<sup>93</sup> Population movement did not escape the attention of the Italian vice-consul who reported on 20 January 1933 from Batum, how in recent times local authorities

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<sup>91</sup> *Tragedia*, p. 636-637. Sheboldaev added more precisions on the filtration points three days later. *Ibid.* P. 638.

<sup>92</sup> Lubiianka. Stalin i VChK – GPU – OGPU – NKVD. Moskva 2003. P. 394.

<sup>93</sup> Lubiianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD. Moskva 2003. P. 392-393.

forced migrants from other Soviet regions to return to their places of origin, making them sell their last possessions to pay for the boat fare to Odesa or elsewhere.<sup>94</sup> As a direct result of Stalin's borders decree, 219,460 persons were arrested in the first six weeks after it came into operation; some were sent to the Gulag, others punished in other ways, while 186,588 were sent back to their villages to face the famine.<sup>95</sup>

The worst period of the famine came during the winter and spring of 1933. Physically exhausted after several years of privation and struggle, the farmers were most vulnerable to hunger, cold and various accompanying maladies. The horrors of the period have been amply documented and written up in the scholarly and popular literature and need not be repeated here. What should be related is the regime's attitude to what happened and the effect it had on Ukraine.

Stalin was convinced that he had achieved his goal. At a high-level party meeting, held on 27 November 1932, Stalin gloated: "The party has succeeded in replacing the 500-600 million poods of marketable grain, procured during the period of individual farmer holdings by our present ability to collect 1,200-1,400 m.p. of grain. It is hardly necessary to prove that without this leap forward the country would have a famine [sic-RS], we would not be able to support our industry, we would not be able to feed the workers and the Red Army."<sup>96</sup> The reference to the famine, or rather lack of it, was an obvious lie, and to the feeding of the workers and the Red Army — an overstatement, but Stalin ambition concerned the availability for the state of the commercial grain. The grain exported from the 1932 harvest was sufficient to assure the survival of all the victims of the famine. Besides this, USSR had another million and a half tons in grain reserves that could also have been used.

Throughout the collectivization and the famine, Soviet exports remained very high, as the following table indicates:

1930/31 = 5,832,000 m.t.

1931/32 = 4,786,000 m.t.

1932/33 = 1,441,000 m.t.

1933/34 = 2,319,000 m.t.

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<sup>94</sup> A. Graziosi, "'Lettres de Kharkov', La famine en Ukraine et dans le Caucase du Nord à travers les rapports des diplomates italiens. 1932-1934". Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique. Vol. XXX(102) 1989. P. 43.

<sup>95</sup> N.A. Ivnitky, *Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie* (nachala 30-kh godov). Moscow, 1994. P. 204.

<sup>96</sup> *Tragedia*. P. 559.

Whether it is considered as genocide against the Ukrainians or war against the farmers, the cost in human lives to Ukraine was enormous. We shall probably never know the exact number of victims, or even get a close approximation, but the two censuses give us some idea of the tragedy.

<b>POPULATION STATISTICS FROM CENSUSES OF 1926 AND 1937</b>									
Year	<b>POPULATION OF USSR</b> (in thousands)				<b>POPULATION OF UKR. SSR</b> (in thousands)				
	Total T	Russian A	Ukrainian B	Jewish C	Total T	Ukrainian D	Russian E	Jewish F	
I. 1926	147,027	77,791	31,195	2,672	28,446	22,927	2,677	1,580	
% of T	100%	52.9%	21.2%	1.8%	100%	81.1%	9.4%	5.6	
II. 1937	162,039	93,933	26,421	2,715	28,398	22,213	3,222	1,470	
% of T	100.0%	58.0%	16.3%	1.7%	100.0%	78.2%	11.3%	5.2%	
change I to II	+15,002	+16,142	-4,774	+34	-48	-714	+545	-110	
	10.2%	+20.5%	-15.3%	+0.1%	-0.2%	-3.1%	+20.3%	-7.0%	

The 1926 census was taken at the end of the year and the 1937 in the beginning. There are thus ten full years between them. The average yearly population increase in Ukraine in normal years was over 600,000 souls. The 1926 figures for Ukraine are missing about 550,000 souls from the total, most of which would go into the Ukrainian column. Most experts consider the figures quite reliable. The problem is how to interpret them and of what lies between them. In studying the consequences of the famine for the Ukrainian nation, the change in the ethnic composition of both Ukraine and the USSR must be taken into consideration. The overall population of the Ukrainian republic fell by 50 to 600 thousand souls, but the Ukrainian component was reduced from 81% to 78%. What the table does not show, but what was a significant change, was the rise in the urban population and the decline of the rural. Before the famine, the influx of Ukrainian farmers into the cities helped the Ukrainization of the urban population; after the denunciation of Ukrainization, rural migrants fell under the renewed policy of Russification. The catastrophic drop of 4 million in the Ukrainian population count in the rest of the USSR, in spite of the large number of important influx of deportees, is probably due more to real and simulated assimilation than to death.

Victims, perpetrators and onlookers alike were aware of the fact that Stalin's war against the Ukrainian farmers was at the same time a direct attack on the Ukrainian nation. The young romantic A.V. Holovkin, who in 1930 organized an underground "Union of Militant Communists" in the town of Putivl (Sumy region) and in 1932 distributed Ukrainian and Russian fliers in defense of the farmers, confided to a friend who turned out to be an informer, that "during the last two years Ukraine has been living through an unprecedented famine. The Ukrainian people is literally perishing from hunger, whole villages are dying out, the situation is hopeless." And he added that the hopeless situation "was created by the Soviet power".<sup>97</sup> In the middle of March 1933, Kosior wrote unperturbedly to the Kremlin that "the famine still hasn't taught many kolhospnyks a lesson".<sup>98</sup> In his report from Kharkiv, dated 31 May 1933, the Italian consul general prognosticated on the devastation of the country: "I conclude: the present disaster will lead to a predominantly Russian colonization of Ukraine. This will transform its ethnographic character. In perhaps a short future, one will no longer be able to speak of Ukraine, nor of a Ukrainian people, nor, therefore, of a Ukrainian problem, since Ukraine will have become in fact a Russian region".<sup>99</sup>

## Conclusion

In the light of all the documents published since the event, there can be little doubt today that the famine was not only used by the Communist party for political purposes, but that it was instigated and directed by Stalin and his cronies for that reason. The regime's ultimate objective was to transform the backward empire into an industrial giant and a military superpower. To achieve this, Stalin needed great quantities of marketable grain, which was to be extracted from the farmers "at any price". The most expedient way was to herd the farmers into collective farms, subject them to a more direct control from the top, and in this way maximize grain deliveries to the state. That the farmers would resist and that the imposition of Moscow's will would result in the loss of millions of human lives was not a great problem for a well-populated empire, where citizens were treated like expendable cogs in a great machine. All this

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<sup>97</sup> *Lubianka*. Op. cit. P. 590.

<sup>98</sup> *Tragedia*. Op.cit. P. 657.

<sup>99</sup> A. Graziosi, "Lettres de Kharkov". Op. cit. P. 61.

explains "Stalin's war on the farmers", but it does not account for the fact that the overwhelming majority of the victims were Ukrainian farmers, living in the Ukrainian republic and in the adjacent regions of the RSFSR. Nor does it justify Stalin's special decrees reversing the Ukrainization program and closing borders on starving Ukrainian farmers fleeing to the more abundant regions of Russia and Belarus.

On 23 November 1932, Kaganovich boasted in Rostov-on-Don that the Party had definitively settled the question of "kto koho" (who would defeat whom) in the struggle between the régime and its opponents. Kaganovich was right regarding the farmers: by then their opposition to collectivization was broken, as was their "sabotage" of state procurement. Ukrainian farmers (as farmers) were no more an obstacle to the Party's policies, or a danger to its domination, than were the Russian farmers. There was no greater need to exterminate them, than there was to eliminate the Russian farmers. However, Ukrainian farmers had presented a formidable obstacle to Communist rule in Ukrainians, as part of the Ukrainian nation, and this danger could come back, "as soon as the situation lent itself". The extermination of a part of the Ukrainian farmers was thus a conscious bloodletting, intended to weaken the Ukrainian nation both physically and morally. The reversal of the Ukrainization program would help denationalize Ukrainian farmers and speed up their assimilation into the Russian nation.

Stalin's border decree concerned all farmers of Ukraine and the North Caucasus Territory. But since the United Nations Convention only recognizes national and ethnic groups, the question that may arise is whether they were targeted as farmers or Ukrainians? We have seen that the "national group" in the United Nations Convention's has been interpreted in the sense of "civic nation" and the interpretation was even applied to a well-defined region. In this sense, all the farmers within the borders of the Ukrainian SSR, whatever their ethnic origin, were part of the Ukrainian nation. According to the 1926 census, ethnically Ukrainian farmers made up 88.5 % of the Republic's farmer population, so that the ethnic and civic character of Ukrainian farmers overlapped. The Ukrainian farmers also made up 89.0 % of the Republic's ethnically Ukrainian population and 71.8 % of the Republic's overall population, and thus constituting an overwhelming portion of the Republic's total population. Stalin's direct reference to the Kuban (two thirds Ukrainian) shows that despite the document's theoretical application to all of NCT, it was the descendants of the Ukrainian Cossacks, who had supported the Kuban

Rada, that were butt of the regime's ire. It was this group that Stalin's border decree singled out for partial destruction.

Finally, it should be noted that while the farmers of the Ukrainian SSR was the main target of the famine, the genocide against the Ukrainian nation had a wider scope of intended victims. It included the Ukrainian agriculturalists on the other side of the Russo-Ukrainian border and the other segments of the Ukrainian population (intellectuals, cadre, workers, etc.) repressed for national reasons.

**Roman Serbyn**

Professor of History at the University of Quebec in Montreal

## **Significance of newly discovered archival documents for understanding the causes and consequences of the famine-genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine**

One would not be truthful in saying that today there is a lack of materials on the tragic events of the early 1930's. A short time ago was published a bibliography of works on the famine. Six thousand works of various genres were listed in that book. However, it would be true to maintain that only in the last several years, the ways of thinking about that social cataclysm, which had far-reaching consequences and about which the researchers from numerous countries (and not only researchers) are discussing to this day, have changed qualitatively.

This change is taking place primarily because slowly documents become available, which reflect the actions of the top leadership of the USSR in 1932-1933, and the behavior of the regional leaders, in particular the party-state nomenclature of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. They also allow us to understand in what particular way, with the assistance of which mechanisms did the Stalinist regime confiscate bread, explaining its actions by the need of modernization, a myth that devoured millions of lives. These documents allow clearer understanding of the doctrinal and situational motives that guided the communist establishment.

The documents of this particular kind were published by me and Valerii Vasilev in the book entitled *Commanders of the Great Famine*, which appeared in Kyiv in 2001.<sup>1</sup> The book contains direct archival evidence of activities of the extraordinary grain delivery commissions headed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR Viacheslav Molotov and Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (CC AUCP (b)) Lazar Kaganovich in Ukraine and in the Northern Caucasus. They include telegrams, explanatory notes

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<sup>1</sup> See, *Commanders of the Great Famine. Travels of V. Molotov and L. Kaganovich to Ukraine and Northern Caucasus. 1932-1933*. Ed.: V. Vasil'ev, Yu. Shapoval. Kyiv, "Geneza", 2001, 399 pages

in their name, and drafts of decisions by the regional governments, which were edited by Stalin's messengers, and their speeches at various gatherings. Finally, they include rare diaries of Kaganovich's trips to Ukraine and to Northern Caucasus. These documents chronicle their daily activities during the trips, meetings, speeches, and orders, which were meant to "stimulate" grain delivery activities.

This publication containing materials from the personal collections of Molotov and Kaganovich in Moscow is just one of the examples of how important it is to make the documentary sources accessible. They not only help us to reconstruct the paradigm of thinking of the communist leaders, but these documents also assist us in restructuring the situation of that time at the macro- and microlevel, which is extremely important for the overall objective evaluation. This type of documentation demonstrates the level of government activity in various regions in 1932-1933.

Ukraine's uniqueness, along with the North Caucasus consisted in the fact that they produced more than half the grain of the entire USSR. In 1931, while talking about Ukraine, Stalin stated that "a number of highly fertile regions found themselves in the state of destruction and famine".<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, at the same time the Kremlin believed that Ukraine possessed some enormous amounts of foodstuffs, which were supposedly hidden from the state by the collective farms, as well as the individual farmers. This was the reason why the state resorted to such high-pressure methods in conducting grain collection. In 1931, the plans for grain collections were reduced for a number of regions in the Urals, Central Volga, Kazakhstan; however, these reductions did not pertain to Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus.

In 1931, Ukraine contributed less grain than in 1930. Then, a special resolution of the CC AUCP (b) declared February of 1932 as the «battle strike» month of completing the grain collection. As a result, 150,000 people died in Ukraine in 1931 already. In March-April of 1932, a large number of people were starving in Ukraine's villages, and in the cities there appeared large numbers of children abandoned by their parents. This was an obvious indication of tragedy.

Nevertheless, the regime did not cease their plans and blamed the problems on the actions of the local officials. For any attempt to resist the strict directives «from above,» the local officials were excluded from the party and were tried as traitors and organizers of sabotage. In this

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 23.

mannter, as of Januray 1, 1932, in 146 rayon [an administrative subdivision equivalent to county] (there existed 484 rayons in Ukraine and that time) followong the accusations of not fulfilling their grain collection plans, 250 of collective farm boards of directors were dismissed, and 345 were sent to trial. In 1931 and in the first half of 1932 some 80% of the rayon party committees were changed.<sup>3</sup> The members of the central apparatus of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (Ukrainian SSR) began to express their concern under these conditions. The last chance to prevent the fast approaching famine for them was the III conference of the Communist Party of Ukraine (CP(b)U), which took place in the summer of 1932. Molotov and Kaganovich, two of Stalin's closest henchmen came to participate in it. Therefore, together with Stanislav Kosior, who chaired the CC CP(b)U since 1928, three members of the Politbureau of the CC AUCP(b) were also present.

The shorthand of this conference was published as a book as early as 1932. However, I was able to find in the archives the original text, which was thoroughly edited. In this version, we can find excerpts, which were not included in the official published version. Some rayon leaders attempted to describe the dire situation in the rural areas, as well as to prove that the responsibility should not be assigned strictly to the lower levels of leadership, in particular, on the newly created rayons. Nevertheless, the speeches of the rayon representatives, as well as the careful attempts of several representatives of the Ukrainian SSR leaders to indicate the complexity of the situation in the agricultural sector, did not touch Stalin's emissaries. The Kremlin believed, that the grain collection plans were realistic and that the Ukrainian SSR leaders are simply trying to make their life easier through their requests.

In conclusion, Stanislav Kosior once again criticized the speeches of some secretaries of rayon administrations by underscoring: “Not everyone is fully aware yet of the responsibility for completing the set tasks. ... We have to eliminate decisively such attitude. After everything that was said at the conference, after the addresses by comrads Molotov and Kaganovich, as well as your unanimous approval of these speeches, we have to begin working communist-style and ensure a speedy resolution of the difficulties currently experienced by some rayons in

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p . 160.

Ukraine”<sup>4</sup>. Delegates of the conference approved the resolution, which was approved by the plenum of the CC CP(b)U on July 9, 1932, and according to which the plan for grain collection for Ukraine – 356 million poods [an antique measure of weight in Russia which equals 16 kilos] – was accepted for “fulfillment without conditions”. Considering that it was impossible to ensure “fulfillment without conditions”, the plan needed to be reduced. As early as August 17, 1932, the Politbureau of the CC CP(b)U agreed to Stalin's proposal “to reduce the plan for grain collection in Ukraine by 40 million poods as an exception for the rayons of Ukraine that suffered particular hardship, with the plan being reduced by half for the collective farms in the regions of Ukraine that suffered particular hardship, and the plan being reduced by one third for the individual farmers”. On August 28, the list of rayons was approved by the politbureau of the CC AUCP(b). At the same time it was noted that «the reductions are mostly related to the sugarbeet rayons»<sup>5</sup> The plan was reduced three times; however by november 1932, only 136 million poods of grain were received from Ukraine.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the strict requirement, Ukraine did not fulfill the established goals. Then, Stalin voiced his displeasure, as evidenced by his letter to Kaganovich dated August 11, 1932. For nearly 70 years this letter was stored in archives. Nobody referred to it (except the party workers back in the 30s). For the first time the letter was published in the Moscow's *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*. Meanwhile, this is a very important document.

Stalin wrote about his displeasure with the work of the party functionaries and state employees; about the unsatisfactory work of GPU of the Ukrainian SSR with regard to fighting the “counter-revolution”. However, the unique part of this letter was not that he distrusted the Ukrainian farmers. The unprecedented aspect was that he put into doubt the loyalty of the entire party organization of Ukraine, in which, according to his statement, dominated Petliura followers and Pilsudski agents. “As soon as the circumstances get worse, - Stalin wrote, - these elements will not delay opening the front inside (and outside of) the party, against the party”. In addition to that, the letter contained concrete directions: “If we will not begin correcting the situation in Ukraine

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<sup>4</sup> Third conference of the CP(b)U. July 6-9, 1932. Stenographic report. Kharkiv, Partvydav, 1932, p. 145, 147.

<sup>5</sup> Stalin and Kaganovich, *Unpublished correspondence. 1931-1936*. Moscow: «Russian Political Encyclopedia» (ROSPEN), 2001, p.290.

<sup>6</sup> Kulchytsky, S.V. *1933: The tragedy of the famine*. Kyiv, «Znannya», 1989, p 33.

immediately, we could lose Ukraine... To make it our task to transform Ukraine in the shortest possible term into a veritable fortress of the USSR; into a veritable exemplar republic. Spare no money for that”.<sup>7</sup>

This was an expressly anti-Ukrainian signal. Stalin did not give such evaluations pertaining to any other region of the USSR. Obviously, the euphemisms of «a veritable fortress» and «an exemplar republic» were to translate into a series of political and economic measures. Their combination was aimed at:

1. to squeeze out of Ukraine the maximum possible amount of grain (which was motivated by the needs of modernization and the necessity to feed the cities);
2. to implement a repressive «purge» of all social strata (which was motivated by the predominance of latent «Ukrainian nationalists» and other enemies).

As the documents published in the last several years confirm, all further actions may be regarded as the realization of these objectives. From the very beginning, it was clear that this process would be accompanied by victims of the purges.

For a certain time – actually until October 1932 – the party-state apparatus of Ukraine tried to maneuver in the hope that Moscow would be less demanding. At the end of October of 1932 (as a means of implementing of the decision by the Politbureau of the CC AUCP(b) dated October 22, 1932), an extraordinary commission headed by Molotov began working in Ukraine. As early as October 29, Molotov informed Stalin that “it was necessary to criticize strongly the Ukrainian organization and, in particular, the CC CP(b)U for demobilization in grain deliveries....”<sup>8</sup> Molotov created a powerful pressure to begin repressions.

From November 1932 to January 1933 “the extraordinary commission” squeezed another 90 million poods out of the farmers. It was then that the system of the special brigades whose purpose was extracting grain was perfected in Ukrainian villages. They received a certain percentage of the pillaged grain and foodstuffs.

«The extraordinary commission» headed by Molotov was not the only one. In the Northern Caucasus, such a commission was headed by

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<sup>7</sup> Stalin and Kaganovich, *Unpublished correspondence. 1931-1936*. p. 274.

<sup>8</sup> Quote from: *Commanders of the Great Famine. Travels of V. Molotov and L. Kaganovich to Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus in 1932-1933.*, p. 228.

Kaganovich and in the Volga region – by Pavel Postyshev. However, it should be noted that the actions of the Postyshev commission were not marked by such cruelty as the Kaganovich commission which directed its repressions particularly against Ukrainians who resided in Kuban.

The newly found archival documents provide the basis for a conclusion that **it was precisely the thorough organization of mass killing of the Ukrainian farmers that gave the man-made famine in Ukraine the characteristics of genocide.**

It was not accidental that at the end of 1932, all the above-mentioned persons – Molotov, Kaganovich, Postyshev – gathered in Ukraine in order to implement radical repressive acts. They were joined by Vsevolod Balytsky, who became the head the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR. All of them were in favor of persecution style of ruling the people and who assumed apriori that there existed sabotage in Ukraine, which was interfering with the plans of grain delivery and which needed to be eliminated. A new round of «getting things in order» began in the Ukrainian SSR. Balytsky proposed a theory that in Ukraine there existed “an organized sabotage of grain delivery and the fall sowing season, mass theft is organized in collective farms and Soviet farms, terror against strongest and the most faithful communists and activists in the rural areas, transfers of tens of Petliura emissaries, dissemination of Petliurist flyers” and concluded that there “undoubtedly existed in Ukraine an organized counter-revolutionary insurgent underground, which is connected to foreign states and their intelligence services, mainly with the Polish Military Headquarters”.<sup>9</sup>

On November 5, 1932, Molotov and the secretary of the CC CP(b)U Mendel Khataievich sent a directive to the party regional committees, demanding from them immediate and decisive actions regarding the implementation of the law dated August 7, 1932 «with the mandatory and urgent implementation of repressions and merciless persecution of the criminal elements in collective farms leadership based on the well-known decree on the protection of social property....»<sup>10</sup> On November 26, 1932, the Ukrainian SSR press published the order of the peoples commissar of the judiciary and the Prosecutor General, which underscored that repression is one of the potent means of overcoming the

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<sup>9</sup>Shapoval, Yu.I., Zolotariov, V.A., *Vsevolod Balytsky. Personality, time, surroundings.* – Kyiv, «Stylos», Kyiv 2002, p. 189.

<sup>10</sup> Quote from: *Commanders of the Great Famine. Travels of V. Molotov and L. Kaganovich to Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus in 1932-1933*, p. 236.

class resistance to grain collection. It allowed to use strictest measures against the «kurkul's» and all class enemies, who interfere or impede the successful struggle for bread.

On December 5, 1932, Balytsky issued an «Operative order of the Ukrainian SSR GPU Nr.1», which instructed his subordinates that “one and the principal task is – immediate breakthrough, discovery and elimination of counter-revolutionary insurgent underground, and a decisive strike against all counter-revolutionary kurkul-Petliurist elements, which actively impede and sabotage the main activities of the Soviet government and the party in the rural areas”.<sup>11</sup>

On February 13, 1933, he issued order Nr.2 «On the next tasks of the agent-operative activities of the Ukrainian SSR GPU.» First of all, Balytsky informed his subordinates that «the analysis of the eliminated cases provides evidence that in this case we have found a unified, carefully developed plan of organizing a military revolt in Ukraine before spring of 1933 in order to displace the Soviet regime and create a capitalist state, the so-called «Ukrainian independent republic». Meanwhile, he set before the Ukrainian SSR GPU as “the most immediate, prevailing and important task... - to ensure the spring sowing season”.<sup>12</sup>

In order to comply with this order, the rayon departments of the GPU were relieved of the «low-profile cases», and employees of the regional GPU departments were dispatched to provide assistance. In addition, members of the «special» departments of the GPU were dispatched to the rayons where the «insurgents and spies» were active; the members of the economic departments of the GPU rayons with stronger industry and large Soviet farms; and members of the secret-political departments of the GPU were dispatched to the remaining rayons. Based on the Balytsky order, decisive measures were also implemented against the mass migrations of Ukrainian farmers outside Ukraine in search of bread. Members of the extraordinary commissions participated in the search for the hidden grain.

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<sup>11</sup> Shapoval, Yu.I., Zolotariov, V.A., *Vsevolod Balytsky. Personality, time, surroundings.* p. 189

<sup>12</sup> National Archives of the Security Service of Ukraine, Kyiv, Fund of executive documents, p. 3-4.

**Documents, which were found in recent years allow for a more systematic evaluation, without simplification and prejudice, of the particular methods, which were used to «deliver a decisive stike» against the Ukrainian farmers.**

**Natural fines.** Natural fines were implemented by the resolution of the CC CP(b)U dated November 18, 1932 «On the measures to improve grain collection.» In particular, with relation to individual farmers, who did not fulfill their quotas for grain, it allowed to apply «natural fines» in the amount of 15-month quota for meat and a one-year quota for potatoes. At the same time, they were to fulfill their quota for grain.

On November 20, 1932, the Council of Peoples Committees of the Ukrainian SSR approved the decision to implement the natural fines against the collective farms, which «allowed the theft of collective farm grain and malevolently sabotage the plan for grain collection.» The natural fines consisted of the «additional task» for meat collection equivalent to the 15-month quota for meat from both the socialized property and individual farmers' property. That is to say that this decree implemented not only the principle of individual responsibility, but a collective responsibility as well. As one of the Ukrainian researchers aptly noted, «in the communist party-Soviet resolutions on natural fines only meat, lard and potatoes were mentioned. They did not mention the products with long shelf-life. However, in two months after the resolution was issued, the «intentional debtors» were submitted to natural fines in full degree. Famine eye-witnesses confirm that. The «intentional debtors» included all Ukrainian collective farms with the exception of 1,500»<sup>13</sup>.

**Prohibition on trade in foodstuffs.** On December 12, 1932, the Council of the People's Committees of the Ukrainian SSR prohibited the trade in potatoes in the rayons, which malevolently underfulfill their obligations on collecting and checking the amounts of potatoes available at collective farms. 12 rayons in the Chernihiv region, and four in both Kyiv and Kharkiv regions were included on the list. On December 3, the trade in meat and animals was forbidden in a number of rayons. On December 6, 1932, according the the decree of the CC CP(b)U and the

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<sup>13</sup> Kulchytsky, S. "Reasons of the 1933 famine in Ukraine: along the pages of one slightly forgotten boook" *Mirror Weekly*, 2003, August 16-22.

Council of the People's Commissars (CPC) of the Ukrainian SSR, these villages were noted on the so-called «black boards.»

**Cessation of delivery of industrial supplies.** Beginning as far back as October 30, 1932, Molotov wrote in a telegram to Stalin: «We are using industrial goods as a method of encouragement and confiscation of certain industrial goods as a repression against the collective farms, and especially the individual farmers.»<sup>14</sup> In this respect, as evidenced by the sources, no detail was too small for Stalin's premier. For example, on November 20, 1932, Molotov telegraphed Kosior from Henychesk: «To this day, the decree to continue sales of matches, salt, and kerosene in all areas is effective. Blacher's telegram dated November 9 confirms it. It is necessary to recall the decree and monitor implementation.»<sup>15</sup>

On December 15, 1932, CC CP(b)U confirmed the list of 82 rayons, to which the supplies of industrial goods were interrupted because those areas did not fulfill their grain delivery obligations.

**Prohibition for the farmers to escape famine.** In the fall of 1932 and in the winter of 1933, a so-called foodstuffs blockade was in effect along the borders of Ukraine, which was implemented with the use of the internal army units and police. This blockade was designed to prevent the farmers from leaving Ukraine, effectively sentencing them to death. Similarly, a foodstuffs «reverse» was also not allowed, that is to say that private persons could not bring in foodstuffs without the state permission from Russia to Ukraine.

On January 22, 1933, Stalin and Molotov sent a directive to the party and Soviet organs, in which it was underscored that the migratory processes, which began as a consequence of the famine, were organized by the «enemies of the Soviets, esers, and Polish agents with the purpose of agitaiting «through the farmers» in the northern regions of the USSR against the collective farms and against the Soviet regime in general.

In this connection, the administrative organs, as well as Ukrainian SSR PG and the Northern Caucasus were ordered not to allow massive migrations of the farmers to other rayons. The corresponding orders were also given to the transport departments of OGPU of the USSR.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Quote from: *Commanders of the Great Famine*, op. cit. p. 229.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 241.

<sup>16</sup> Central national archive of civic formations of Ukraine, fund 1, description 16, case 9, pages 115-116.

Notably, the famine did not affect the areas of Russia adjacent to Ukraine. For this reason, the Ukrainian farmers who suffered from the famine, and who were able to cross the secured border, travelled there to exchange and purchase bread.

**Implementation of the passport system.** On November 15, 1932, the Politbureau of CC AUCP(b) made a decision «On the passport system and unburdening the cities from the undesirable elements,» in order «to alleviate Moscow, Leningrad and other major city centers of the USSR from the inhabitants, who were not involved in the industrial process nor were employed by other organizations, as well as from the kurkul, criminal and other anti-societal elements, who are hiding out in the cities,» it was necessary to implement a unified passport system and thereby invalidate any other identification forms.

On December 27, 1932, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR approved a joint resolution «On establishing a unified passport system throughout the Union of the SSR and mandatory propyska [registration] of passports,» and on December 31 of the same year, the corresponding resolution was adopted by the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee and CPC of the Ukrainian SSR.

On April 28, 1933 the USSR CPC passed a decree on issuing passports to all the citizens of the USSR throughout the country. The decree stated that the citizens, who «reside permanently in the rural areas, will not be issued passports»<sup>17</sup>. The registration of residents in those areas was done according to the lists of residents in the villages by the village councils under the oversight of the police. Effectively, the regime was tying «down» the farmers to a particular area making them into hostages or new serfs.

**Purchasing items of value from the farmers.** On June 29, 1932, the all-Ukrainian office of TORGSIN, which was a division of the all-Union system for trade with foreigners, was established. This system of stores was geared to serve not only foreign citizens, but the citizens of the USSR as well. One could purchase foodstuffs and other items if paying with foreign currency. Later, the purpose of those stores was to extract gold and precious items from the population, and for that

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<sup>17</sup> Quote from: Shapoval Yu. “Unimagined stories”. Kyiv, «Svitohlad», 2004, p. 82.

purpose, the network of stores was expanded. By October of 1933, 263 stores were operating in Ukraine, supported by a network of small shops, trade stations, and branches.<sup>18</sup> In 1931, the treasury received approximately 6 million through the TORGSIN system; in 1932 – approximately 50; in 1933 – 107 million of convertible rubles. Certain stores purchased up to 800 kilos of gold in a day.

Of the 107 million convertible rubles, 86 million were internal contributions. In addition, the TORGSIN stores were sort of a litmus paper for the GPU. For example, if the farmers turned in gold coins, they were detained on the spot. In addition, the NKVD demanded the lists of people, who turned in gold, with their names and addresses. TORGSIN stores directors were obligated to transfer valuables to the industrialization fund.

**Communist special services activities in the rural areas** are an entirely separate topic. Archival documents attest to the fact that it was supressing the real resistance among the farmers (where it existed), as well as fabricated all sorts of cases, which were designed to prevent an expression of the farmers' dissatisfaction. At the same time the PGU was fully aware of the realities of the famine. On February 16, 1933, a state-party directive appeared, which ordered to “categorically prohibit any organization to register the cases of swelling and death by hunger, except for the PGU branches”.<sup>19</sup> The village councils were ordered to avoid indicating the cause of death in the death certificates. In 1934, a new directive arrived: to send all registries of citizens' status which contain information on the deaths in 1932-1933 to the special departments, where they, most likely, were destroyed.<sup>20</sup>

This was one of the steps of Stalin's regime to make the information about the famine secret. On January 14, 1933, responding to numerous inquiries from abroad, the Peoples Commissar for Foreign Affairs Maksym Litvinov issued a special statement declaring that there was no famine in the USSR and that all the information about it was a fabrication. On February 23, 1933, the Central Committee of the Politbureau

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<sup>18</sup> Ref.: Marochko, V.I. “Torgsin: golden price of lives of the Ukrainian farmers in the years of famine (1932-1933)”. *Ukrainian Historical Journal*, 2003, # 3, p. 91.

<sup>19</sup> Ivniitsky H.” Role of Stalin in the famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine. From the materials of the former Kremlin Archive of the Politbureau CC CPSU” Materials of the international conference “Great famine and genocide in Ukraine in 1932-1933” in Vicence, Italy, October 16-18, 2003, p.3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

passed a decree «On the travels of international correspondents in the USSR,» which established the order «according to which [the journalists] will be permitted to travel and visit particular areas only if permitted by the Police Central Command.»<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, the USSR continued to export grain at dumping prices. In 1930, 48 million poods of grain were exported; in 1931 – 51 million; in 1932 – 18 million; in 1933 – 10 million.<sup>22</sup> Under the conditions of famine, aware of the deaths of millions of its own citizens, the USSR continued to export grain, arguing that it was necessary for industrialization. When there appeared a movement demanding that this export be prohibited, Stalin's emissaries resisted it very skillfully and the western countries practically turned a blind eye to the true prices of this export grain. English author Bernard Shaw, known to be sympathetic toward the USSR, in his interview for the «Pravda» newspaper asked a question: “...If they will prevent the USSR from selling its foodstuffs to foreigners, what will it do with them? Those politicians, who occupy the high posts, did not think that the Soviet Union may be able to consume those foodstuffs”.<sup>23</sup> However, the case was that the regime did not plan to allow its citizens to consume the foodstuffs, but people like Bernard Shaw were incapable, or unwilling, to see the tragedy of the starving people.

However, there existed Western countries that were aware of the realities of the famine. Information, in particular, about the situation in Ukraine, was received through diplomats. For example, on May 31, 1933, the Italian consul in Kharkiv, Sergio Gradenigo wrote in his dispatch: “The famine continues to ravage and more people are dying, and it is impossible to comprehend how the world can remain indifferent to such tragedy...”<sup>24</sup>

On November 21, 1933, the correspondent of the English newspaper *Manchester Guardian* wrote: “When it comes to famine, not a single honest witness, who looks with his open eyes, cannot state that in the villages, which I visited, there is now a famine, but will also not deny that the famine existed, a serious famine, mostly in April and May... It is

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<sup>21</sup> *Stalin and Kaganovich. Unpublished Correspondence 1931-1936*, p. 307.

<sup>22</sup> Ref.: *Radzinsky E. Stalin. – Moscow, «Vagrius», 1997. – p. 276.*

<sup>23</sup> “Bernard Shaw on Ottawa conference” *Pravda*, 1932, September 12.

<sup>24</sup> Quote from: “Holodomor: Moscow's terror against the Ukrainian nation” in *State Restoration, 1992, Розбудова держави, 1992, # 4, p. 14.*

possible to say with confidence that that not a single province... endured as much as Ukraine and Northern Caucasus."<sup>25</sup>

The factor that made the situation in Ukraine very different from what was happening in Russia or in Kazakhstan, was the change in the national politics. On December 14, 1932, Stalin and Molotov signed a document concerning the grain delivery campaign. That document demanded that "Ukrainization is conducted correctly" in Ukraine and outside it, where ethnic Ukrainians resided compactly. This document also contained the categorical demand to fight the Petliura and other "counter-revolutionary" elements. This indicated not only that the policy of "Ukrainization" was ending, but also signaled the beginning of the anti-Ukrainian cleansing.

The events of the beginning of 1933, in particular, the changes in the party-state leadership of Ukraine, confirmed the change in policy. The most important change was the appointment of Pavel Postyshev as the second secretary of the CC CP(b)U and the first secretary of the Kharkiv regional committee of the CP(b)U. Simultaneously, he remained the secretary of the CC AUCP(b). The discovered archival materials indicate the particular way in which Postyshev and his «team» (his closest allies, as well as party functionaries who arrived as «reinforcements» from Russia), implemented the Kremlin economic policy of grain confiscation, as well as implemented a wide-range «purge» of all social spheres from petliurites and Ukrainian nationalists. The latter were accused in organizing the famine.

The political events of 1932-1933 were summarized by Postyshev in his speech at the united Plenum of the CC and Central Monitoring Commission of the CP(b)U in November of 1933. He underscored that the collective farms in Ukraine were made Bloshhevik. Postyshev also emphasized that "errors and miscalculations allowed by the CP(b)U in the implementation of the national policy were one of the main reasons why the agricultural sector of Ukraine lagged behind in 1931-1932. There is no doubt that the correcting of the missteps in the national policy of the party, without the elimination of the nationalistic elements, who have occupied various positions in the social construction of Ukraine, it would have been impossible to eliminate the delay in the development of its agriculture."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Quote from: Shapoval Yu. "Unimagined Stories", p. 84-85.

<sup>26</sup> Postyshev P.P."Radianska Ukraina-nepokhytny forpost velykoho SSSR", *Chervony shliakh*, 1933 Nr. 10 p. 245.

The plenum approved the resolution, which indicated that “at the present time the main danger is the local nationalism, which is joining the imperialist intervention attempts.” This “present time” will stretch over many years. In such a way, the cessation of the “Ukrainization” policy was justified along with the beginning of mass repressions in Ukraine as early as 1933, which, in time, will organically become part of the “great terror” implemented by Yezhov in 1936-1938.

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the famine-genocide was an intentional and effective method of transforming Ukraine into an “exemplary republic” (if one should use the Stalin's euphemism). The recently discovered and publicized archival documents allow us to see in the actions of the Stalinist regime the special anti-Ukrainian accents, the meaning and deeply rooted consequences of which will be discovered by the continued scholarly analysis.

**Yuri Shapoval, Professor.**  
Institute of Political and Ethno-national Research,  
National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv)

# **Demographic Dimensions of the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine**

## **Introduction**

There is a growing literature on the estimation of the number of deaths due to the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine. Initially there were eyewitness estimates by journalists covering the events. Later historians and demographers made ingenious attempts to estimate the losses using whatever statistical, historical and anecdotal information was available (key demographic information was hidden by the Soviet government for many years). As these researchers did not have access to key demographic data, their estimates were problematic. It was not until the 1980s that more complete demographic data became available, namely the secret 1937 census, the 1939 census, vital statistics (registration of births and deaths), as well as secret documents about arrests, deportations and cover ups and falsifications by communist officials. Only after these materials became available did demographers have the means to make reasonable and credible estimates of the number of deaths due to the 1932-33 Famine.

In spite of several estimation efforts based on the more complete data, we still do not have a widely accepted figure on the number of deaths. As pointed out in this article, there are still unresolved conceptual, definitional and statistical issues that need to be addressed and solved, before we can arrive at an acceptable figure. In this article we will present an overview of the main methodologies used to estimate the human losses, discuss the theoretical and practical issues related to these estimation procedures, and attempt to derive a range within which the probable figure lies. One important implication of this range is that we can say with confidence that estimates outside this range are highly unlikely, if not impossible.

As pointed out by several persons (see examples in Kulchytsky, 2003), the key question is not who comes up with the highest figure, but the fact that something drastic happened in these 2-3 years, that resulted in massive deaths in a very short time period. Although it is important to

try to estimate, at least approximately, the actual number of victims, the exact figure is not crucial. What matters is that due to a deliberate policy of the government of the Soviet Union millions of innocent persons perished in the cruelest fashion. This tragedy needs to be studied objectively, documented with facts and amply publicized.

The demographic analysis of the deaths due to the 1932-33 Famine can be classified along two dimensions: a) level, that is, the total number or deaths caused by the Famine; b) temporal and geographical dynamics of the events. The level dimension can be decomposed into direct and indirect losses. Direct losses were deaths due to starvation; indirect losses were births that would have occurred if there were no Famine.

In the first section of this paper we will address the first dimension, by attempting to make estimates of the number of deaths using different methodologies and data. The outcomes of this analysis are a set of ranges that bracket the probable number of deaths due to the Famine. In the second section we analyze time series of births and deaths during the years before and after the Famine, as well as during the months of 1932 and 1933, and present some indicators that put the Famine tragedy in perspective, compared to other tragic events like the Second World War.

### **Level Dimension:**

#### **Estimates based on the 1926, 1937 and 1939 Population Censuses of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic**

Estimating the number of persons who died due to the 1932-33 Famine is a complicated task. The relatively recent availability of more complete data allows us to at least come up with more realistic minimum and maximum figures. As will be explained in this section, it is very difficult to come up with an exact estimate of the number of deaths attributable to the 1932-33 Famine. .

One promising methodology, used by many researchers (Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, Kulchytsky, Mace, Maksudov, etc.), is to use as basis the total population estimate provided by the 1926 census and then, using vital statistics (births and deaths) to estimate the expected total population for 1937 (or 1939) under the assumption that there was no Famine and other calamities during the intercensal period, compare these estimates with the 1937 (or 1939) census counts. The difference between these estimates and the census counts provide an estimate of the human losses due to the Famine and other tragic events during this pe-

riod (1927-37 or 1927-39). Basically there are two ways of doing this: 1) global method; 2) demographic equation method.

### Global method:

Estimated 1939 population = 1926 census population x %(1927-38)\* relative change - assume a certain overall relative growth between the two census dates under “normal:” conditions (absence of Famine and other extraordinary events) - apply this relative growth to the total population of the first census estimate: this results in the expected total population at the date of the second census, assuming that no abnormal events happened during the intercensal period - compare this estimate with the 1939 census count: the difference measures the estimated losses due to the abnormal events between the two censuses, including the 1932-33 Famine.

This method is used in the calculations presented in the *Holodomor 1932-33* section of Ukraine’s Presidency website: [www.president.gov.ua](http://www.president.gov.ua) (accessed on July 23, 2007). The following data are used:

1926 census total population = 31.2 million

1939 census total population = 28.1 million

intercensal relative rate of change = 16%\*\*

Applying these numbers to the “global method” equation we have:

31.2 million (1926) x 1.16 = 36.1 million (1939 estimate)

36.1 million – 28.1 million (1939 census) = 8 million

Thus, according to this methodology and the data used, Ukraine lost about eight million persons between 1927 and 1938 due to the 1932-33 Famine and other tragic events, or about 25% of the total 1926 census population count used here (as we will see later, other authors use different numbers for the 1926 total population count). It is important to point out that this estimate is for a 12 year period, and it includes not only the 1932-33 Famine years, but also deaths due to severe political repressions during this period.

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\* As the 1926 census took place in December and the 1939 census at the beginning of January, the intercensal period is defined from 1927 to 1938, or 12 years.

\*\* Average rate of growth for the Soviet Union during this period (assumes that the population of Ukraine would have experienced a similar rate of growth had it not been affected by the 1932-33 Famine and other acts of repression during the 1927-38 period). Note that, according to these estimates for the 1926 and 1939 census counts, during this 12- year period Ukraine lost about three million persons.

This methodology has the advantage of not being affected by possible birth undercounts and the certain very large undercounts of deaths during the Famine years. If we assume that the two census counts are correct (or have errors of the same order of magnitude and in the same direction, probably under-estimates), then the “global” nature of this methodology includes in this estimate combined net errors in the registration of births and deaths during this period.

An unknown factor is internal migration. Net migration (in-migrants – out-migrants) for the whole Soviet Union was practically zero during this time due to the tight control of its international borders, but migration between the different Soviet republics is difficult to measure, as no complete and reliable migration data were collected during this period. On the one hand we have evidence of sizeable planned resettlements of farmers from Russia and Belarus to rural areas in Ukraine, in order to populate areas devastated by the Famine, by rural-to-urban migration caused by the forced industrialization policy of the Communist government, and by massive deportations to Siberia. On the other hand we have population losses (out migration) due to voluntary migrations from Ukraine to other Soviet republics, deportations of kulaks in 1930-31, deportations of Poles and Germans in 1934-35 and deportations of other “enemies of the people” and dissidents to Siberia. The net result of these migration movements is not known. If the total net number of migrants during this period is positive, then the estimate of eight million losses is underestimated by this amount; if net migration is negative, then the eight million is an overestimate by this amount.

### **Demographic equation method:**

This is a more detailed variant of the global method, and is based on the so called demographic equation: Estimated 1939 pop. = 1926 pop. + 1927-36 (Natural Growth\* + Net Migration\*\*), that is, the estimated 1939 population is obtained by adding to the 1926 population the natural growth and the net migrants during this 12 year period. Here we use the natural growth that would have occurred if no abnormal events happened between the two census dates, and an estimate of the actual total number of net migrants between 1926 and 1939.

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\* Natural Growth = Births – Deaths (can be positive or negative)

\*\* Net Migration = In-migrants – Out-migrants (can be positive or negative)

Given the lack of reliable internal migration statistics in Ukraine during this period, we will assume that the net migration component of the demographic equation was zero for the 1927-39 period (see discussion in the Global method section above). With this assumption the demographic equation is reduced to:

$$\text{Expected 1939 population} = \text{1926 population} + \text{Natural Growth during 1927-38}$$

Regarding the Natural Growth component, official yearly birth and deaths registration statistics are available for this period, and this allows us to make more detailed calculations of the population deficit in Ukraine during 1927-38 ( a detailed discussion of the significance of these numbers will be made later).

Year	In 1,000s			% Deaths/Births
	Births	Deaths	Births-Deaths	
1927	1,184.5	522.6	661.9	44.1%
1928	1,139.3	495.7	643.6	43.5%
1929	1,081.0	538.7	542.3	49.8%
1930	1,023.0	538.1	484.9	52.6%
1931	975.3	514.7	460.6	52.8%
1932	<b>782.0</b>	<b>668.2</b>	<b>113.8</b>	<b>85.4%</b>
1933	470.7	<b>1,850.3</b>	<b>-1,379.6</b>	<b>393.1%</b>
1934	<b>571.6</b>	<b>483.4</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>84.6%</b>
1935	759.1	341.9	417.2	45.0%
1936	859.0	361.3	497.7	42.1%

**Table 1.- Yearly Numbers of Births and Deaths: Ukraine, 1927-1936**  
**Source: Kultchyskyj, 2003: Table 5**

Based on these data, we will use different values of natural growth (births – deaths) in the demographic equation, in order to estimate possible ranges of the population losses during the 1927-38 period. These calculations are based on two assumptions: a) there is no reason to suspect that in 1927 and 1928 the registered deaths were significantly underestimated, like during the Famine years, and the natural growth for these years is reasonably accurate; b) as it is impossible to predict the “normal” natural growth in Ukraine during these years, we will use a rather wide range of natural growth values in our calculations.

<b>Births - Deaths (in 1,000s)</b>		<b>1939 Estimate:</b>	<b>1939 (Estimate - Census)</b>
<b>Yearly Average</b>	<b>12 years</b>	<b>28.9 + 12 yrs.</b>	<b>(in millions)</b>
700	8,400	37.3	6.3
662	7,944	36.8	5.8
600	7,200	36.1	5.1
500	6,000	34.9	3.9
400	4,800	33.7	2.7

***Table 2.- Calculation of 1927-38 Losses Using Births and Deaths***

IMPORTANT: These calculations are based on data provided by Kulchytsky, 2003. Note that he uses 28.9 million as the total population estimated by the 1926 census, compared to 31.1 million figure posted on the Ukraine's Presidency website. Also his value for the 1939 census is different, 31 million, compared to 28.1 million on the website. Thus in the first example we have a loss of 3 million between the two censuses, while in this case we have a gain of 2 million. As we shall see later, these discrepancies have a significant effect on the estimates of population losses during this period.

In the first column of Table 2 we present different yearly average totals of natural growth (deaths – births) for the 1927-38 period. The value of 700 is a theoretical maximum, as it is higher than the registered natural growth numbers for 1927 or 1928; we assume that these were fairly normal years without significant data quality problems in the registration of births and deaths. The 400 value is a theoretical minimum, lower than the registered values for all years except the Famine period of 1932-1934. In the second column we present average total estimates of natural growth for the 12-year period (first column value multiplied by 12). The third column presents expected total population values for 1939, based on the respective average yearly natural growths in the first column. The last column presents the estimated population losses for the 12-year period, based on the different natural growth scenarios. We see that, depending on the average value of natural growth during this 12-month period, the total losses vary between 6.3 and 2.7 million. The difference between this range of losses and the eight million losses estimated in the first example is due to the fact that different values of total population based on the 1926 and 1939 censuses are used. The intercensal loss of three million results in a higher estimate of losses during this period,

while an intercensal gain of two millions results in smaller estimates of the losses.

Because these estimates of losses are for a period of 12 years, while the effects of the Famine took place during 1932-33 (and possibly 1934), they cannot be attributed in their entirety to losses due to the Famine. The last column provides a range of absolute maximum and minimum values for losses that include losses due to the Famine. It is important to note that this range is based on the assumption that total net migration during this period was zero for Ukraine. If the net migration for this period was positive, the estimated losses would be larger; if the net migration for this period was negative, then the estimated losses would be smaller.

We present a third set of calculation using the demographic equation method and data from the 1937 census, instead of the 1939 census. The USSR 1937 population census revealed dramatic evidence of the huge population losses in the USSR in general and in Ukraine in particular due, to a great degree, to the 1932-33 Famine. The results caught the Soviet authorities totally by surprise. In January of 1934 and December of 1935 Stalin made demographic predictions for the USSR that implied a population of 177 million at the beginning of 1937, while the 1937 census estimated only 162 million, a deficit of 15 million people. Once the authorities realized the implications of the 1937 census results, after a brief attempt to “doctor” the results, on August 27, 1937, a government office of vital statistics “CUNHO” ordered all census materials to be sent to its central office, and the census results were impounded. All census records were ordered to be destroyed, and the 1937 census results were kept secret for 51 years. Given the unfortunate (for the Communist government) results of the 1937 census, a new census was ordered for 1939.

Data from the 1937 census provide additional insights into the estimation of losses due to the 1932-33 Famine. We repeat the analysis presented in Tale 2 with data from the 1937 census:

<b>Births - Deaths (in 1,000s)</b>		<b>1937 Estimate:</b>	<b>1937 (Estimate - Census)</b>
<b>Yearly Average</b>	<b>10 years</b>	<b>28.9 + 10 yrs.</b>	<b>(in millions)</b>
700	7,000	35.9	7.5
662	6,620	35.5	7.1
600	6,000	34.9	6.5
500	5,000	33.9	5.5
400	4,000	32.9	4.5

*Table 3.- Calculation of 1927-36 Losses Using Births and Deaths*

There are two differences with Table 2: a) the intercensal period is 10 years instead of 12 (the 1937 census took place in early January of 1937); b) the 1937 census total population for Ukraine was 28.4. This means that during a 10-year period Ukraine lost, instead of gaining population. The estimates of the population losses (last column) under the different scenarios of natural growth (first column) are slightly higher than the respective estimates using 1939 census data, but are of a similar order of magnitude.

### **Discussion of Results:**

These three examples illustrate the difficulties in estimating the number of deaths due to the 1932-33 Famine. We note the very different census figures for the total population of Ukraine. In the first example we have 31.2 million for 1926 and 28.1 million for 1939, a loss of 3 million. In the second example we have about 29 million for 1926 and about 31 million for 1939, a gain of two million. These discrepancies introduce significant changes in the estimates of losses due to the Famine. For example, if we use 31.2 million, instead of 28.9 million for the 1926 census, then the estimates based on the 1937 census are reduced by 2 million. A more definite estimate of the losses due to the Famine requires unique figures for the 1926 and 1939 census estimates of total population.

The estimate of losses attributable to the 1932-33 Famine also raises some definitional issues. First, what is the exact period that should be considered in relation to the Famine? Some authors claim that the actual Famine occurred in 1933, and that losses in 1932 should not be counted. Second, losses need to be distinguished between direct and indirect. Direct losses are deaths due to starvation. Indirect losses are stillbirths and infant deaths due to malnutrition of mothers, and births that would have occurred had the mother not suffered from extreme malnutrition (missed conception) or the parents not died of starvation. If we try to include indirect births, probably one should also include losses in 1934. Both the “global” and “demographic equation” methods include indirect losses. Finally, a common mistake made by persons without demographic training, like politicians, journalists or professionals in other areas, is to attribute all losses estimated for a 12- or 10-year intercensal period to the 1932-33 Famine. As we have seen, this is an overestimation of losses due to the Famine.

**In the first example we have an estimate of eight million victims caused by the Famine and other extraordinary events during the 1927-38 period. The second example provides range between three and six million, while the third example provides a range of four to seven million.** It is difficult to pinpoint a more precise figure. What we can conclude from these examples is that estimates of losses like 10 million or more are unrealistic, and that a more accurate estimate is probably in the 4-6 million range.

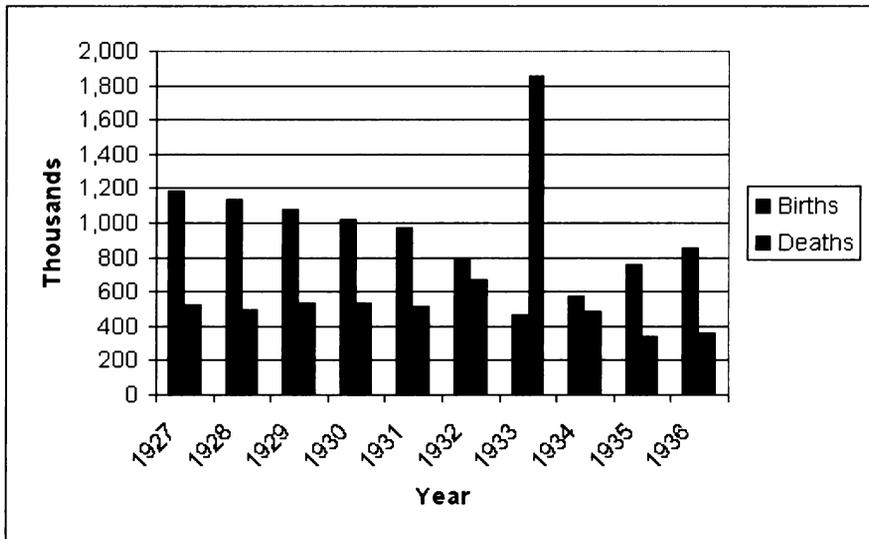
A recent effort by demographers at the Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine is likely to provide a more accurate estimate of deaths due to the 1932-33 Famine. They have made a detailed reconstruction of the population of Ukraine on a yearly basis and by age. Their estimate of human losses due to the Famine is for the 1932-34 period and it includes direct and indirect losses (Libanova et al., no date). To our knowledge, this is the first attempt to estimate losses for the exact period of the Famine, instead of for a longer period that includes losses due to other events. Their estimate of demographic losses due to the Famine is five million: four million direct losses and one million missed births (indirect losses). Unfortunately the report has not been published yet, and we are not able to evaluate their methodology.

### **Temporal and Geographic Dimension of the 1932-33 Famine**

Vital statistics data (registered births and deaths) allow us to document in some detail the effects of the 1932-33 Famine. Figure 1 shows the number of yearly registered births and deaths in Ukraine, for the period 1927 to 1936. We see that between 1927 and 1931 the number of births started at 1.2 million and diminished gradually to 975 thousands, while the number of deaths fluctuated between 500 and 540 thousands. In 1932 we see a significant change: the number of birth dropped to 782 thousands, while the number of deaths increased to 688 thousands. (Table 1 in the previous section presents the numbers for Figures 1 and 2).

The bars for 1933 provide a dramatic illustration of the effects of the Famine. The number of births reached its lower level during this year, 470 thousands, while the number of deaths jumped from an average of 520 thousands in previous years (1927-31) to 1.8 million. In 1934 we see the beginnings of a slow recuperation, with the numbers of births gradually increasing to normal levels and the number of registered deaths

dropping to 480 thousands in 1934, and diminishing to about 350 thousands in 1935 and 1936.

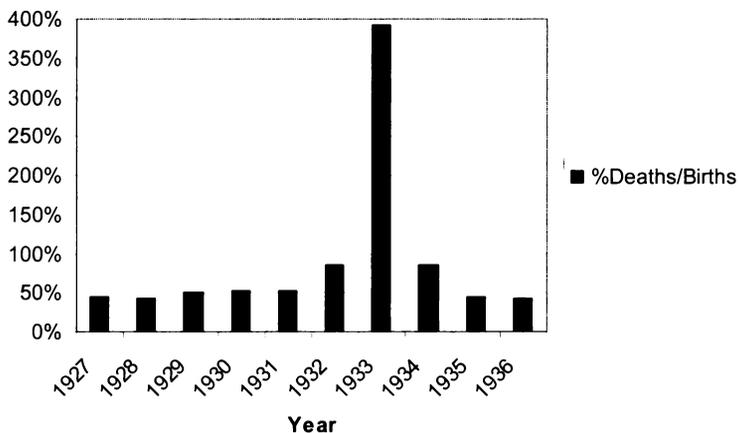


**Figure 1. Number Registered Births and Deaths (in 1,000s):  
Ukraine, 1927- 36 of Yearly  
(Source: Table 1)**

The situation in 1933 was even more dramatic than official vital statistics portray. Several authors have suggested that during the Famine there was a significant under registration of deaths. In many localities the system was not able to cope with the massive number of bodies, and ZAHs officials, of the department of public registration, got the message from security organs that it was politically not advisable to register large numbers of deaths. Official documents at the local level have provided fragmentary evidence of high levels of underreporting of deaths, but until recently there was no quantitative analysis of the magnitude of deaths under registration for the whole country. The suspicions expressed by several authors that only about half of all deaths may have been officially registered in 1933 have been confirmed by calculations done by demographers of the Institute of Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. As part of a very detailed investigation of mortality in all current territories of Ukraine, starting at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Libanova et al., no date), to be published this

year, they have shown that the actual number of deaths in 1933 was close to twice as much as the official number. Thus in only one year the number of deaths in Ukraine was over 3.5 million. (They estimated that the death rate in Ukraine for 1933 was 118.8 per thousand population. As the death rate is defined as  $(\# \text{ of deaths} \times 1,000)/\text{total population}$ , and if we assume, based on 1926 and 1937 census data that the total population in Ukraine in 1933 was about 30 million, we have the following relationship:  $118.4 = (\text{Deaths} \times 1,000)/30,000,000$ , which gives us Deaths = 3.55 million, or close to twice the 1.85 million officially registered number of deaths in 1933.

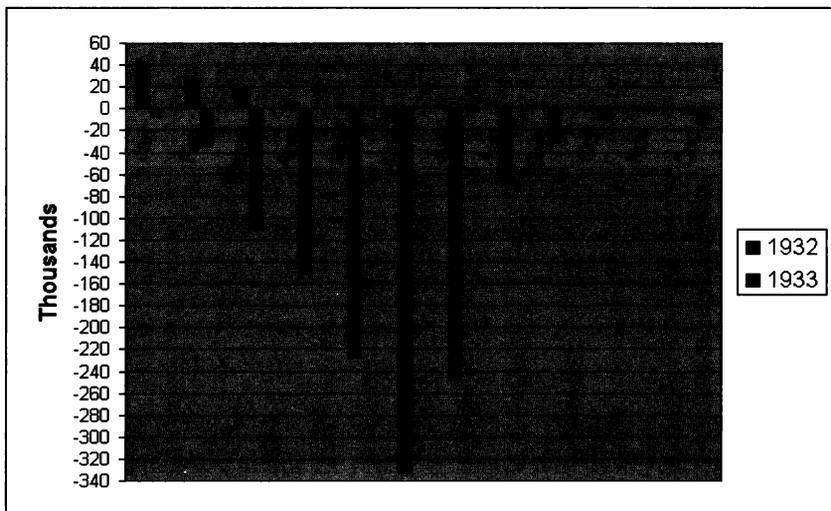
Another way of illustrating the dynamics of births and deaths during the 1927-36 period in Ukraine is to look at the relative proportion of deaths in relation to the number of births. Figure 2 presents the indicator % of deaths in relation to the number of births. We see that during the periods 1927-31 and 1935-36, the number of deaths was about half of the number of births. In 1932 and 1934 the proportion of deaths over births increases to about 80%, and in 1933 the number of registered deaths was about four times as high as the number of births. In reality, according to the estimation of the Institute of Demography and Social Studies, the actual number of deaths that year was about eight times as high as the number of births.



**Figure 2.- Percent of Deaths over Births: Ukraine, 1927-36**  
(Source: Table 1)

By design, rural areas suffered the brunt of the 1932-33 Famine. The objective was to break the resistance of farmers to collective farms (kolkhoz) and to industrialize the country in neck-breaking pace, at the expense of the farmers. Births and deaths statistics for rural areas of Ukraine by months for the years of 1932 and 1933, provide a dramatic illustration of the timing of the Famine.

In Figure 3 we present the difference between births and deaths in rural areas by month, for the years 1932 and 1933. We see that for January of 1932 the difference between registered births and deaths was 42 thousands, it gradually diminishes to zero and in June became negative with -8 thousands. One effect of the confiscation of grains during the 1931-32 winter was the gradual reduction of births during 1932, from a maximum of 74 thousands in January to a minimum of 30 thousands in December. A second effect was the increase in deaths by the summer of 1932. After the 1932 harvest the difference between births and deaths became slightly positive, but due to the steady decline of birth, towards the end of the year the difference between births and deaths became negative again. (See the respective numbers in Table A.1 in the Appendix).

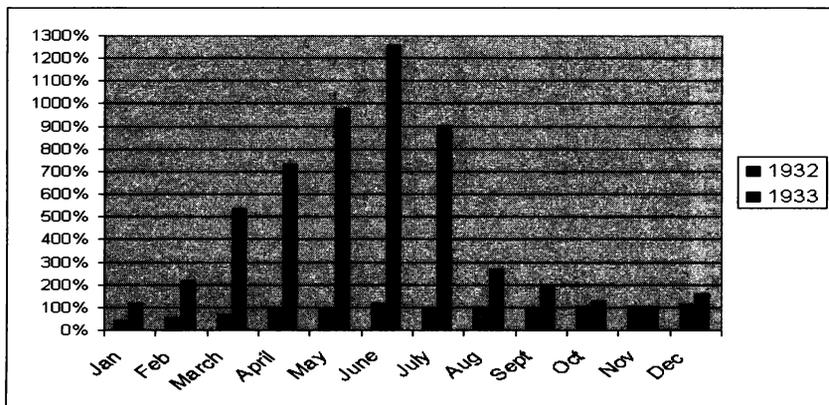


**Figure 3.- Monthly Registered Births minus Deaths (in 1,000s) by Month Rural Population of Ukraine, 1932 and 1933 (Source: Table A.1)**

The graph provides a dramatic illustration of the effects of the Famine on the rural population in 1933. In all months of that year there were more registered deaths than births, and their monthly differences increased rapidly, reaching a minimum of -360 thousands in June. That is, the number of deaths reached its maximum just before the harvest.

Figure 4 presents these data using the indicator percent deaths over births. At the beginning of 1932 deaths represented about 40% of births, this proportion increased gradually to 100% by June, and then fluctuated around 100% the rest of the year. That is, starting in June of 1932, the number of deaths was equal to the number of births the rest of the year. In 1933 the proportion of deaths in relation to births increased steadily and reached its maximum in June; the number of registered deaths for this month was about 12 times higher than the number of registered births. As it has been documented that actually only about half of the deaths were registered by “ZAHS”, a department of citizen registration, in 1933, this proportion is actually twice as large.

The analysis by demographers of the Institute for Demography and Social Studies provides us with another indicator that dramatically illustrates the impact of the Famine on Ukraine’s population. They estimated the life expectancy at birth (average number of years a person is expected to live if mortality conditions stay the same during his lifetime) for Ukraine for different years, and compared them with the respective values for Western Europe (Table 4).



**Figure 4.- Percent Deaths over Births by Month:  
Rural Population of Ukraine, 1932 and 1933  
(Source: Table A.1)**

Due to differences in mortality between males and female, this indicator is estimated separately for each sex. The life expectancy at birth for males is currently about 62.3 years in Ukraine (2006). The estimated life expectancy for males in 1933 was only 11.3, that is, a man born in 1933 was expected to live only 11 years if mortality conditions in that year stayed the same during his lifetime. What is even more shocking, is that the life expectancy for 1933 was lower than the life expectancy for 1942, 18 years, the worst year in terms of casualties in Ukraine during World War II.

Year	Ukraine	Western Europe	Ukraine - W. Europe
<b>Males:</b>			
1933	11.3	56.1	-44.8
1942	17.7	49.2	-31.5
2006	62.3	76.0	-13.7
<b>Females:</b>			
1933	14.8	58.7	-43.9
1942	25.6	58.3	-32.7
2006	73.8	82.5	-8.7

**Table 4.- Life Expectancy at Birth by Sex and Year:  
Ukraine and Western Europe, 1933 and 1942  
(Source: Libanova, E. et all (no date))**

Similar relationships are observed for females. While the 2006 life expectancy at birth for females in Ukraine was 74 years, it was only 15 years in 1933 and 25.5 in 1942, that is, the impact of the Famine on females in 1933 was much higher than in 1942. This means that Ukrainian females born in 1933 were expected to live, on the average, about 15 years less than females born in 1942.

It also instructive to compare the life expectancy values in Ukraine with those of Western European countries. Currently the differences in life expectancies are about 14 years for males and nine years for females. In 1933 the difference was 45 years for males and 44 years for females. This means that, compared with Western European countries, the Famine shortened, on the average, life expectancy of Ukrainians by about 44-45 years. Also the cost of World War II on the Ukrainian population was much higher than on the Western European populations; the differences in life expectancy were 32 years for males and 33 years for females.

## Summary and Conclusions

In this article we have discussed some of the more important demographic dimensions of the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine. We draw two main conclusions from this discussion: a) due to data problems and subjective factors, it is difficult to come up with a generally accepted figure of deaths attributable to the Famine, but in our opinion this is not a crucial point; b) the main point is that there is ample statistical evidence that something very tragic happened in 1932-33 in Ukraine as the result of a deliberate government policy, and the cost in human lives was staggering.

We have illustrated the difficulties in estimating the level of deaths due to the Famine, and have shown that any figure outside the range of three to seven million is unrealistic. Probably the best estimate we have so far is about five million.

Time series data clearly document the human cost of the Famine. In terms of births we see a decline from 1.2 million birth in 1927 to 471 thousand births in 1933. In terms of registered deaths we see a drastic increase from an average 550 thousand in the five years preceding 1932 to 1.85 million registered deaths in 1933. Demographic analysis has shown that the suspicions of serious under registration of deaths in 1933 were well founded, and that the actual number of deaths was almost twice as high. Thus only in 1933 we have a documented loss of about three million people (births minus deaths). In rural areas of Ukraine the official monthly figures for 1933 (which we know to be grossly underestimated), show an increase from 44 thousands in January to 361 thousands in June.

Another measure of the tragedy of the 1932-33 Famine is in term of life expectancy at birth. A male born in 1933 was expected to live, on the average, only 11 years, and the respective figure for females was 15 years. The impact of the Famine in terms of life expectancy at birth in 1933 was worse than the impact in World War II in 1942, the worst year in terms of human losses. The statistical evidence is undisputable. The 1932-33 Famine was a tragedy of vast proportions, and the key factor is that it was the result of a deliberate government policy.

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## Appendix

	1932				1933			
	Births	Deaths	Births-Death	%D/B	Births	Deaths	Births-Death	%D/B
<b>Jan</b>	74.0	31.7	42.3	42.8%	36.7	43.9	-7.2	119.6%
<b>Feb</b>	62.7	35.4	27.3	56.5%	27.7	60.6	-32.9	218.8%
<b>March</b>	60.4	43.1	17.3	71.4%	25.4	135.8	-110.4	534.6%
<b>April</b>	52.3	46.6	5.7	89.1%	23.7	174.2	-150.5	735.0%
<b>May</b>	51.4	50.4	1.0	98.1%	25.9	253.2	-227.3	977.6%
<b>June</b>	46.6	55.3	-8.7	118.7%	28.7	361.2	-332.5	1258.5%
<b>July</b>	55.3	52.8	2.5	95.5%	30.8	278.8	-248.0	905.2%
<b>Aug</b>	51.5	47.9	3.6	93.0%	38.1	103.3	-65.2	271.1%
<b>Sept</b>	47.1	43.2	3.9	91.7%	34.8	65.6	-30.8	188.5%
<b>Oct</b>	45.7	47.1	-1.4	103.1%	33.4	42.8	-9.4	128.1%
<b>Nov</b>	37.6	38.7	-1.1	102.9%	27.6	28.2	-0.6	102.2%
<b>Dec</b>	30.4	34.8	-4.4	114.5%	21.7	34.4	-12.7	158.5%
<b>Total</b>	615.0	527.0	88.0	85.7%	354.5	1582.0	-1227.5	446.3%

***Table A.1 - Number of Registered Births and Deaths  
by Months and by Year  
Rural Population of Ukraine, 1932 and 1933  
(Source: Kulchytsky, 2003 (Table 6))***

**Oleh Wolowyna,**

President of the consulting firm Informed Decisions, Inc.

His main areas of research are demographic and sociological characteristics of Ukrainians in the United States and Canada, as well as demographic situation in Ukraine.

## Documents

**Petrovsky\* to Molotov and Stalin**

**June 10, 1932**

**Top Secret**

Working on the sowing campaign in Pryluky, Lohvytsa, Varva, Chernukhy, Pyriatyn, and Mala Divytsa raions, I came, so to speak, face to face with the village, but of course this does not mean that until now we, Ukrainian communists, did not know what was going on in our countryside (even though now we are being accused of being cut off from the villages). We knew that we would be subjected to severe pressure in grain procurements and that there would be hell to pay. In my opinion, the CC KP(b)U is guilty of accepting without objection to raise 510 million poods of grain procurements in Ukraine. We submitted to the imperative necessity to preserve the pace of socialist construction, which we had assumed, and took into consideration the tense international situation. It was in this sense that I understood the necessity to carry out the directives of the CC VKP(b) concerning the grain procurements, which was accepted for strict implementation.

We knew that the fulfillment of the grain procurements in Ukraine will not be easy, but what I now saw in the countryside shows that we have exaggerated in this matter; we have overdone it. I visited many villages of those raions, and everywhere I saw a considerable part of them engulfed in famine. There are — not many, but there are, people swollen from starvation, mainly poor farmers and even middle farmers. They use such surrogates, that no worse are possible, and at times even these are lacking. At large meetings in villages I am, of course, scolded with whatever comes to mind, old women cry, and sometimes even men. Sometimes the criticism of the situation that has been created goes very deep and wide—why did [you] create an artificial famine, after all, we had a harvest; why did [you] take away the seed material—this did not happen

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\* Hryhory Petrovsky, chairman of the Central Executive Committee

even under the old regime; why is it necessary for Ukrainians to travel for bread in difficult circumstances to non-grain producing territories, yet grain is not brought here, and so on.

In such circumstances, it is difficult to provide explanations. Of course, you scold those who caused excesses, but in general you squirm like a carp on a frying pan. In response to the desperate cry for help with seed material and grain for food I promised a little with regard to seed material; I direct the farmers to track down seeds in their own areas, but as regards food assistance in the form of grain I cannot promise anything, or promise little. Right now, because of the famine, mass thefts are developing in the villages, mainly of poultry—[people] steal chickens, ducks, they take potato scraps, butcher calves and cows during the night and eat them.

Right now the farmers are sowing millet and buckwheat. The days for sowing millet are ending but not for buckwheat, which the farmers are awaiting from us. The farmers have always objected to oats because they considered that labor in this matter is in vain, since oats will not ripen in this region; it will even be difficult to obtain good grass from it. In these raions there will be insufficient sowing compared to last year's area. There is still a month or a month and a half before the new crop. This means that the famine will be intensifying. Therefore, I am posing a straightforward question to you—shouldn't assistance be rendered to the Ukrainian countryside in the amount of two or, at the very least, one and a half million poods of grain? If this assistance can be provided, then the party would not only have the poor farmers behind it but also all the middle farmers against our class enemies; without a doubt collectivization would be strengthened. It is also necessary to provide assistance because out of starvation the farmers will be picking unripened grain and much of it may perish for nothing. The situation is particularly grave for the village intelligentsia.

Owing to the harsh grain procurement there is a tremendous amount of distortions in the countryside, rudeness, disgraceful practices, particularly in relation to individual farmers, the middle farmers. Much work will have to be done here in order to rectify this, and above all, that such situations do not repeat themselves.

Concerning sowing and young crops. Since sowing material nearly everywhere was seized for the grain procurement, the sowing was often carried out with poor-quality materials, and although the young crops in these raions are good and the fields are free of weeds, the grain is sparse.

Obviously, the quantity of seeds per hectare was also at a lower level. Moreover, in some cases the ears of winter crops are short, emaciated, and contain few grains. One is struck by the great amount of unsowed land. The farmers tell me: go and look around the village—can one allow so much unsowed area? On this basis and for other reasons many farmers say that the new grain procurements will be even harder for the village than last year's. And I think this is true. I was not present at the grain procurements, but I was at the sowing in early March in Odessa oblast and in Moldavia, and there I did not see a single raion (I was not in Rozdilnia) where the grain-forage balance was not extremely strained. You know to what the grain procurements have led Moldavia.

Collectivization has broadly embraced the farmer masses, but as organizations, the collective farms are still weak. At the same time, solid, if rough, collective farm activists have developed in the countryside, who will fight to the death for the collective farms.

Because of the famine the collective farms and village party organizations are experiencing particular difficulties in the struggle against the kulaks, inasmuch as the kulak has revived and is casting off all restraint with all his might. At meetings groups of the dekulakized [farmers] and their relatives plot strikes, speak out against the policy of the party and the Soviet power, curse, thrust distortions under people's noses. The middle farmer is wavering, partly associates with him [the kulak]; the hungry poor farmer is silent. Besides, a limited corporativeness is arising among the collective farmers. In the interest of the collective farms, they are putting pressure everywhere on the middle farmer and go to great extremes with regards to taxation and to various other obligations. In addition, they are alienating [the middle farmer], pushing him out of farming in general and economic initiative in particular.

There are very few goods in cooperative shops in the countryside and they are very, very expensive. There are no eatable products. While I was in the villages, I could not even buy bread, and there was no trace of sugar, herring, sea-roach, and any kind of sweets.

As you know, because of the general famine, the village [population] has spontaneously set out for the Dno station, the Central-Black Earth Oblast', to Belarus, and to the Northern Caucasus. Sometimes two-thirds of the farmers abandon a village and head out for bread, because at the Dno station grain costs 30-40 rubles a pood, whereas here it is 100-140 a pood. Naturally, this creates a mess at stations and on transport. These conditions breed speculation. Such a situation can no

longer be endured. I proposed to conduct agitation for organized trips for grain through the cooperative society and collective farms, but then, 2-3 days ago, practically a ban on trips for grain came appeared from the NKPS [Commissariat of Transport]. Tickets are not being issued to farmers or they are issued in very limited numbers. Farmers have already asked me the question—why are they banning trips for grains? But this issue plays into the hands of the kulak. Every such fact is used against the party, against the collective farms. In the last while, anti-collective farm moods have intensified. In certain places people are leaving the collective farms, taking away the horses and other property.

I wrote this letter in Pryluky. I did not find anyone in Kharkiv, and I am sending it to you without [consulting] comrade Kosior and the other members of the Politburo. In closing, I once again request that you examine all methods and means in order to render urgent food assistance in grain to the Ukrainian village and to provide as quickly as possible buckwheat for sowing in order to cover what was left unsown.

H. Petrovsky

RDASPI. F. 82, op. 2, d. 139, ll. 162-163. V. Vasil'ev, Yu. Shapoval (eds.) *Komandyry velykoho holodu*. Kyiv, Geneza, 2001. Pp.212-215.

**Kaganovich to Stalin**  
**June 12, [1932]**

Greetings Comrade Stalin!

[...]

5. I am sending you letters from Petrovsky and Chubar. Chubar's letter is more businesslike and self-critical, it doesn't have the rubbish that was in Petrovsky's letter. Petrovsky starts from the very first lines to shift the blame to the CC VKP(b), declaring that he "understood the necessity of fulfilling the directives of the CC VKP(b) on grain procurements" as if they couldn't have raised all their issues at the CC VKP(b) in a timely and honest manner. He (Petrovsky) argues with those who tell the truth, that they were out of touch with the countryside and did not know the situation, but then he has to admit that they [the Ukrainians] concealed the truth from the CC VKP(b) and only began to talk when the CC pointed out the crying shame to them from Moscow. Practically speaking, his letter boils down to an effort, first, to lay the groundwork for rejecting grain procurements this year, which is absolutely inadmissible, and second, he and Chubar raise the question of providing grain assistance for food needs. In this respect we will have to provide partial assistance, the only question is the quantity. Please write your thoughts on this point? Kosior has written *nothing*.

[...]

All the best. Regards. Yours,  
L. Kaganovich.

F.558, op.11, d. 740, ll. 37-42. Stalin i Kaganovich Perepiska. 1931-1936. Moskva, ROSSPEN, 2001. P.164.

**Kaganovich to Stalin**  
**June 14, 1932**

Greetings Comrade Stalin.

[...]

2) The regions are pushing hard on the problem of grain, and we are refusing the overwhelming majority. Chubar also came to get some grain, we haven't decided anything yet, we only gave 50,000 poods for Moldavia. They are asking for 1.5 million, of course we have no means to give them that much, but we will have to help, especially the beet-growing districts. Please let us know your thoughts on this point, how much we can give them.

Right now we are preparing the issue of ensuring a successful harvest campaign.

Regards.

L. Kaganovich

F.558, op. 11, d. 740. ll. 43-52. Stalin i Kaganovich Perepiska. P. 168.

**Kaganovich to Stalin**  
**June 23, [1932]**

Greetings Comrade Stalin!

[...]

4) The PC of Foreign Trade included in the export-import plan for the third quarter the export of 60 million poods of grain and in addition to the delivery to ports of another 50 million poods as security for sale in October. It proposes that the annual plan for exports from the '32 harvest be increased to 4 million tons. We have not yet resolved this question. Of course it is imperative to export without fail immediately, and we should reject the attitudes that have taken shape on the basis of some difficulties in the last couple of months, to the effect that we shouldn't export, but the question is how much to export in the third quarter.

[...]

L. Kaganovich

F. 558, op. 11, d. 740, l. 76-81. Stalin i Kaganovich Perepiska. P. 188-189.

## **Resolution of the CEC and SNK of the USSR**

**August 7, 1932**

### **“On Protecting the Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms, and Cooperative Societies and Reinforcing the Status of State (Socialist) Property”**

In the recent time we have received an increased number of complaints from workers and collective farmers about cases of cargo theft from railway and river transport, as well as theft of property belonging to cooperative societies and collective farms. These acts of theft were perpetrated by hoodlums and antisocial elements. There has also been an increasing number of complaints about coercion and threats from kulak elements aimed at those collective farmers who refuse to withdraw from collective farms and continue honestly and selflessly to develop them.

The Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People Commissars of the USSR believe that public property (belonging to the state, collective farms, and cooperative societies) is the foundation of the Soviet state system, that it is sacred and inviolable and that people attempting to obtain public property into their private possession should be considered enemies of the people. In view of this, an unrelenting struggle against thieves of public property is the foremost duty of Soviet government bodies.

On the basis of these considerations and in order to grant the requests of workers and collective farmers, the Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People Commissars of the USSR have resolved:

#### **I**

1. Consider the importance of railway and river cargo equal to that of state property and reinforce cargo protection in every way.

2. As a measure of judicial repression for the theft of railway and river cargo, apply the highest measure of social protection—shooting and the confiscation of the entire property. Under alleviating circumstances, replace this measure with at least 10 years of imprisonment with the confiscation of property.

3. Do not apply amnesty to criminals guilty of cargo theft.

#### **II**

1. Consider the importance of property belonging to collective farms and cooperative societies (harvest in the field, public reserves, cattle, co-

operative societies' storehouses and stores, etc.) equal to that of state property and reinforce theft protection of this property in every way.

2. As a measure of judicial repression for the theft of property belonging to collective farms and cooperative societies, apply the highest measure of social protection—shooting and the confiscation of the entire property. Under alleviating circumstances, replace this measure with at least 10-year imprisonment with the confiscation of property.

3. Do not apply amnesty to criminals guilty of stealing property belonging to collective farms and cooperative societies.

### III

1. Launch an unrelenting struggle against antisocial kulak and capitalist elements which are using coercion and threats or endorse these measures regarding collective farmers in order to make them withdraw from collective farms and to cause the disintegration of collective farms. Consider these crimes equal in gravity to treason.

2. In the cases concerning the protection of collective farms and their workers from coercion and threats from kulak and other antisocial elements, apply such a measure of judicial repression as five to ten years of imprisonment in concentration camps.

3. Do not apply amnesty to criminals found guilty in these cases.

**Resolution of the CC VKP(B) and RNK USSR on Grain  
Procurement in Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and Western Oblast  
December 14, 1932**

On hearing the reports of Comrades Rumiantsev, Secretary of the Western Oblast Party Committee, Kosior, Secretary of the CC KP(b)U, Stroganov, Secretary of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Party Committee, and Sheboldaev, Secretary of the Northern Caucasus Krai Party Committee, the CC VKP(b) and the SNK USSR decree:

1. Oblige the CC KP(b)U and the Sovnarkom of the Ukrainian SSR, on the personal responsibility of Comrades Kosior and Chubar, to fully complete the grain and sunflower seed procurement plan by the end of January 1933.

2. Oblige the Northern Caucasus Krai Party and Executive Committees, on the personal responsibility of Comrades Sheboldaev and Larin, to fully complete the procurement plan for grain by Jan. 10-15, 1933, and for sunflower need by the end of January.

3. Oblige the Western Oblast Party and Executive Committees, on the personal responsibility of Comrades Rumiantsev and Shelekhes, to fully complete the procurement plan for grain by Jan. 1, 1933, and for flax by Feb. 1, 1933.

4. Due to the extremely poor efforts and the absence of revolutionary vigilance in a number of local party organizations in Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, a significant part of their raions has been infiltrated by counterrevolutionary elements—kulaks, former officers, Petliurites, supporters of the Kuban Rada, etc. They have managed to find their way into collective farms as directors and other influential members of administration, accountants, storekeepers, foremen at threshing floors, etc. They have succeeded in infiltrating village soviets, land management bodies, cooperative societies and are now trying to direct the work of these organizations contrary to the interests of the proletarian state and the party policy, as well as to organize a counterrevolutionary movement and the sabotage of the harvest and sowing campaigns. The CC VKP(b) and SNK USSR oblige the CC KP(b)U, Northern Caucasus Krai Party and Executive Committees, and the SNK of Ukraine to resolutely extirpate these counterrevolutionary elements by means of arrests, long-term deportation to concentration camps, without stopping short of capital punishment for the most malicious of these elements.

5. The Central Committee and Sovnarkom instruct party and government organizations of the Soviet Union that the worst enemies of the party, working class, and collective farm farmers are saboteurs of grain procurement who have party membership cards in their pockets. Playing into the hands of kulaks and other anti-Soviet elements, they organize state fraud, double-dealing, and attempts to defeat the fulfillment of the tasks set by the party and government. The Central Committee and Sovnarkom oblige the appropriate bodies to apply to these renegades and enemies of the Soviet power and collective farms, who still have party membership cards in their pockets, severe repressions, five- to ten-year deportation to concentration camps, and, under certain circumstances, execution by shooting.

6. The Central Committee and Sovnarkom point out that instead of correct Bolshevik-style implementation of the national policy, in a number of raions in Ukraine Ukrainization was carried out mechanically, without taking into consideration the peculiarities of every raion and meticulous selection of the Bolshevik cadre. This made it easier for bourgeois-nationalistic elements, Petliurites and others to create their legal cover-ups and counterrevolutionary cells and organizations.

7. In particular, the Central Committee and Sovnarkom point out to the Northern Caucasus Krai Party and Executive Committees that the irresponsible, non-Bolshevik "Ukrainization," which was at variance with the cultural interests of the population and which affected nearly half of the raions in the Northern Caucasus, as well as the complete lack of supervision on the part of territorial agencies over the Ukrainization of schools and the press, had provided the enemies of the Soviet power with a legal form for organizing resistance to the Soviet authorities' measures and tasks on the part of kulaks, officers, Cossack resettlers, members of the Kuban Rada, etc.

For the purpose of crushing the resistance to grain procurement mounted by kulak elements and their party and non-party menials, the CC and SNK USSR decree:

a. In the shortest time resettle to the northern oblasts of the USSR the entire population of the most counterrevolutionary Cossack village (*stanitsa*)—Poltavskaya (Northern Caucasus), with the exception of collective and individual farmers who are truly loyal to the Soviet power and have not been implicated in grain procurement sabotage. Populate this village with conscientious collective farmers who have served in the Red Army and are now working in other territories that suffer from the

shortage and poor quality of arable land. Transfer to these settlers all the lands, winter crops, buildings, equipment, and cattle of the farmers being resettled to the north.

Comrades Yagoda, Gamarnik (to be replaced by Bulygin), Sheboldaev, and Yevdokimov shall be responsible for implementing this resolution (section a).

b. Bring to justice and sentence to five to ten years in concentration camps the traitors of the party who were arrested in Ukraine for organizing grain procurement sabotage, such as former secretaries of raions and heads of executive committees, land management bodies, and raion soviets of collective farms viz Golovin, Pryhoda, Palamarchuk, Ordelian, Lutsenko (Orikhiv raion), Khoreshko, Us, Fishman (Balakliia raion), Yaremenko (Nosiv raion), Liashenko (Kobeliaky raion), and Lensky, Kosiachenko, Dvornik, Zyka, and Dolhov (Velykyi Tokmak raion).

c. Along with kulaks, resettle to northern oblasts all former communists who were expelled from the party for sabotaging the sowing and grain procurement campaigns.

d. Make a proposal to the CC KP(b)U and SNK of Ukraine to pay serious attention to the correct implementation of Ukrainization, eliminate its mechanical implementation, expel Petliurite and other bourgeois-nationalistic elements from party and government organizations, meticulously select and raise Ukrainian Bolshevik cadre, and ensure systematic party management and supervision over Ukrainization.

e. Immediately switch Soviet bodies, cooperative societies, and all newspapers and magazines in the Ukrainized raions of the Northern Caucasus from Ukrainian to Russian, as being more understandable to Kuban residents, and to prepare and change the language of instruction in schools to Russian by the autumn. The Central Committee and Sovnarkom oblige the Krai Party and Executive Committees to urgently examine and improve the composition of school teachers in the Ukrainized raions.

f. In cancellation of the old resolution, allow the delivery of goods to Ukrainian villages and grant Comrades Kosior and Chubar the right to suspend the delivery of goods to especially backward raions until they fulfill the grain procurement plan.

Head of the SNK USSR Viacheslav Molotov (Skriabin)

Secretary of the CC VKP(b) Joseph Stalin

RGASPI. F. 17, Op. 3. D. 2025. L. 42-42ob.

*Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*. Moscow 2001. Vol. 3. Pp.576-577.

**Directive of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government  
Prohibiting the Departure of Starving Farmers from Ukraine and  
the Kuban  
January 22, 1933**

*On 22 January 1933, secret instructions were sent from Moscow to Kharkiv, the capital of the Ukrainian SSR at that time, and to Rostov-on-Don, Voronezh, Stalingrad, Samara, Smolensk, Minsk as well as to several governmental centers of Russian and Belarusian regions bordering on Ukraine. The document demonstrates the national character of the genocidal policy pursued by the Kremlin. The target of the induced famine were the farmers of Ukraine and the ethnically Ukrainian Kuban region of the North Caucasus.*

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of Commissars of the USSR have received information that in the Kuban and Ukraine a massive departure of farmers "in search of bread" has begun into the [Russian] Central-Black Earth region, the Volga region, the Western and Moscow regions, and into Byelorussia. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of Commissars of the USSR do not doubt that this departure of farmers, like the departure from Ukraine last year, was organized by the enemies of Soviet power, the Socialist Revolutionaries and the agents of Poland, with the goal of agitation "through the farmers" in the northern regions of the USSR against the collective farms and against Soviet power as a whole. Last year the Party, Soviet and Chekist organs of Ukraine were caught napping by this counter-revolutionary trick of the enemies of Soviet power. This year we cannot allow a repetition of last year's mistake.

**First.** The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of Commissars of the USSR order the Regional Committees of the Party, the Regional Executive Committees and the Plenipotentiary of the OGPU [*political police*] of Northern Caucasus not to allow massive departure of farmers from the Northern Caucasus into other regions, or the entry into the Northern Caucasus from Ukraine.

**Second.** The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of Commissars order the Central Committee of the Ukrainian SSR, as well as [V. A.] Balitskii [*Moscow's OGPU agent in Ukraine*] and [S. F.] Redens [*head of the Ukrainian GPU*], not to allow a

massive outflow of farmers from Ukraine into other regions or the entry into Ukraine of farmers from the North Caucasus.

**Third.** The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of Commissars order the Plenipotentiary of the OGPU of the Moscow region, Central-Black Earth region, Western region, Belarus, Lower and Middle Volga regions, to immediately arrest all "farmers" of Ukraine and the North Caucasus who have broken through into the north and, after separating out the counter-revolutionary elements, to return the rest to their places of residence.

**Fourth.** The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of Commissars order Porokhov of the Transport Section of the GPU to give a similar order to the GPU Transport Organs.  
Chairman of the Council of Commissars of the USSR: V. M. Molotov  
Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party:  
J. Stalin

*[The original document appears in: Tragediia sovetskoi derevni. Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie. Dokumenty i materialy v 5 tomakh 1927-1939. Tom 3 Konets 1930-1933. Moskva, ROSSPEN, 2001.Pp.634-635.]*

**Resolution of the Politburo of the CC CP(b)U  
To carryout Stalin's directive on border closing  
January 23, 1933**

[From Minutes of the P.B. meeting. N.101, 23 January 1933]

**Directive of the CC AUCP(b) and the SNK USSR in connection with  
the mass departure of farmers beyond the borders of Ukraine.**

1. Send the following directive (see enclosure) to all oblast (provincial) committees and oblast (provincial) executive committees.

2. Order the plenipotentiary people's commissar of railway transport (comrade Lavrishchev) and the IUZhOKTO GPU [Southern District Transport Division of the GPU] to issue immediate instructions to all railway stations concerning the suspension of sales of tickets beyond the confines of Ukraine to farmers who do not have a certificate from the RIKs [Raion Executive Committees of Councils of Workers, Farmers, and Red Army Deputies] for the right to depart from state industrial and construction organizations stating that they have been recruited for one kind of work or another beyond the confines of Ukraine.

[In favor: Khataievich, Chubar, Iakir, Liubchenko, Balytsky, Serbychenko.

**Enclosure**

[To]

Koltsov – CC AUCP(b)

Comrades Lavrishchev, Druskis (all)

Comrades Sapov, Kuzmenko (p 1)

Oblast (province) [party] committees, oblast [administrative] executive committees.

Following last year's example, mass departures of farmers "for bread" have begun from some regions of Ukraine to Moscow, Western oblasts (provinces), Central-Chernozem oblasts (provinces), Belarus; there are cases where villages are being abandoned by nearly all individual farmers and some collective farm members. There are no doubts that such mass departures are being organized by the enemies of Soviet rule, SRs, and agents of Poland with the goal of agitating "via the farmers" in the northern regions of the USSR against the collective farms, against Soviet rule. Last year the party, Soviet, and Chekist organs of Ukraine

failed to spot this counter-revolutionary plan of the enemies of Soviet rule. This year the repetition of such a mistake cannot be permitted.

**The CC CP(b)U and the Radnarkom of the Ukrainian SSR propose:**

1. To adopt immediate decisive measures in each region concerning the prevention of a mass departure of individual collective farmers, issuing from Balytsky's GPU directive.

2. To carry out work with all kinds of recruiters of a workforce for deportation beyond the limits of Ukraine, to take them under strict control, and in necessary instances to isolate them from this work and exclude all counter-revolutionary elements.

3. To launch widespread explanatory work among collective farmers and individual farmers concerning unauthorized departures and abandonment of farms, and to warn them that in the event of a departure to other regions, they will be arrested.

4. To adopt measures to halt the sale of tickets beyond the confines of Ukraine to farmers who do not have a certificate from RIKs for the right to leave state industrial and construction organizations due to the fact that they have been recruited for one kind of job or another beyond the limits of Ukraine.

5. Provide a brief factual report about the state of affairs connected to the mass departure of farmers in your oblast no later than 6:00 p.m. on 24 January.

Khataievich, Secretary of the CC CP(b)Uv. Chubar, Head of the SNK of the Ukrainian

TsDAHOU. F. 1, op.16, spr.9, ark.114 – 116.

Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *Yak nas moryly holodom*. Kyiv, 2003. Pp. 156 – 158.

## Royal Consulate of Italy\*

Kharkiv  
May 31, 1933, Ref. No. 474/106  
Embassy of Italy, Moscow

### RE: THE FAMINE AND THE UKRAINIAN QUESTION

The famine continues to wreak havoc among the people, and one simply cannot fathom how the world can remain so indifferent to such a catastrophe and how the international press, which is so quick to bring international condemnation upon Germany for its so-called 'atrocious persecution of the Jews', can stand quietly by in the presence of this massacre organized by the Soviet government, in which the Jews play such a major role, albeit not the leading one.

For there is no doubt: 1) that this famine is primarily caused by a contrived scarcity designed 'to teach the farmers a lesson', and 2) that there is not one Jew among the famine victims; on the contrary, they are fat and well fed under the fraternal wing of the GPU.

The 'ethnographic material' must be changed, cynically stated one Jew who is a high ranking official in the local GPU. One can already foresee the final fate of this 'ethnographic material', which is destined for replacement.

However monstrous and incredible such a plan might appear, it should nevertheless be regarded as authentic and well under way.

Through barbaric requisitions (on which I have repeatedly reported), the Moscow government has effectively engineered not so much a scarcity (which would be putting it far too mildly) but rather a complete absence of every means of subsistence throughout the Ukrainian countryside, Kuban, and the Middle Volga.

Three considerations motives can be taken into account as having dictated such apolicy:

- 1) the farmers' passive resistance to collectivized agriculture;
- 2) the conviction that the 'ethnographic material' can never be reduced to an integral communist prototype;
- 3) the necessity or expediency, more or less openly acknowledged, of denationalizing those regions in which Ukrainian or

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\* Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine – 1932—1933: Report to Congress Commission on the Ukraine Famine. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 1988, pp. 424 – 427.

German consciousness have reawakened, threatening possible political difficulties in the future, and where, for the sake of the unity of the empire, it is better that a preponderantly Russian population reside. The first consideration must have led to the initial 'lesson' which, as confirmed! by many Party members, has undoubtedly been decided by the government.

The second consideration has at least contributed to the government's semicomplete lack of interest in the tragic consequences of the 'lesson'.

The third consideration is certainly destined to dispose of the Ukrainian problem within a few months at a cost of 10-15 million souls. Nor does this number appear exaggerated. In my opinion this number will be surpassed and may have already been reached.

### **Italian Diplomatic and Consular Dispatches**

This calamity, which is claiming millions of lives, is destroying the infancy of an entire nation and is really affecting only Ukraine, Kuban, and the Central Volga. Elsewhere it is felt much less or not at all.

Renowned professionals of every persuasion, who hold the tsarist regime in such low esteem and who have been persuaded to look favorably upon the current regime, and who have had occasion to travel through other parts of the Soviet Union, all confirm that the catastrophe is strictly confined to Ukraine, Kuban, and the Central Volga.

"The devastation starts past Kursk," said the writer Andreyev, who arrived several days ago from Moscow, adding, "that the Ukrainian villager will never again return to the soil. Those who survive wander far from their homeland, and no one will ever be able to revive in him any trust for the current regime. The collective farms also suffer terrible starvation. They are being dissolved by the high mortality and the flight of those survivors to the cities. Everyone is escaping to the major centers. But even if their strength enables them to reach the city, death by starvation awaits them there as well, for they have no money and there is no one to help them. My daughter has just turned 15, but she has not even had the opportunity to see our country as it used to be, prosperous and happy. Perhaps 'salvation' will come by means of the villagers' total annihilation. The government will supplant him with a new element, who will till the soil like a worker in the factory. But experience teaches that in the hands of the present regime the factories will also produce nothing. And so shall it be with the earth, and once it is organized into state farms

the regime will eventually collapse. I have returned from visiting several inhabitants of the area near Leningrad. They complain that 50 to 60% of their cattle have perished. And these are gentlemen who eat bread every day. They have nothing to complain of! They have it easy and should come here to see what is happening!" This conversation took place at the home of mutual acquaintances.

These general comments have been prompted by the course of events that led up to the current disaster.

I think it advisable to share another episode which illustrates the situation:

One Comrade Frenkel, a member of the GPU collegium, once confided to someone of our acquaintance that 250 corpses of famine victims are gathered nightly in the streets of Kharkiv. For my part, I can testify to having seen trucks with 10-15 bodies drive by the consulate after midnight. Three large apartment buildings are being built not far from the consulate, and the trucks stopped at the fence, while two supervisors went in with hay pitchforks to look for the dead. I saw them pick up seven bodies from the site with these pitchforks: Two men, one woman, and four children. Other people woke up and disappeared like shadows. One of the two doing this work said to me, "You don't have this where you come from, do you?"

On the morning of the 21st at the marketplace the dead were gathered like piles of rags, in mud and human manure, along the barrier which bounds the square near the river. There were about 30 of them. On the morning of the 23rd they numbered 51. An infant was sucking the breast of a dead mother whose face was gray in color. The people said, "These are the buds of the socialist Spring."

One afternoon I was going down Pushkin Street toward the center of the city. It was raining. Three *bezprizornye* passed in front of me, pretending to scuffle. One was pushed and fell into a woman who was carrying a pot of *borshch* covered with a kerchief. The pot was knocked to the ground and broke. The culprit ran away, but the other two gathered the soup in the mud with their hands and swallowed it. They then put some of it in a cap for the third one.

On this same Pushkin Street, 20 or 30 meters from the consulate, a farmer woman spent the whole day with her two children curled up on the corner sidewalk, like many mothers all along the street. She held the customary tin can, an old box of saved items without a cover and from time to time someone would throw a kopeck into it. That evening with a

single gesture she pushed her children away, rose to her feet, and threw herself into the path of a street car coming at full speed. Half an hour later I saw a street sweeper scraping up the unfortunate woman's guts. The children had been standing there watching all the time.

Only a week ago a service was organized for rounding up the abandoned children. In addition to the farmers who pour into the city because they no longer have any hope of survival in the countryside, there are also many children that are brought here and abandoned by parents who then return to the village to die. They hope that someone in the city would care for their child. Until last week the children were left crying on doorsteps, sidewalks, and everywhere. You could see ten-year-olds playing mother to three- and four-year-olds. As night approached they would cover the little ones with their own coat or kerchief and sleep on the ground with a tin can at their sides for a possible coin.

For a week already the municipal workers have been mobilized to go around the city in white jackets, round up the children, and take them to the nearest police station, often amid scenes of desperation, cries, and tears. There is a police station in front of the consulate, and every moment you can hear cries of desperation, "I don't want to go to the death shanties; leave me to die in peace."

Around midnight they begin to take the children in trucks to the North Donets station to be loaded on freight trains. This is where they also bring children gathered from the villages, or found on trains, along with farmer families and the solitary older people rounded up in the city during the day. The 'sorting' is performed by sanitation workers (according to one physician these are the real heroes of the day; so far 40% of them have died from typhus contracted in the course of their work). Those who are not yet swollen and show some chance of recovery are sent to the Holodna Hora camps where about 8,000, mainly children, lie in agony on hay inside large barns. A doctor assigned there has told me that they are given 1 milk and soup but that these supplies are obviously scarce and sporadic. They make do 'any way they can'. From 80 to 100 die each day. "A Russian doctor can no longer have a sensitive heart," he said, "but I have lived through one heart-breaking crisis after another."

The swollen people are taken by freight train into the countryside, about 50 to 60 kilometers from the city so that no one will see them die. The cars are filled up and then barred shut. It often happens that the train is full after just a couple of days, because the cars are all closed up. A few days ago a worker assigned to the train was passing by one of the

cars when he heard someone call out. As he came closer he heard a wretched man inside begging him to be let out because the stench of the corpses had become unbearable. Opening the car, the worker found this man alone still alive. He was then taken to another car to die, one in which those locked in were still alive.

Upon arrival at their unloading point, large pits are dug and the dead are removed from the cars. I was told that no one is terribly fussy and that often one of

### **Italian Diplomatic and Consular Dispatches**

Those thrown in the pit reawakens and moves in a final flash of life. But the grave-diggers' work is not interrupted and the unloading continues.

I have received these particulars from the sanitation workers and can vouch for their authenticity:

In the Holodna Hora prison an average of 30 people die each day.

The village of Grakhovo about 50 kilometers from Kharkiv had 1300 inhabitants and today has only 200 left.

The district of Poltava seems the most severely stricken and is even worse than Kharkiv. In the city of Poltava even the doctors are beginning to swell up from lack of nourishment.

A Communist Youth League member from Sumy wrote to a girl in Kharkiv, saying that families were killing the youngest children and eating them.

I enclose a sample of a powder made from roots used to make a woody porridge in the Belgorod region.

In front of Mr. Ballovich's house a distinguished-looking elderly man suddenly bent down over a pile of wood shavings and swallowed a handful.

I enclose a photograph of a young child who was brought here from the Middle Volga by a family of German origin for repatriation through the German Consulate General. The resemblance to a decrepit old man is one frequently encountered even here in Kharkiv.

I would finally like to mention the suicide of GPU General Brodsky. On the 18th of this month, having returned from an inspection of the countryside and following a terrible row with Balytsky during which he repeatedly cried that this was not communism but 'an abomination', that he had had enough of such inspections, and that never again would he go anywhere to carry out 'orders' (it seems that he was supposed to carry out some act of repression), he shot himself in the head with a pistol.

Similar reasons were involved in the case of Khvyliovyi and Hirniak. These latter two, given their particularly interesting political repercussions, are dealt with in a separate report.

Finally, a high-ranking official in the local government and Party member whose name I have been unable to determine, has gone insane after inspecting the countryside. They had to put him in a strait jacket. He was also in a frenzy and was crying out, "This isn't communism; it's murder."

In conclusion: The current disaster will bring about a preponderantly Russian colonization of Ukraine. It will transform its ethnographic character. In a future time, perhaps very soon, one will no longer be able to speak of a Ukraine, or a Ukrainian people, and thus not even of a Ukrainian problem, because Ukraine will become a *de facto* Russian region.

Sincerely yours,  
The Royal Consul, Gradenigo

**Letter from the Chairman of the Kharkiv oblast department of the  
Secret Service Z.Katsnelson  
to the Head of the Secret Service of the Ukrainian SSR  
V.Balytsky  
about the spreading of the famine.  
June 5, 1933**

To the Chairman of the Secret Service of the Ukr.SSR Comrade Balytsky  
Personal Letter

The food supply situation throughout the regions of the Kharkiv oblast, already hard, has recently sharply deteriorated. As a result, we have a considerable increase in the influx of the homeless, uncared for and begging element in the city of Kharkiv. If during the months of January and February the number of those picked up in the city was:

grownup homeless	257	persons
sick and invalids	15	”
children and teenagers	<u>373</u>	”
TOTAL	645	”

and in March - April, correspondingly:

grownup homeless	2560	persons
sick and invalids	113	”
children and teenagers	<u>1806</u>	”
TOTAL	4476	”

then in the month of May the number of those picked up rose to:

grownup Homeless	4439	persons
sick and invalids	585	”
children and teenagers	<u>6378</u>	”
TOTAL	11402	”

while during the three days of June is was

grownup homeless	313	persons
sick and invalids	157	”
children and teenagers	<u>606</u>	”
TOTAL	1077	”

These numbers apply to the city itself not counting the railroad stations where the children are being picked up by Comrade Bronevoy commission without involving the police. The total number of those picked up by the commission amounts to 10,000. Furthermore, the number of corpses of farmers who died of hunger and are being picked up in

the streets of Kharkiv has also sharply increased. In February the number of such corpses that were picked up was 431, in March - 689, in April - 477, while the month of May shows the following:

in the first 10 days	182	corpses
in the second 10 days	300	"
in the third 10 days	<u>510</u>	"
TOTAL	992	"

and in the first three days of June the number was 196. The situation in the villages is no better: the problems with the food supplies are growing every day spreading to ever new inhabited areas. This can be seen from the following data:

By the 1st of March the number of oblast regions experiencing difficulties with the food supplies was 21, of the populated areas 82

By the 1st of April - regions 35, populated areas 225

By the 1st of May - regions 42, populated areas 532

By the 1st of June - regions 59, populated areas 585

The level of difficulties with the food supplies throughout the regions can be characterized by the following data:

Heavily affected regions - 23, incl. populated areas 296

Less heavily affected regions - 17, incl. populated areas 178

The least affected regions - 18, incl. populated areas 107

Extremely affected by the shortage of food supplies are the regions of Khorol, Chutovo, Novo-Georgievo, Poltava, Kremenchug, Reshetylvka, Krasnograd, Kobeliaky, Globinsk, Miropol, Chuguevo and Novo Sanzhar, where the rate of sickness and mortality caused by exhaustion is assuming threatening proportions. In some villages the grown up population has left for various cities in search of earnings and food leaving the children to the mercy of fate.

In a number of villages in the indicated regions the great majority of those who are starving are the collective farmers and their families. Many of them are sick and swollen due to malnutrition, and in many instances they receive no help because there are no food supplies resources whatsoever available. As a result several people die every daily. The main kinds of nourishment in the regions affected by the food shortage are: potatoes picked in the fields, all sorts of refuse (garbage), husk, weed seeds etc.

In some regions, what serves as food supply is the meat of the fallen animals (pigs and horses), while in the regions of Novo-Sanzharsk,

Kobeliaky, Krasnograd and a few others cases are recorded of using the meat of dogs and cats as food. At the same time, there is an increase in cannibalism and corpse consumption. Not infrequent are the cases when parents of children who died of hunger use their corpses as food. Also there are facts of members of a family exhausted by malnutrition killing weaker members, especially children, and using the meat as food. The following are the data showing the increase of cases of cannibalism and corpse consumption throughout the regions of oblast:

by the 1st of March	9 cases
by the 1st of April	58 "
by the 1st of May	132 "
by the 1st of June	221 "

The greatest majority of letters, which I personally receive from the administrators of our regional departments describe an extremely difficult situation in their regions. I consider it important to quote some of them:

- In the Bakalaev region out of the 48 village soviets 26 village soviets with 39 collective farms are undergoing special difficulties with food supplies.
- Only 15 villages with 24 collective farms are in a comparatively satisfactory condition with regard to supplies. Thus, the village Chepyshki, consisting of 500 homesteads, has turned into a wilderness. Only every 3rd or 4th house is inhabited. There is no sound heard either by day or by night; in the morning no smoke is coming from the chimneys.
- In the period from the month of March to the 30th of May over 300 people died in the village, of which 95% were collective farmers. In the village of Lyman almost 1/4 of the population has left going beyond the region in search of food, the children are left to the mercy of fate. All the dogs and cats in the village have been eaten.
- The corpses of the dead animals, as a rule, are buried in the ground, yet, as soon as the representative of the village soviet leaves, they are exhumed and carried away for consumption. The number of swollen and weakened people is reaching 100.
- In the village Vovchy Yar, with 800 homesteads, about 8-12 collective farmers die every day. In the last month and a half over 2,500 have died.
- Two cases of cannibalism have been recorded in the village.

- In the region of Novo-Sanzharsk out of 25 village soviets 18 are experiencing food shortage. In the majority of villages there up to 45% collective farmers and private landowners have no food supplies whatsoever. In every one of those villages there are nearly 60 swollen families with at least 200 members.
- In the last 3 months up to 3,000 cases of death from exhaustion have been recorded. Mortality is growing daily. In some villages several people die every day.
- The region has over 2,000 homesteads, which do not participate at all in sowing due to malnutrition and the resulting exhaustion. In a number of villages the parents have abandoned their children to the mercy of fate. The children are lying in mud along the fences.
- 7 cases of cannibalism and corpse consumption have been discovered in the region.
- In the Krasnodar region out of 49 village soviets 14 experience special hardships with food supplies while another 18 experience them in a lesser degree.
- Aspecially heavy food shortage, malnutrition and the resulting exhaustion are noticed in 103 collective farms of the region. In the months of April and May, 14 cases of cannibalism have been recorded.
- The situation in certain villages is described as follows:
  - Petrivka village. In the collective farm "Sickle and Hammer" over 600 died in the last two months Out of 295 people able to work only 35 report for work. The great majority of the rest is exhausted - are sick and swollen. Some collective farmers have left the village altogether in search of food.
  - Berestovenka village. Mortality is growing with every day. In the Kirikolokski area alone over 100 people have died. In the Voroshilov collective farm 2-3 people die daily. The situation is the same in other collective farms.
  - Many parents throw out their children to the street or take them to the closest railroad stations.
  - Ulianivka village. 20 people have died in the Kotovsky collective farm and 50 in the collective farm "Shliakh Lenina" ("Lenin's Road").

- 50% of the collective farmers are lying swollen. In the above named villages, as well as in others, which are especially hit by the food shortage they use as food the meat of the fallen horses, dogs and cats.
- In the region of Novo-Vodolazhsk there are 5 village soviets especially hit by food shortages. In the last 2 months about 800 people died in those villages. Many collective farmers and private landowners are exhausted, lying sick and swollen.
- Furthermore, over 700 of those able to work have lately left the villages of Znamenka, Manuylovo, Troyanoe, Fedorivka and others going beyond the region borders in search of bread (food).
- As a result the number of uncared- for children has considerably increased. Many children, abandoned by their parents to the mercy of fate, are now roaming the villages begging . Some collective farmers and private landowners, having no means of sustenance, also roam the villages leading a parasite form of life.
- Thefts have now greatly increased in the villages. The collective farmers steal from each other cows, horses as well as various food supplies. The stolen cows and horses are killed for food.
- In the region of Hadiach 10 village soviets are particularly heavily hit by the food shortages. Over 2,000 cases of death from exhaustion have been registered there in the last few months.
- It is necessary to point out that mortality has assumed such wide proportions that several village soviets stopped registering the number of deaths.
- The number of uncared- for children is growing every day. Children roam the villages begging. Nurseries are filled to the brim, they are not provided with food supplies, in many instances children experience hunger and use all kinds of substitutes as food. This leads to frequent cases of sickness and death among children.
- In a number of village soviets entire families have migrated to the nearby cities, where some of them found jobs while others go around begging.
- As a result of difficulties with the food supplies the number of thefts in the region has increased to dangerous levels.
- In the period of March to May 228 thefts and armed robberies have been recorded in the region.

- In Krasnoznamenny, Kharkovetsky and other village soviets there were cases of suicide due to extreme exhaustion.
- Some collective farmers feed themselves with the meat of the dead horses and other animals.
- In the region of Izium 14 village soviets are experiencing difficulties with food supplies. A total of 15,000 are starving, mostly collective farmers. Due to extreme exhaustion 2,502 cases of death have been registered in the above named villages within the last 5 months.
- In a series of collective farms (Neskorodkovsky, Brigadirovsky, Gorokhovatsky, Malo-Kamyshevakhsky and a number of others) the administration issues meat of the dead horses as food to the collective farmers.
- Also, there are more cases of parents abandoning their children at the office entrances in the regional center or simply in the streets. Within the last month 657 abandoned children have been picked up and sent to the children's homes.
- A similar situation is observed in other regions of the oblast, which are especially hard hit by the food shortage.

Undoubtedly, the regional as well as the oblast organizations have conducted an intensive search of food supply resources and worked hard to provide help to those collective farmers and private land owners in special need of provisions. However, in view of the fact, that the amount of help provided was limited and the level of food shortages was constantly increasing, no real improvement of the situation has been reached. A further increase in the food shortages presents a direct threat to a satisfactory fulfillment of the following economic and political campaigns in the villages - that of harvesting and of weeding. Therefore it is necessary to take immediate measures in increasing help with food supplies in the affected regions so as to alleviate their difficulties with food shortages.

HEAD OF THE KHARKIV OBLAST  
 DEPARTMENT OF GPU OF UKR.SSR  
 Katsnelson  
 5/VI/1933

*Ukrainian bread for export: 1932-1933.* –K.2006 - pp.303-310. Central State Archives of Ukraine. - F1, op.20, spr.6276- Ark.39-46. The original is typewritten.

**Letter to Joseph Stalin**  
**from Reva Nikolai Antonovich,**  
**collective farm worker from the village Khylykivka, Poltava oblast,**  
**concerning the mass famine in 1933.**  
**May 1, 1940**

Moscow, Kremlin, Central Committee of the Communist Party, to Com-  
rade Stalin.

From citizen Reva Nikolai Antonovich, Poltava oblast, Pokrovo-  
Bogachansk region, village Khylykivka<sup>1</sup>

Dear Iosif Vissarionovich!

A bold idea came to me to write to you, as you are our friend, teacher and father, the whole truth, not the kind they write in the papers and you are reading. You may find some truth there, but very rarely so considering the ocean of people we have. Those scribblers besiege the newspapers with their truth while no one ever stands up in our defense because you are far away and do not know about our misery and suffering.

**We, as collective farm workers<sup>2</sup> in our oblast and region, do not live but merely subsist, and we only exist as laborers for the state and not for ourselves. Our condition from year to year gets ever worse. Never in its history has Ukraine known such a hard life. Our collective farmers are ragged, barefoot, and what is the worst, our people are hungry. How long will this go on? Neither you nor the authorities tell us the truth and somehow it all turns out contrary -- the old women, who have lost their minds, foretell it with amazing accuracy much more accurately than you do.**

The black reaction of 1933, the year of famine, when people ate tree bark, grass and even their own children, when hundreds of thousands starved to death, **and it all was happening in plain view of the communists who drove around in their cars over our corpses while insolently praising the good life.** They themselves, of course, were well ed. What a shame that such things were happening in a country with the greatest freedom on earth.

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<sup>1</sup> A rectangular stamp with a date in the middle saying "Received on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1940".

<sup>2</sup> Here and elsewhere in the document certain lines are underlined by hand.

People were starving not because of poor harvest but because the state took away the grain from the people, and that grain was being stored in the storehouses of "Zagotzerno"(Grain Storage) and distilled into the intoxicating spirit while people were dying of hunger. But you yourself, Iosif Vissarionovich, said that human beings are the most precious capital, yet this capital, year after year, turns into manure. In 1933, when starving people were collecting grains of corn near "Zagotzerno" at the Khorol station, they were being shot at like dogs. A squadron of mounted police was summoned from the town of Khorol and, drawing their sabers, they attacked us like lions. And this was taking place at the time when there was plenty of grain, there was flour in the storages yet people were dying of hunger. It means that it was all deliberately planned by the state and the government knew about it because many of our countrymen, swollen due to hunger, came to Moscow and all other major cities, and died there. And as a result many villages and farmsteads became empty. For those children who stayed alive they set up orphanages. In our village, in this school year of 1941, only three children will be entering the first grade - that is what the year 1933 has done. The village soviet(council) will not release information about mortality in 1933 because that year mortality exceeded the number of death during 50 years. Those, who survived such hardship, became damaged. I myself can serve as an example. We, collective farmers, became swollen, we could not walk, our mental capacities deteriorated, our vision lessened by several %, our health was gone and so was our strength, our bodies became weak, visits to the hospital became frequent. There are many sick people today in the areas where famine raged in 1933.

All this happened in full view of the Communists. They should feel guilty and ashamed for not having had the courage to address the higher authorities, to trumpet about such tragedy so as to prevent it from going on. Even abroad, as it was reported in "Izvestija", they knew about it, which means that the enemies of the people were doing it without any hindrance, but you, Iosif Vissarionovich, apparently did not know about it for no one informed you about it. The Communists were concerned more about saving their own skin, because if they uttered a word in defense of the starving people, they would have to share their lot.

This is how we are appreciated, Iosif Vissarionovich. Today, it is all repeated again: the collective farmers receive between 140 and 900 gram of grain per working day, so the government has forbidden sale of flour and bread, the railroads do not sell tickets to those who want to travel

elsewhere in search of food. They don't let us go to Moscow, Kyiv or Kharkiv, for, indeed, it would be a shame to allow such ragged emaciated folk with their bags to enter those gorgeous cities where the authorities and foreigners might see them. So it appears that people were meant to be squashed. The railroad stations are packed with those human relics, people besiege the railroad cars and stations, being fined in the most shameful manner. People abandon their homes, their collective farms and wanders in search of a better life. All this because of bread.

We know how to work very well, leaving nothing unharvested, all the tasks are carried out, yet we have no bread nor any money. And on top of that - thank you - we are taxed in an outrageous manner. The taxes are such that to pay them equals buying one's freedom. Because if you do not pay you lose your freedom and they sell all your miserable belongings. I witnessed it myself how they were judging the man who has not paid taxes. He didn't even look like a human being but like some relics in rags.

Well, there is no mercy to anyone. With all the meat being delivered to the state, a person has nothing to eat, not even one gram of meat a year, yet he must deliver it to the state on top of the monetary taxes. Probably nowhere in the world is there such a mockery of the population, and not just the people but also the animals-- people are forced to breed enormous amount of cattle, yet the cattle are starving and dying, we cannot fulfill the required delivery quota. Most of the work is done now by tractors. We have raised a lot of horses, it would have been better if there were only half of the number, and if they had good fodder to eat we could use them in all our work, but now our animals are suffering and we, people, suffer too for nothing. People today are reminiscing in a positive way about the land owners and the old times when there was plenty to eat, an overabundance of food, and people never went hungry. Such talk speaks volumes about life today. We and our children, year- in and year- out, suffer from hunger and cold. Five years ago our village was bathed in gardens, today all the trees have been chopped down for fuel, and the village stands naked, ragged. In our collective farms we have no holidays, no days off, we live like slaves only for labor, and in return we are hungry, miserable, and exhausted.

If some year the harvest happens to be good, so that a working day brings in 2 kg or more, our regional authorities deem it too much, and they force us to sell the grain to the state. They keep people sitting at meetings for three days and nights at a time, stopping all work, until with

all kinds of machinations and threatening they force people to agree to sell it. And the farmers have to return to work without any compensation. So the collective farmers feel hurt by such treatment on the part of the authorities. We give everything to the state and remain hungry and freezing, we are mistreated and not respected, and we lack food in a country of plenty. This looks like a deliberately planned starvation of the people.

What is written here, Iosif Vissarionovich, is the truth, although not complete truth since it is impossible to describe everything, it can only be related but to tell it to our higher-ups means to subject oneself to a great danger. Here I am writing to you this letter, brief as it is, because to describe it all would amount to a huge volume. And I suspect that this letter will not be allowed to reach you, while I myself, being considered guilty of "counter revolution", would be deported to the white bears like a bandit.

Well, I beg you, Iosif Vissarionovich, to give us sustenance of which the main part is bread. For we feel insulted when we have to work producing bread and not eating it ourselves. Perhaps you could set up a minimum amount of grain allocation per working day, because **in our collective farm "Leninsky Shliakh" we receive 900 gram** per working day, and with such an amount one cannot go far. You yourself have said, at the Second convention of collective farmers, that even 8 kg per working day is not enough.

If you don't believe what I wrote, then I beg you, send to me here your trusted individual or a secret service man, and let him check and prove that everything described here is true

And I ask you, Iosif Vissarionovich, to respond to my letter after reading it personally, and to help us in our misfortune so that we would know for sure whether our government and the party would help us or not. I told many collective farmers about this letter, and if our and your father have ever experienced such hardships then you would believe us.

Autographed by Reva N.

The document bears a resolution: "To the member of the Bureau of the obkom (regional committee) comrade Bukhtjarov. I ask you to review this letter in its essence and to report the results by 1/VI/40". Signature is illegible. 19/V/40

State Archives of Ukraine's Secret Service, Poltava. File 11754, pp.241-246. Original is in handwritng.

## Eyewitness Famine Accounts

HOLODOMOR is the Ukrainian word for death by starvation. However, when referring to the Holodomor of 1932-1933, the meaning and magnitude of this word are not easily conveyed. For this reason, the authors of this concise collection have decided, with a heavy heart, to include eyewitness accounts of individuals who miraculously survived the cruel hand of Soviet policy in Ukraine and were brave enough to recount the terror they endured.

Taking the reader through the various phases of the planned Genocide, which was unleashed upon the Ukrainian nation, the testimonials below shed light on the true face of evil, which befell Ukraine in 1932-1933. After reading the excerpts below, the reader will agree that the word HOLODOMOR is best translated as Genocide.

The following eyewitness accounts convey the deliberate Soviet policy to crush the nationally conscious Ukrainian farmers, resulting in the deaths and starvation of anywhere from seven to ten million innocent victims...

*"The most devastating effects of the famine occurred in the months of March, April, May and June of 1933. These four months spared no-one; people died in dwellings, yards, alleys, and city streets."* - Tetyana Budko, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, Detroit, 1955, p. 532.

*"We arrived at the large village of Petrovo towards evening. An unearthly silence prevailed. 'All the dogs have been eaten, that's why it's so quiet,' the farmer who led us to the Political Department said."* - Victor Kravchenko, I Chose Freedom: The Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official, New York, 1946, p. 112.

*"I will not tell you about the dead,' she said. 'The half dead, the nearly dead are even worse. There are hundreds of people bloated with hunger. We've eaten everything we could lay our hands on-cats, dogs, field mice, birds. When it's light tomorrow you will see the trees have been stripped of their bark, for that too has been eaten."* - Victor Kravchenko, I Chose Freedom: The

Personal and Political Life of a Soviet Official, New York, 1946, p. 113.

Unable to fill the crippling grain quotas of Stalin's "harsh collectivization" of agriculture, the Soviet government sent thousands of Communist agents to terrorize the countryside and confiscate all the grain from the homes of the villagers...

*"The members of the commission, headed by Lyabunov, broke into farmers' homes, took everything they could lay their hands on, smashed the brick ovens, drove the half-clad families out, including children, then nailed the doors and windows amid the cries of the victimized people and coldly proceeded to the next house."* - M. Inhulets, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, Detroit, 1955, p. 355.

*"One day the search brigade came to the home of a farmer in Obukihiv village. The commander of the brigade persisted that the man show him where he had hidden his pork fat. The farmer turned to the Icon in the corner of the room and made the sign of the cross. Then he grabbed his old butcher's axe and in an instant split open the head of the "25 thousander."* - F. Pravoberezhny, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, Detroit, 1955, p 405.

Withholding or stealing grain, considered property of the Soviet Union, became a crime punishable by death...

*"1933 was a year of terrible famine in Ukraine. The collective farm posse, guarding the still unreaped patches in the fields, caught Hrisha with the gleanings and brought him to the village soviet. The village soviet held a public trial, and in accordance with Soviet law, sentenced him to execution by a firing squad. Hrisha clutched his rye stalks and would not let them be taken away. When the trial was over, Hrisha was immediately executed on the spot."* - P. Chonusky, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, Detroit, 1955, pp. 448-449.

*"Some farmers were distended to such an extent that, after filling their bundles, they were unable to carry them as far as their homes and died on the way. The following night, the NKVD went shooting through the length and breadth of the village of Sahaydaky carrying off all those who had taken any grain from the station."* - N. Reshetylivsky, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, Detroit, 1955, p. 581.

**The Soviet government sealed Ukraine's borders. Left with nothing to eat, many villagers tried to escape in search of food...**

*"The farmers with faces and legs swollen from the hunger of the famine were invading the town, and were dying in masses in the streets. The administration of the town was unable to bury the dead farmers in time, and there was a repulsive odor in the air during all this time. They police, or rather militia patrols, driving along the streets, collected the corpses. They also took those completely exhausted by starvation who arrived in town to ask for " a little bit of bread", put them on the mound of corpses saying, " you'll get there, don't worry." I saw this all myself and quite often – Testimony of Dr. Anna Pachkovska for the Hearings of the House Select Committee of Communist Aggression, United States Court House, Chicago, Illinois, October 1954.*

*"Before they had completely lost their strength, the farmers went on foot across country to the railroad. When the Kyiv-Odesa express came past, they would just kneel and cry: "Bread, bread!" They would lift up their horrible starving children for people to see. And sometimes people would throw them pieces of bread and other scraps." - Vasily Grossman, Forever Flowering, Harper And Row, New York, 1972.*

*"I saw the ravages of the famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine-hordes of families in rags begging at the railway stations, the women lifting up to the compartment windows their starving brats, which with drumstick limbs, big cadaverous heads and puffed bellies, looked like the embryos out of alcoholic bottles." - Arthur Koestler, The God That Failed, p. 68.*

*"At the beginning of 1933, when hunger set in, the people began to leave their homes in despair. They boarded trains at the Hlobyno Station to go into the wide world and thus escape the imminent death by starvation. Their corpses filled the railway stations and city streets throughout Ukraine...Whole families were thus wiped out of existence in the months of March, April and May. The dead were not buried for as long as two or three weeks, for there was hardly anybody alive to bury them. Those who survived were the next candidates for the world beyond. They looked like horrible specters with swollen faces and legs. One fourth of the entire population of 2,600 inhabitants of Horby perished from the artificially created famine." Testimony of Fedir*

Soshenko for the Hearings of House Select Committee on Communist Aggression, United States Court House, Chicago, Illinois, October 12, 1954.

...or carried out unthinkable acts...

*"My niece notified me that Vasyl's boy, Mykola, had died. I went to his dwelling and saw the older boy hanging from a rope in the kitchen. When I saw Vasyl, I asked him: "Vasyl, what are you doing?" He nonchalantly replied: "I hanged the boy. There was nothing to eat. When my wife brings some food, she gives it to the children and I get nothing. Now when she brings the food, they will not be here and I will get everything." - D. Solovey, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, Detroit, 1955, p. 530.*

*"Misfortune befell Vasyl. His neighbor, Mostovy, died of starvation. The widow had slaughtered a cow in order to feed her starving children. She prepared a generous meal for the starving Vasyl. He died on the spot as a result of the meal." - Natalka Liutarevich, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, Detroit, 1955, pp. 533-534.*

And some even resorted to cannibalism...

*"I remember a case in 1933. I saw a woman with a valise. I saw a man come over to her-a man who bore all the marks of starvation. He bought himself a portion and began eating. As he ate his portion he noticed that a human finger was imbedded in the jelly. People came running, gathered around her, and seeing what her food consisted of, took her to the police station. At the police station were two members of the NKVD who, instead of taking action against her, let her go laughing, "What, have you killed a kulak? Good for you!" - unknown witness*

*"After she was interred the neighbors started wondering what had happened to her daughter Vaska. They entered Kulina's house and began to search for the child. In the oven they found a pot containing a boiled liver, heart, and lungs. In the warming oven they found a large earthenware bowl filled with fresh salted meat, and in the cellar under a barrel they discovered a small hole in which a child's head, feet, and hands were buried. It was the head of Kulina's little daughter, Vaska." -Andriy Melezhyk, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, 1955, p. 655.*

*"A spectacle I shall never forget was when a sixteen year old boy, who, besides his stepmother, was the only survivor in the family, swollen from starvation, crawled up to the place where the dead stallion had been finding a hoof, snatched it in both hands, and gnawed furiously. The boy was never seen again and unofficial rumors circulated that he had been eaten by his stepmother." - Yavdokym Bodnar, The Black Deeds of The Kremlin: A White Book, Globe Press, 1955, pp. 566-567.*

The 1932-1933 HOLODOMOR ranks among the worst cases of man's inhumanity towards man, and perhaps the most extreme example of the use of food as a weapon.

It is undeniable that the Soviet government committed Genocide against the Ukrainian nation in 1932-1933.

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