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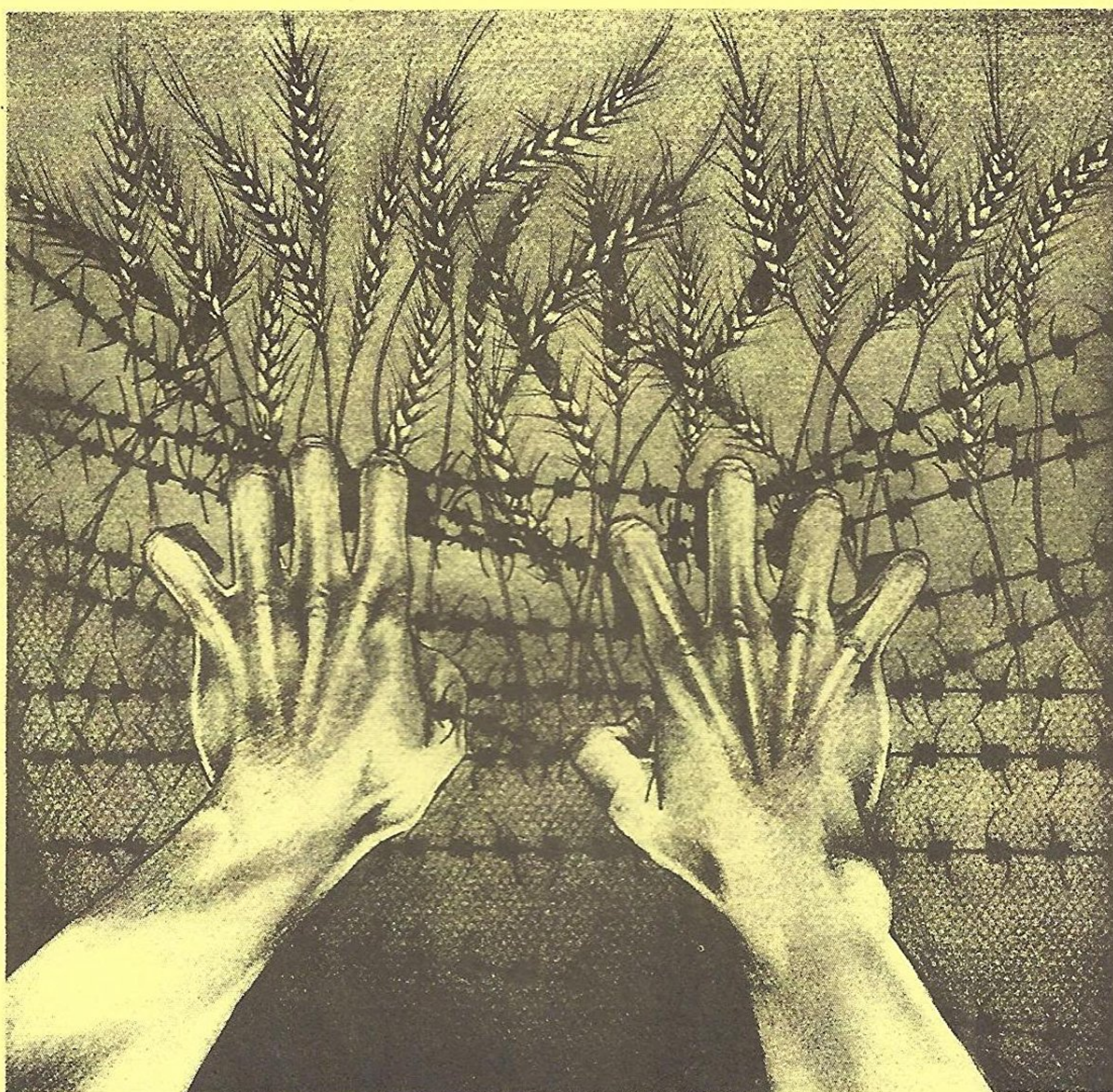
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REVUE CANADIENNE AMERICAINE D'ETUDES SLAVES

## HOLODOMOR

The Ukrainian Genocide  
1932-1933

Guest Editor:  
CHERYL MADDEN





## FOREWORD/AVANT-PROPOS

PETER BORISOW (Los Angeles, USA)

### 1933. GENOCIDE. TEN MILLION. HOLODOMOR

2003 marks the seventieth anniversary of the *Holodomor*, the deliberate killing of ten million Ukrainians in the genocide of 1932-1933. Yes, the number is ten million. It is Roman Krutzyk's current number, based on research by Memorial in Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> It is the number quoted by famed Politburo defector Victor Kravchenko at his trial in Paris in 1949.<sup>2</sup> It is also the figure used privately in 1933, by Stalin's apologist, *The New York Times*' infamous Walter Duranty (who later lied in print about the genocide).<sup>3</sup> If these three, each for different reasons in a position to know, each working at a different time and from a different perspective, all present the same number – if the best and the worst concur on that number – then, it works for me.

Ukrainians in Ukraine, as well as in the diaspora, are taking the initiative to tell the story of this nightmare to a worldwide public which is almost totally ignorant of the events. In many ways, our tragedy is one of the best-kept secrets of modern history.

This part of our history is largely unknown for many reasons. The Soviets were ruthless in destroying anyone who spoke about it. Survivors were (and many still are) afraid of retribution. The USSR had an elaborate program of disinformation to deny its deeds. Many of us who spoke out in the West were either not believed or ignored. Today, Russia, as the successor state to the

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1. Speech by Roman Krutzyk at St. Georges Academy, New York, March 30, 2003, on the occasion of the presentation of "Not a Thing to Forget" exhibition by the All Ukrainian "Memorial" Society. See *"Not to be Forgotten": A Chronicle of the Communist Inquisition in Ukraine 1917-1991* (Kyiv: Kyiv City Organization of the All Ukrainian Memorial Society of Vasyl Stus, 2003), p. 13.

2. "Transcript of Trial of Victor Kravchenko, Paris, France, January 26, 1949," bk. 3, pp. 33-39, in Archives of Victor Kravchenko, ed. Andrew Kravchenko, Los Angeles, California.

3. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine 1932-1933 Western Archives. Testimonies and New Research*, ed. Wesevolod W. Isajiw (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003), p. 86; Sally Taylor, "A Blanket of Silence: The Response of the Western Press Corps in Moscow to the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933," *ibid.*, pp. 77-91; Great Britain. Foreign Office. *General Correspondence: Political* FO 371/17253. "Tour of Mr. W. Duranty in North Caucasus and the Ukraine," William Strang (Moscow) to Sir John Simon, Foreign Secretary, September 26, 1933, Registry Number N7182/114/38.

USSR, vigorously continues to deny the genocide, although they do admit, ever so speciously, that there was a "famine".

Our tragedy has failed to catch the imagination of the general public. There are no best selling books about it. There are no Western movies about it. True, our resources to tell the story have been, and still remain, limited. Nevertheless, I believe we can do a better job telling our story to the world.

One of the difficulties we have faced, especially with the U.S. public, is how to focus public attention in a time of sound bites. In the English-speaking world, sound bites create the impression that stays with the public. Whether it is a presidential campaign or a new pair of sneakers, anything that requires more than a quick look will be ignored by most people. If we are to get our message across, especially to the American public, we must use instantly identifiable sound bites for our tragedy – sound bites that will be understood by virtually everyone. Another axiom in modern communication is "repetition works". The more often you repeat that sound bite, the more people will remember it. We need to tell our story with the right words, repeat them and then repeat them some more.

Only two words fit the bill: Genocide and *Holodomor*. The events of 1932-33 were Genocide. Period. There is no further discussion on the events that occurred. Rabid Russophiles, die-hard communists, paid propagandists and some of the just plain congenitally stupid will continue to debate the issue forever. No serious person or scholar still debates the facts of the Ukrainian genocide. The more we learn of the events, the more they fit perfectly the definition of genocide as stated in the United Nations Convention on Genocide (1948).<sup>4</sup>

Today, everyone knows what "genocide" means. That does not, however, preclude an energetic debate about the precise definition of "genocide" and who is properly entitled to use the term. The crux of the debate is not about what happened to any one group. It is all about tailoring the definition so precisely that it will include one group and exclude another (or others) in the battle for the hearts and minds of the world public and especially of the American public.

Let us not kid ourselves – this is not a debate over entries in a dictionary or footnotes in history books. The battle for the hearts and minds of the American public is a battle for massive public dollars and huge political power. This is all about controlling tools to build the future – money and power. Our history puts us in the middle of this debate whether we like it or not. Either our voice will be heard and our story judged on its merits or it will be diluted into a curious footnote. It is up to us. Yes, it is "just" a battle of

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4. *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ed.-in-chief Israel W. Charney (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 2: 579-80.

words, but the stakes are enormous. The words we choose will determine the results we get.

Even though there is no question of the validity of using “genocide” in the context of the events of 1932-1933 in Ukraine, the word “genocide” is not completely adequate for our purposes. When we first started telling our story, there was no existing word that could describe the unique form of genocidal horror that was inflicted upon Ukrainians. In time, a new word emerged – “*Holodomor*”. “*Holodomor*” is a very important word and a very good word for the purpose. It is the only word that really fits the elements of the events and the enormity of those events.

“*Holodomor*” is the unique English language label for the Ukrainian genocide the same way the word “Holocaust” is accepted for the Jewish genocide. Although relatively new, “*Holodomor*” is rapidly gaining usage and acceptance. This genuinely Ukrainian word joins the technical and emotional parts of the Ukrainian genocide. It is an accurate picture of what our genocide was like. “*Holod*” means “hunger, starvation”.<sup>5</sup> “*Mor*” is more complex. Alone, it means “pestilence,” “plague”.<sup>6</sup> The verb “*mordovate*” means “to excruciate,” “to torment or torture,” “to rack” (as in medieval torture chambers).<sup>7</sup> *Holodomor* thus carries with it the concept of premeditated, unrelenting, wide ranging and excruciating massive acts of torture and starvation. It was a plague of torture and starvation. This is how our families died. Not in a famine, but in a “*Holodomor*.”

We should use “*Holodomor*” as the stand-alone English word to name the unique genocide that was inflicted upon Ukrainians in 1932-1933. It should always be capitalized the same way you would capitalize World War II or Holocaust. Its impact should not be diluted with any hyphenations. If addressing an audience that might not be familiar with it, use “*Holodomor*, the Ukrainian genocide.” In time, it will gain wide usage and acceptance in the English language, especially if we use it consistently and repeatedly and push for its inclusion in dictionaries and for its use in media and publications.

Equally important, we need to understand the damage being done to our cause by the misnomers and why we once used them – and then to abandon them forever. Of all the misnomers, the most common one, “famine” is certainly the one that does Ukrainians the greatest disservice. For the generation that lived through the genocide, like my parents, there was no other word to use. The word “genocide” was not even coined until 1944, when it was intro-

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5. M. L. Podvesko, *Ukrainian-English Dictionary* (New York: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1954), p. 196, trans. from *Ukrainian Dictionary* (Kyiv, 1948).

6. *Ibid.*, p. 438.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 439.



duced by Raphael Lemkin, a Ukrainian Jewish lawyer from Lviv, who used it to describe the horrors that were inflicted upon Jews by the Nazis.<sup>8</sup>

At the time of the events, "*holod*" was the natural word to use. Our parents and other survivors described what they saw and felt – it was "*holod*," meaning hunger. On a wide scale, especially in the press of that period, it was described as "famine". Everyone was stymied by the inadequacy of the vocabulary at the time to describe our horror. Today, we are no longer limited by vocabulary in any language. We have a choice of words and our story is mediated by our selection. Our choice of inadequate words weakens our case and insults the sacrifices of our families and our heritage. We should know better and today we do know better. Our message will be much clearer and stronger when Ukrainians stay focused on "genocide" and "*holodomor*".

When people hear "famine" they think of crop failures or locusts or some other terrible natural disaster. Maybe there was no rain. Yes, it is tragic, but it is not even close to conveying the horror of what happened to our families. Famine was one of the instruments of the Ukrainian Genocide. But, the events were genocide, not famine. Famine was an instrument of the genocide in the same way as were bullets, beatings and freezing to death in exile. We do not talk about the great "Bullet" or the great "Freezing". Why must we, seventy years later, with an English vocabulary adequate for the purpose, continue talking about the great "Famine"? If someone is stabbed to death, do you raise the cry of "Murder!" or do you run around screaming "Knife!"?

I always note that Russia, as the successor state to the USSR, is now quick to agree there was a "famine," but vigorously denies there was any "genocide". All the various groups with vested interests in one way or another, be it denial of our history or accountability for it – or simply not wanting our story to compete with their own story for the hearts and minds of the world public – all these various groups are happy to talk about our "famine". But, they go nuts when you mention "genocide". Oh, no! Yours was not a genocide – that was ours. You are the folks with the "famine". "Genocide" is the heavy artillery in the "win the hearts and minds" business. "Famine" is the pea-shooter. It is up to us to choose our weapons.

"Famine-genocide" is a half step in the right direction. Lose the first part of it and we are there. The problem with it is that most people, even the well educated, are confused by "famine-genocide." What was it – a "famine" or a "genocide"? Is it the same as a "genocide-famine"? Or, is it a "genocidal famine"? These are all great technical terms for a graduate school dissertation. In the competition to tell our story to the general public, they just create confusion. "Famine genocide" is firing a pea from a cannon.

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8. *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, pp. 402-03.



In real life, especially among the general public, few have the time or attention span to bother with our technical explanations. The problem is that short attention span – if a sound bite is too complicated, they just will not bother. The fastidious technocrats who use these complex terms may be technically correct, but who understands them? These are the folks who upon finding that same man stabbed to death in the street announce to the public, “Cessation of mitochondrial function due to severing of inferior vena cava followed by massive diversion of system hemodynamics . . . .” Are you asleep yet? Is anyone out there inspired to call the police? Where is the remote?

This confusion seriously hurts our story. One reason Ukrainians were not named in The Genocide Resolution currently pending in Congress (HR 139)<sup>9</sup> is that many sponsors and endorsers did not really understand that the Ukrainian “famine” was really a genocide. Some had heard about the “famine genocide” but still are not sure that it was a real genocide. Other groups, those who do not confuse the issue and simply call their tragedies “genocide,” were named – Armenians, Jews, Cambodians and Rwandans. Ukrainians, the largest European victim group of genocide in the twentieth century,<sup>10</sup> were not named and must now find comfort knowing they are silently included in “and others.”

Some have told me that this alleged confusion with HR 139 was just an excuse. They say there are other (political) reasons why Ukrainians were not named in HR 139. That may be. But, we gave them the excuse. If that is the case, they used our own words against us. The most regrettable side effect of our confusing nomenclature is that it does make work easier for revisionists who try to reduce our history to a vacuous footnote or lose it altogether in mass confusion. My question is, “Why are we continuing to give them tools to use against us?” Even if we are successful in getting a separate Ukrainian resolution passed, we should still be included in any Congressional resolution on genocide. Can you imagine a Congressional resolution on genocide that does not name the Holocaust and its six million victims? How can we pretend it is O.K. to ignore the *Holodomor* and its ten million victims?

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9. 108th Congress. House of Representatives, 1st Session, Judiciary Committee. Report, May 22, 2003, *HR 193: Reaffirming Support of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and Anticipating the 15th Anniversary of the Enactment of the Genocide Convention Implementation Act of 1987 (the Proxmire Act) on November 4, 2003*.

10. In terms of body count the largest genocide is believed to have occurred in China, where more than twenty million people are reported to have been killed between 1959 to 1961 during the “Great Leap Forward.” See *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes. Terror. Repression*, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Mark Kramer, ed. Mark Kramer. Foreword by Martin Malia (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1999), p. 464.



Our challenge is to tell the story of our tragedy, of the horrific premeditated and precisely inflicted slaughter of our families, in a manner that conveys not only what happened but also the enormity, the agony and the horror of what happened. The *Holodomor* is the largest European genocide of the twentieth century. An entire country, the largest country in Europe, was turned into one huge, mind-boggling, never ending, inescapable concentration camp run by sadistic commandants. The insanity was not just sanctioned, it was ordered by the government. Hell did freeze over – and it was brought to Ukraine. Ten million Ukrainians were killed. They almost succeeded in destroying us altogether.

This is not a debate about the past. This is a battle for the future, the future of Ukraine and Ukrainians.

The *Holodomor* is the Ukrainian genocide of 1932-1933.

Ten Million Ukrainians were killed in the *Holodomor*.

Let us never forget the greatest tragedy of our history. Let us never fail to tell our story. Let us tell our story in a clear and consistent fashion using words that the public will understand and remember.

1933. Genocide. Ten Million. *Holodomor*.



## INTRODUCTION

CHERYL A. MADDEN (Providence, RI, USA)

### INTRODUCTION

The year 2003 is the seventieth anniversary of the *Holodomor*, the murder-by-starvation of millions of people in Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and Lower Volga regions of the former Soviet Union. On May 15, 2003, the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) passed a resolution declaring the *Holodomor* was an act of genocide.<sup>1</sup>

The Stalinist Soviet government issued famine-inducing edicts, decrees, and laws, and coupled these with the power of its security organs and military to commit this act of genocide. Many of the ways in which the people would normally find food with which to feed themselves became illegal. For example, the rules of *de-kulakization* meant it was against the law for anyone to feed or shelter these dispossessed people and/or their children. Gleaning, traveling to other areas to find work and food, the possession of grindstones or mortar-and-pestles with which to grind grains of wheat to enable proper digestion; all these means of acquiring food were against the law. Grindstones and mortars-and-pestles were confiscated.<sup>2</sup> The premise, "From each according to his abilities; to each according to his needs," was interpreted to mean that the elderly, sick, disabled (including disabled veterans), and children who were too young to work were "useless eaters."<sup>3</sup> After removing all the foodstuffs from blacklisted areas, the military and the security organs cordoned off these areas, and enforced the government's policy of, "No food in; No people out." In the vain attempt to live, the victims ate anything they could find: carrion, weeds, bits of grain retrieved from boiled manure, and so

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1. Roman Woronowycz, "Verkhovna Rada Declares Famine of 1932-1933 Act of Genocide," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 22, Parsippany, New Jersey, June 1, 2003, <http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/2003/220301.shtml> (July 5, 2003).

2. O. Pidhainy, et al., eds., *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book*. Vol. Two: *The Great Famine in Ukraine*, with an introduction by Charles J. Kersten (Detroit: The Globe Press; The Democratic Organization of Ukrainians Formerly Persecuted by the Soviet Regime in U.S.A. [DOBRUS]; the World Federation of Ukrainian Former Political Prisoners and Victims of the Soviet Regime [FUP], 1955), pp. 483-86.

3. Miron Dolot, *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust*. Introduction by Adam Ulam (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1985), p. 91.



on. Songbirds were hunted to such an extent that they were depopulated in some areas of Ukraine.<sup>4</sup> There were acts of cannibalism. How could a mother feed her children? Too often, she could not:

On Friday before Easter, we buried the younger girl and the older one died the next day.

My poor mother started to pull her hair, cursing the government authorities and commissars who had ruined the farms, and chased all the people to perdition to the end of the world [sic], killing their children with hunger, cold and persecution so that there should not remain anyone who could say later that the authorities ruined our property and killed our father. And now instead of gay and happy children, small crosses stand in the cemetery as the only traces of the innocent victims of wild tyrants.<sup>5</sup>

That Stalin's propaganda machine was so successful in keeping news of this genocide from the outside world is a tribute to the pervasiveness of the systems of control then firmly in place. Apologists like Walter Duranty, *The New York Times* reporter in the Soviet Union, recanted the official Soviet line in his articles published in this newspaper of international repute. His articles denied reports made by Gareth Jones and Malcolm Muggeridge, who wrote about the Holodomor as it was taking place. Duranty was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for his reporting from the Soviet Union. A postcard protest campaign organized by the Ukrainian community is presently underway demanding that the Pulitzer Committee revoke Duranty's Pulitzer Prize. The Ukrainians have been joined in this quest for justice by individuals from around the world, the British news media,<sup>6</sup> and other news organizations, among these including United Press International,<sup>7</sup> National Public Radio,<sup>8</sup> and *The Moscow Times*.<sup>9</sup>

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4. *Ibid.*, p. 173.

5. Vladimir Pachamowicz, "Vladimir Pachamowicz's Account," in Leonard Leshuk, ed., *Days of Famine, Nights of Terror: Firsthand Accounts of Soviet Collectivization 1928-1934* (Washington, DC: Europa Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 60-61.

6. Dr. Siriol Colley, and Nigel Colley, "Open Letter to revoke Duranty's Pulitzer on behalf of Gareth Jones (bad PR for the New York Times)," June 24, 2003, <http://www.firecrepublic.com/focus/f-news/935018/posts> (July 5, 2003).

7. Martin Sieff [UPI Senior News Analyst], "Commentary: Gareth Jones, Hero of Ukraine," June 12, 2003, at: <http://www.upi.com/view.cfm?StoryID=20030611-012334-4255r> (June 13, 2003).

8. Bob Garfield, "The Pulitzer Pulled?," On The Media. National Public Radio (NPR), Washington, DC, June 13, 2003.

9. Matt Bivens, "One Pulitzer that Should Shake the World," Opinion section, *The Moscow Times*, June 16, 2003, p. 10.



The authors whose contributions are included in this commemorative edition of *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* address a variety of aspects of the history of the *Holodomor*. Peter Borisow was born in a refugee camp in Germany in 1946. His parents were Ukrainian nationalists, whose entire families were killed between 1921 and 1933. Mr. Borisow emigrated to the United States as a Displaced Person in 1950. A graduate of New York University, his career has spanned several aspects of the arts, trade and finance. He developed insured film finance in 1984. He is the president of a privately held firm specializing in analysis and management of equity risk in film investment for investors, banks and insurers. He is President of the Hollywood Trident Foundation, and the President of the Genocide Awareness Foundation. His article "1933. Genocide. Ten Million. *Holodomor*," discusses the need for Ukrainians to consistently label the *Holodomor* as such, in order to define the genocidal horrors of politically enforced starvation suffered by its victims that was inflicted upon them by the Stalinist Soviet regime. As Borisow states, it is necessary to correct the public perception of the term, "famine," as a naturally occurring, weather-generated event.

Siriol Colley, M.D., is the niece of the Welsh reporter, Gareth Jones, whose groundbreaking articles based on his three trips to the USSR (1930, 1931, and 1933) first reported the Famine to the West. Her son, Nigel Colley, is a graduate of York University in Toronto. He is the webmaster of the website dedicated to Gareth Jones' work, [www.colley.co.uk/garethjones](http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones). For the most part, since Gareth's murder in Inner Mongolia in 1935, his work has been forgotten by historians. To correct this oversight, Siriol Colley wrote *Gareth Jones: A Manchuko Incident* [published in 2001], based on his articles, letters and diaries, as well as documents from the Public Record Office, letters from Lloyd George's secretary and research on the current situation of the time in Japan and China. It was edited by Nigel Colley. Fortunately, Gareth's mother, Mrs. Edgar Jones, had preserved these documents. The Colleys wrote their contribution to this journal, "Gareth Jones: A Voice Crying in the Wilderness, 1905-1935," based on these primary source documents.

Dr. Daria Darewych is an art historian and prolific writer specializing in Ukrainian art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She received her doctorate from the University of London, and is a Professor of Art History at York University. She was the Art Editor for *The Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, volumes 3-5. In 2000, she was elected President of the Shevchenko Society of Canada. Her article, "Images and Evocations of the Famine-Genocide in Ukrainian Art," suggests some of the reasons for the absence of direct documentary portrayals of the Famine. She discusses the works of Kasimir Malevych, and introduces a few of the growing number of works of art evoking the Famine that were created more recently in Ukraine and the diaspora.



Dr. James E. Mace is Professor of Political Science at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy National University. In the 1980s, he chaired the United States Congressional Commission on the Ukrainian Famine. He has written extensively on the subject of the *Holodomor*, and is a frequent contributor to the *Kyiv Day*. In his article, "Is the Ukrainian Genocide a Myth?," Dr. Mace discusses the relevance of a letter written by Stalin to Lazar Kaganovich on September 11, 1932. The roles that Kaganovich and Molotov played in the grain procurement procedures help to define the *Holodomor* as a deliberate genocidal act perpetrated by the highest levels of Soviet Government. Dr. Mace explains the meaning of the word, "*Holodomor*" and its acceptance as the term denoting the Famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933. Significantly, the use of Ukrainian language in the Kuban region further evidences that the *Holodomor* was intended to destroy the Ukrainian culture and language, as well as its people.

Cheryl A. Madden, the Guest-Editor of this edition of *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, is a Master's Degree candidate at Providence College. Her historical specializations are the history of the *Holodomor*, and the forced repatriations of Slavs and others circa the conclusion of World War II. She is the author of the recently published book, *The Ukrainian Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933, and Aspects of Stalinism: An Annotated Bibliography-in-Progress in the English Language, Part One: Books*. Madden's article, "The *Holodomor*, 1932-1933," addresses some of the issues raised by the Famine deniers. Drawing from recently published German-Russian primary source famine letters, German and Italian diplomatic sources, as well as Ukrainian sources, her article provides an overview of the *Holodomor*. She points out that a re-emotionalization of history is needed, lest the fact that for any individual to have suffered the hunger-death is morally unacceptable is forgotten by the historiographers of the subject. Ms. Madden's review article, "Ethnic Germans in the USSR Reveal Soviet Realities: 1925-1937," describes a book containing two-hundred translated primary-source letters of appeal written by German-Russians living in the Famine-afflicted areas of the USSR. These letters addressed to friends, family, and various relief-agencies, and churches in the United States and Germany evoke the depths of human misery and despair experienced by the Famine victims as they suffered the hunger-death. This review also can be viewed cyberly at the website of the German-Russian Heritage Society of North Dakota State University under Ms. Madden's nom-de-plume, Lesia Chernihivska. The URL of this review is:

[http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc/info/book\\_reviews/chernihivska.html](http://www.lib.ndsu.nodak.edu/grhc/info/book_reviews/chernihivska.html)

Her other contribution to this journal is, "A Selective Annotated Bibliography of Books in English Regarding the *Holodomor* and Stalinism," that is similarly detailed to her previously published bibliography.



Johan Öhman is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of History, Lund University in Sweden. He also is affiliated with the Department of East European Studies, Uppsala University. His dissertation, written under the supervision of Professor Klas-Göran Karlsson, deals with the relations between the Holocaust, the Terror-Famine, and historical culture in Ukraine during the 1990s. His article explores the ways in which the historical facts of the *Holodomor* and Ukrainian subjugation by the Soviet Union have influenced the formation of national and personal identity and Ukrainian historical culture in the present day. Of particular interest is his discussion of the history of the Ukrainian past in general, and of the *Holodomor* specifically, as these subjects are presented in Ukrainian textbooks.

Larissa M. L. Zaleska Onyshkevych (Ph.D. University of Pennsylvania) specializes in modern Ukrainian drama. An educator, editor, and translator, she has published 2 anthologies and over 60 articles on Ukrainian drama as well as numerous studies of Ukrainian literature and orthography. She has also edited an anthology of Ukrainian poetry of the 1980s translated into English, and has also translated other Ukrainian poetry and drama. She is now President of the Shevchenko Scientific Society of the USA. Dr. Onyshkevych's article, "The *Holodomor* of 1932-1933 as Presented in Drama and the Issue of Blame," explores the literary contributions of several playwrights from Ukraine and the Diaspora. Their works bring to the visual forum the physical, emotional, and spiritual agonies that the victims of the *Holodomor* experienced.

Orysia Paszczak Tracz is a political studies graduate of George Washington University. She lectures, translates, and writes about Ukrainian ethnography, and is a columnist for *The Ukrainian Weekly*. She is the author of, "Denied, Defiled, or Ignored – the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933, Fifty Years Later," and translator of *Ukrainian Antiquities: Folk Art of the Hutsul and Pokuttia Regions in Private Collections*, and *Ukrainian Folk Costume*. Her article, "Testimony – from *Holod-33*," is a series of translated primary source testimonies from the Ukrainian text. The human aspects of these testimonies bring the full force of the horror of the Famine to the viewer's consciousness and conceptualization of its cruel realities. Tracz's article addresses the topics of public and private memory, and the facts of the *Holodomor*, no matter how unpleasant it may be to gentle sensibilities to discuss such things.

The cover (*A Fine Harvest*, 10 x 10 inches, conte and graphite) and frontispiece (*Hunger and Silence*, 9 x 14 inches, conte and graphite) illustrations are the work of Josuha Vossler, a freelance artist who graduated summa cum laude from North Dakota State University. He is presently studying medieval British Literature at the University of Arizona, where he teaches freshmen composition classes. His evocative artwork also graces the book, *We'll Meet Again in Heaven: Germans in the Soviet Union Write Their American Relatives, 1925-1937*, by Ronald J. Vossler.



## ARTICLES

CHERYL A. MADDEN (Providence, RI, USA)

### *THE HOLODOMOR, 1932-1933*

The genocidal famine of 1932-1933, also known by its Ukrainian name, *Holodomor*, meaning, "Terror-Famine," decimated the peasant population in Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus, and the Kuban and Lower-Volga Regions of the USSR. A quarter of the Ukrainian population perished.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 2002, an inquiry posted by Lesia Chernihivska to the H-RUSSIA List (part of Michigan State University's Humanities-on-Line Network) instigated a lively scholarly debate. During the related exchange, Professor Mark Tauger of West Virginia University questioned the genocidal nature of the *Holodomor*, and suggested that "devotees" of the Famine might have a somewhat nationalistically slanted approach in their opinions thereof. He also stated that the "memoirs and even letters from the period" should not be treated as "absolute truth but as emotional expressions of traumatized people" referring to literature about this syndrome and its effect on memory.<sup>2</sup> According to the definition of posttraumatic stress syndrome provided by the American Veterans Association, some people develop this psychological disorder after a traumatic event disrupts their lives. Significant to Tauger's point, those experiencing PTSD have to actually witness or experience the traumatic event in order to develop the psychological reaction because of it. Neither do all victims of such a trauma develop any long-term psychosis. Those most likely to develop the syndrome are those who have experienced:

Victimization . . . betrayal . . . early age of onset and longer-lasting childhood trauma, lack of functional social support, and concurrent stressful life events, those who report greater perceived threat or danger,

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1. Stephen Devereux, "Famine in the Twentieth Century: IDS Working Paper 105" (Brighton, UK: Institute of Developmental Studies, January 2000), p. 10.

2. Lesia Chernihivska, Mark Tauger, *et al.*, "Ukrainian Famine: QUERY," *et al.*, April 5, 2002-May 19, 2002, a series of messages archived at the H-RUSSIA website maintained by Michigan State University. These messages are conveniently compiled at the ArtUkraine.com website <<http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/hrussia1.htm>> n.d. (November 17, 2002). Several selected posts enclosed in the Appendix.



suffering, upset, terror, and horror or fear. Those with a social environment that produces shame, guilt, stigmatization, or self-hatred.<sup>3</sup>

In response to the issues raised in this cyber-discussion, let us consider the various aspects of the *Holodomor* from the point of view of foreign and domestic documentation, testimonies, and other available data.

During the early 1930s, Soviet citizens were still able to mail letters to relatives and friends living outside the Soviet Union. An extensive primary source archive of personal letters of appeal written by victims of Stalin's various policies is housed at the North Dakota State University Library. A compilation of these letters was translated and edited by Professor Ronald J. Vossler in his book, *We'll Meet Again in Heaven: Germans in the Soviet Union Write Their American Relatives, 1925-1937*. The Germans, who wrote to the outside world, were the descendents of those invited into Russia from their former homelands by Tsarina Catherine II. The North Dakota newspaper, *Dakota Rundschau*, published one of the most unusual letters, dated June 13, 1930. Written from Moscow, the letter states:

We are waiting for Germany to free us from this "freedom." With such a prospect, I went to the German ambassador in Moscow. I spoke to him. My great hope became a bitter disappointment. We were a delegation of 12 people, from many places in Russia. All had but a single hope, only one request. But the German ambassador explained very quickly that there was not going to be an exodus to Germany. The German embassy put no effort into trying to allow us to emigrate. Everything we heard about a favorable attitude toward emigration to Germany and America through letters from foreign countries were rumors. Judge for yourselves what should become of us. Fifty-five percent of the German farmers have been driven from house and home. I was sentenced myself, my entire inheritance has been confiscated, and . . . we are to be resettled. . . . But to where, no one knows. . . . The ambassador robbed us of our last hope. The miserable situation that has struck us is unspeakably great.<sup>4</sup>

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3. United States Veterans Association, "What is Posttraumatic Stress Disorder?," Oct. 13, 2002,

<[http://www.ncptsd.org/facts/general/fs\\_what\\_is\\_pstd.html](http://www.ncptsd.org/facts/general/fs_what_is_pstd.html)> (December 1, 2002).

4. Ronald J. Vossler, trans and ed., *Until We Meet Again in Heaven: Germans in the Soviet Union Write Their American Relatives, 1925-1937* (Fargo: Germans from Russia Heritage Collection and North Dakota Univ. Library, 2001), pp. 103-04.

This particular letter is unsigned in Vossler's book, but another letter dated April 1932, explains the reason why. Especially when publishing the letters, the real names of the correspondents had to be changed or deleted to protect their identities from Soviet authorities even here in America:

Esteemed editor! I am sending two letters. . . . Please, for both of them, don't mention the names of my family, because even in the United States, there are members of the secret police and spies. One shot my brother two years ago. Another brother, and his family too, was banished to Solovki.<sup>5</sup>

By early 1935, Soviet citizens no longer had uninhibited access to the international mails. A letter from the village of Glueckstal, South Russia, dated February 2, 1935, pleads:

I would have written to you earlier, but we are not supposed to write for help from out of the country. Dear brother, you write that you sent me 5 dollars. But I don't dare inquire if I have received, or might receive, the money. You shouldn't have sent it because now I am in much anxiety if they find out. . . . We are in constant fear, with no hour certain, for from here many more families are being deported, and for that very reason, that they've received help from outside the country.<sup>6</sup>

Vossler provides historical background in his book to explain the various Soviet gambits to those unfamiliar with Soviet history.

Another book of these letters is *Days of Famine, Nights of Terror: First-hand Accounts of Soviet Collectivization, 1928-1934*, edited and annotated by Leonard Leshuk. This source includes a G-2 Report from Major Emer Yeager, Military Attaché in Warsaw. It recommends the veracity of a lengthy and detailed autobiography by Vladimir Pachamowicz describing his experiences with dekulakization, deportation, and the related confiscations, and other terror-inducing factors of starvation, and forced labor. Major Yeager's report to his superiors is dated May 16, 1931. Leshuk analyzes the various chapters of his book, including a photograph of "Russian Hunger Letters Exhibited in Berlin" indexed in the National Archives collection of *The New York Times* photographs for the year 1933. "Reports in US government intel-

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5. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 241-42.



ligence files mention such displays in Germany at that time, thus confirming their existence."<sup>7</sup>

Realizing the potential for panic if the true census figures were made public, Stalin ordered the Soviet Census of 1937 destroyed, because it numerically portrayed the demographic disaster of the Famine and related policies. Demographer Mark Tolts, citing the Soviet statistician, Mikhail Veniaminovich Kurman, explains that the projected population figure of 170 million was not reached. Interestingly, Stalin had bragged several years earlier that the population of the USSR would match the growth rate of the 1920s, reaching the figure of 168 million by 1933. Tolts refers to facts presented by Urianis in his book, *Problems of the Dynamics of the USSR's population*, "... the population on April 1, 1933, was 158 million. . . . It is now known that even in the cities of the European part of the USSR, deaths exceeded births in 1933."<sup>8</sup>

Such an overwhelming famine situation should have been cause for national and international action to save as many victims as possible through prompt food distribution and medical assistance. During the earlier 1920s famine in the Soviet Union, such foreign aid was gratefully accepted and achieved positive lifesaving results. However, in the case of the Holodomor, Soviet propagandized denials that famine conditions existed. Press reports of questionable accuracy submitted by correspondent Walter Duranty of *The New York Times* reports effectively channeled and lessened Western comprehension of the suffering and deaths caused by the deliberately destructive Stalinist policies. Referring to Duranty, James Crowl states:

It seems that the man who was for more than a decade the eyes and ears of *The New York Times* in Moscow and who helped shape American opinion on subjects from the struggle to succeed Lenin to the famine of 1932-34 may have been a Soviet hirling.<sup>9</sup>

Crowl critiques Duranty's reporting further by stating that he did not conduct independent research to validate his press writings:

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7. Leonard Leshuk, *Days of Famine, Nights of Terror: Firsthand Accounts of Soviet Collectivization, 1928-1934*, trans from the German by Raimund Rueger (Washington, DC: Europa Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 231 and 235.

8. Mark Tolts, "What would the 'Lost' 1937 Census Tell Us About Stalin and Collectivization?," *Ogonëk*, 51 (Dec. 1987), in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 40, no. 3, Febr. 17, 1988, 12.

9. James William Crowl, *Angels in Stalin's Paradise* (Lanham, MD: Univ. Press of America, 1982), p. 35.

In fact, his articles showed that he relied entirely on official sources of information. Anyone in the West who cared to subscribe to a Soviet newspaper could have written much the same description of Soviet conditions.<sup>10</sup>

Duranty's most infamous article, however, baldly stated that famine conditions did not exist. He allowed that a food shortage was evident, but that "there is no famine or actual starvation, nor is there likely to be."<sup>11</sup> Given the reputation of *The New York Times*, Duranty's articles were particularly damaging. He later received the coveted Pulitzer Prize for his reporting from the Soviet Union. Reasoning how the august *The New York Times* could tolerate such sloppy craftsmanship by their ace reporter, Crowl cites the following warning by Karl Bickel, President of the United Press:

Americans who suppose that editors are inclined to cheer their correspondents in the fearless pursuit of truth have a naively idyllic view of modern journalism. They forget that the principal commodity of the newspaper is news, not truth, and the two do not always coincide. . . . The correspondent who gets himself expelled or even disliked for talking out of turn puts his employers to great expense and, more important, endangers their sources of information.<sup>12</sup>

The Soviet system applied a great deal of legalized force to extract grain and other foodstuffs from the peasantry, who fully realized their lives were imperiled by the irrationally high grain quotas imposed upon them. University of Quebec Professor of History, Roman Serbyn, notes that Andrew Cairns, a wheat expert in the employ of The Empire Wheat Board [London] visited the famine areas in 1932. Cairns observed, "there was practically no bread because the government had collected so much grain and exported it to England and Italy."<sup>13</sup> Serbyn continues:

Zealous activists, ignoring peasants' pleas to leave some food for the children, removed the last ounce of black bread from the table and prodded the soil in the peasant courtyards with iron rods to uncover hidden grain. Requisition was applied with equal ruthlessness to collective farms

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10. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

11. Walter Duranty, "All Russia Suffers Shortage of Food: Supplies Dwindling," *The New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1932, p. 1. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 159.

12. Interview with Eugene Lyons, July 17, 1972, quoted *ibid.*, pp. 197-98.

13. Roman Serbyn, "Famine Genocide is Not a Myth," review of *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, ed. by Marco Carynnyk, Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, and Bohdan S. Kordan, in *The Toronto Star*, Oct. 1, 1988, M-18.



and individual farmers. . . . The giving of alms to the famished was forbidden. . . . Those who managed to barter food in Russia lost it at border checks around Ukraine.<sup>14</sup>

According to Johann Bollinger, in *Marienberg: Fate of a Village*, the pre-famine diet consisted of:

Grains – summer and winter wheat, rye, barley, oats and corn – and potatoes and sunflowers . . . sugar beets, soybeans, watermelon, and various vegetables, like paprika (peppers), tomatoes, egg plant . . . cucumbers and cabbage. In the orchard there were cherries, plums, apples, pears and – above all – apricots.<sup>15</sup>

At the International Commission of Inquiry in Brussels on May 27, 1988, historian Leonid Meretz explained:

We were human beings and they made animals out of us. . . . People had become absolutely obsessed with food, and tried to gain nourishment from any organic matter – bark, grass, vermin or insects, cadavers of livestock and then – probably what was the most traumatic aspect of the famine for the peasants who survived it – the phenomenon of cannibalism.<sup>16</sup>

Speaking of the application of force in political situations, Edmund Burke said, "The use of force alone is but temporary. It may subdue for a moment; but it does not remove the necessity of subduing again; and a nation is not governed which is perpetually to be conquered."<sup>17</sup> Stalin apparently appreciated this truism. His escalating policies of dekulakization, forced collectivization, deportation, cultural and linguistic de-Ukrainianization, and famine caused the death of millions of people. Countless more suffered illness, exposure, starvation, physical and emotional deprivation, social and personal trauma, while the Soviet government consolidated its power over them.

Apologists sometimes say that Stalin was innocent of the crimes committed in the name of Communism. Lord John E. E. Acton's statement, "Much

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14. *Ibid.*

15. Johann Bollinger, *Marienberg: Fate of a Village* (Fargo: Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, and North Dakota State Univ. Libraries, 2000), p. 21.

16. "International Commission of Inquiry Hears Survivors Recount Atrocities of Soviet-Engineered Famine," *Universal News Services, Ltd., PR Newswire European*, May 27, 1988, dateline Brussels.

17. Edmund Burke, "Speech on Conciliation with America," March 22, 1775., in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1979), p. 109: 19.

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more evil is due to conscious sin and much less to unconscious error than most of us are usually aware,"<sup>18</sup> appears nearer the truth in the assessment of Stalin's culpability. Consider the laws that were in place in the Soviet Union at that time. Several laws promulgated in 1932 unquestionably express Stalin's intent:

1) On 7 August 1932, a law was passed forbidding "violation of socialist property." This law covered even the bodies of dead animals, or the smallest amount of foodstuffs owned by the collective. Severe prison term or the "supreme penalty" was the recommended punishment even if the so-called "theft" involved only a handful of grain taken to feed oneself or one's children. Even gleaning (picking up grain or other farm products in the fields after the harvester has passed) was forbidden as theft of socialist property.

2) On November 17, 1932, kulaks were defined as, "class enemies." These persons then suffered the fate of confiscation of their property, expropriation of their goods, arrest, and imprisonment in the GULag labor camps for themselves and their families, including infants, children, and the elderly. Executions were commonplace. A woman described the confiscation process as she experienced it:

When they came to take all these things, my husband wasn't home. I didn't want to let them take them [items included working livestock and harness, chickens, warm clothing, overcoats, boots, leather, eating utensils, etc.]. They hit me and tied me up, lay me face down and abused me. . . .<sup>19</sup>

Soviet newspapers, *Izvestiia*, *Visti*, and *Pravda*, as well as Kalinin, Lenin's widow Krupskaya, and even Stalin himself received appeal letters such as this from people experiencing the famine and related actions.<sup>20</sup>

1) On November 20, 1932, another law allowed the government to decline payment collective farm workers, who often were paid in kind. This law allowed officials to take back grain given them instead of cash payments, even that intended for seed for the upcoming growing season.

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18. Lord John E. E. Acton quoted in Herbert Butterfield, "The Whig Interpretation of History," <[http://www.eliohs.unifi.it/testi/900/butterfield/chap\\_6.htm](http://www.eliohs.unifi.it/testi/900/butterfield/chap_6.htm)> (December 1, 2002).

19. Letter from M. E. Bocharnikova, 1932. RGAE, f. 7486s, op.1, d. 236, l. 40, quoted in Léwis Siegelbaum and Andrei Sokolov, *Stalinism as a Way of Life: A Narrative in Documents* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2000), Document 11, p. 48.

20. *Ibid.* This book contains a sampling of 157 such letters and documents about various aspects of the Stalinist way of life.



2) On December 6, 1932, eighty-six *raions* of Ukraine were black-listed, and all trade, especially of foodstuffs, was forbidden. Significantly, existing stocks were confiscated leaving the peasants no means of feeding themselves or their families. Mercy, even for small children caught up in this situation, was defined as, "anti-Soviet behavior."<sup>21</sup>

3) A *Visti* article of January 1, 1930 reports that the College of the People's Commissariat of Trade noted that certain exportable commodities had fallen short of the imposed quota. "The College has decided to set up strict supervision to prevent products earmarked for export from being unloaded for home marketing. Any infringement of this order will be severely penalized."<sup>22</sup>

What did the American government know of this? In 1932, The Embassy of the United States of America in Berlin received a confidential memorandum addressed to the Secretary of State from Frederic M. Sackett. His letter included primary source evidence of famine and the related actions faced by the peasantry in the famine-affected areas of the USSR. Enclosed with his letter was a report by Professor of Economics at Duke University, Calvin Hoover. Sackett specifically stated that the information it contained was significant and should be made known to the appropriate officials of the United States Government:

I am concerned that such information as I was able to obtain should be at the disposal of our Government. . . . Peasants are arrested even for gleaning the fields after they have been harvested, and in some cases of attempts at resistance to arrest, this man says, many peasants have been shot. . . . This man also described the tales of the expulsions of the so-called Kulaki from their homes. These expulsions are now apparently carried out at night and the Kulak families are expelled at once without any regard to the weather and sometimes stripped of boots, overcoats, or anything else which the persons caring out the expulsions consider of value.<sup>23</sup>

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21. Wasyl Hryshko, *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933*, ed. and trans. by Marco Carrynyk (Toronto: Bahriany Foundation, SUZHERO, DOBRUS, 1983), pp. 82-84.

22. S. O. Pidhainy, *Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book, The Great Famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933* (Detroit: DOBRUS and FUP, 1955): 2: 260.

23. Embassy of the United States of America in Berlin, Document No. 2218, March 1, 1933, "Memorandum of Frederic M. Sackett to The Honorable Secretary of State containing the report of Professor Calvin Hoover," (1 March 1933), quoted at: <http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/profhoover.htm> n.d., "The Great Famine-Genocide in Soviet Ukraine, 1932-1933" (November 17, 2002) from M. Wayne Morris, *Stalin's Famine and Roosevelt's Recognition of Russia* (Lanham, MD: Univ. Press of America, 1994), pp. 171-81.

Professor Hoover's report goes on to discuss the depreciation of the Soviet ruble that negatively affected the people's ability to feed themselves:

There has been an extraordinary depreciation in the purchasing power of the ruble since 1930. The nominal official rate is still 1.94 to the dollar. The rate on the "Black Bourse" varies between 40 and 70 to the dollar. A kilo of butter on the free market sells for about 60 rubles. . . . A surprising number of Russians seem to purchase commodities at the Torgtein [sic] shops, where payment can be made in foreign valuta or in precious metals (including silver). The number of Russians who use these shops is even more surprising because of the danger to a Russian of whom it becomes known that he has valuta in his possession. The most extraordinary measures are being taken by the GPU and other instruments of Soviet power to extract valuta from the population. These measures include widespread terrorism and torture. . . . The torture to which reference is made is not only psychological but is physical as well.<sup>24</sup>

The Torgsin system reaped a harvest of gold, silver, jewelry, and precious metals for the Soviet government. The Italian Royal Consul reported on February 24, 1933:

I have brought up the subject of the Pan-Ukrainianism irredentism, because it is part and parcel of the raising of Ukrainian consciousness, a reawakening brought about the appalling injustice that Moscow is doing to Ukraine. First the coal, then the wheat, and everything that's left after the wheat has gone, potatoes, barley, meat, etc., as well as the citizens' gold, are being squeezed out of them through the torgsin (it seems that 4.9 million rubles have been obtained just from the silver brought to the torgsin) and more through the GPU.<sup>25</sup>

For political reasons, the governments of the United States, Britain,<sup>26</sup> Italy, and Germany,<sup>27</sup> despite knowing that famine conditions existed in the 'bread-

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24. *Ibid.*

25. William Liber, Q.C., *Documentary Evidence*. Submitted by William Liber, Q.C., Counsel for the World Congress of Ukrainians, Exhibit P-41. Italian Diplomatic Reports reprinted from the *Report to Congress by the U.S. Government Commission on the Ukrainian Famine* (Washington: GPO, April 22, 1988), p. 413 (Toronto: The International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine, dated between 1988 and 1990), p. 413.

26. Lubomyr Luciuk citing British documents quoted in *Universal News Services Ltd.*, *PR Newswire Europe*, May 27, 1988.

27. Liber, *Documentary Evidence*, pp. 1-48.



basket of Europe," failed to take life-saving action. The League of Nations and the International Red Cross proved equally ineffective. George P. Kulchytsky in his article, "Western Relief Efforts During the 'Stalin Famine',"<sup>28</sup> details the efforts of the international Ukrainian Relief Committee formed in 1933. Significantly, among its other activities, the Relief Committee addressed a letter directly to the President of the United States advising him about the famine. Documents related to the Committee's activities are archived at the Biblioteka Narodowa in Warsaw.<sup>29</sup> Kulchytsky notes the Committee sent a series of telegrams to President Roosevelt in November 1933, around the time that the United States granted diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union. The reply to these appeals was received by the Committee in December 1933, and said, after a polite expression of concern, "at this time can take no part in alleviating their situation."<sup>30</sup>

The worldwide economic depression meant that the diplomatic recognition of the USSR represented the opening of a promising new market for American goods and industrial export. Even before formal diplomatic relations were achieved, some American companies were already exploiting business opportunities in the USSR as Stalin's Five-Year-Plan rushed the industrialization of his country. An example of American business operating in the USSR concurrent to the famine is the Ford Motor Company, that held a nine-year contract (put into effect May 31, 1929) with The Supreme Council of National Economy of the USSR. The influential Ford Motor Company already had substantial financial interest in American trade relations with the Soviets remaining on the proverbial even-keel.<sup>31</sup> With so many Americans out of work, the chance for acquiring the Soviets as an official and substantial new trade partner factored large in the ongoing diplomatic negotiations to that end. These business dealings and diplomatic negotiations and recognition took place regardless of the nastier aspects of Soviet *realpolitik*.

The famine-stricken areas of the USSR were cordoned-off:

Police units and Red Army troops sealed off roads and railways during the famine year. Nothing entered, or left, Ukraine. Hitler strung

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28. George P. Kulchytsky, "Western Relief Efforts During the 'Stalin Famine,'" *The Ukrainian Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (Summer 1993), 152-64.

29. *Ibid.*, note 2, p. 152.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

31. "GAZ Ford 1929 Agreement for USSR Manufacture of Model A Fords," *GAZ Factory Information Book, 1987*, <http://www.users.bigpond.com/cpitman/contract.htm> (October 10, 2002). A copy of this Contract is included in the Appendix.

barbed wire around concentration camps; Stalin created an Auschwitz out of the entire Ukraine,<sup>32</sup>

Travel was forbidden to the peasantry in particular, and to anyone without specific documents and Party permission. Still, people desperately tried to escape to find food or any kind of work from which to buy food for themselves and their families. Ukrainian members of the Polish *Seim* directly investigated the repatriation of refugees attempting to escape from the famine afflicted areas of the Ukrainian SSR that were turned back when they reached the Polish and Rumanian borders.<sup>33</sup>

Parliamentarian Khrutsky appealed to The Metropolitan Dionysius of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. "The Catholic Church bound itself to petition the Pope to issue an international appeal to the Western world. The 'Manifesto to the Civilized World' was published in Berne, Switzerland."<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, the consciousness-raising activities of the Relief Committee proved to be political "hot potatoes," and the Committee's efforts met with official delays, refusals, and, in some cases, harassment:

The Relief Committee issued a directive by which it instructed its members to keep track of rude official behavior and ultimately defended its rights in the Polish court at Ternopil. Similar difficulties were faced by foreign-based Ukrainian Relief Committees, branches of the Relief Committee in Lviv in Czechoslovakia, France, and other countries.<sup>35</sup>

At the suggestion of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky of L'viv, the Committee held an international, inter-denominational Conference in Vienna on December 16-17, 1933. The international political situation again interfered with humanitarian efforts. The discomfited Austrian government "sought international tranquility."<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, the Conference met, and issued a Declaration drawing attention to the Famine and noting that it was both avoidable and conducted to achieve Stalinist political goals. Significantly, it stated that international grain surpluses were available for transport to the USSR.<sup>37</sup> As Stephen Devereux states: "Famines occur because they are not prevented: they are allowed to happen. . . . Inadequate information is one

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32. Ronald J. Vossler, "Pilgrims in the Valley of Tears," *N.D. REC/RTC Magazine* (Febr. 2000), p. 20.

33. Kulchytsky, p. "Western Relief Efforts during the 'Stalin Famine'," p. 154.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

35. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*, p. 159.

possible reason for response failure – others include bureaucratic inertia . . . and lack of political will.”<sup>38</sup>

The Ukrainian National Women's League of America appealed to Congressman Herman P. Kopelman (Connecticut). He sent a copy of their Memorandum to the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov. Litvinov replied by letter January 3, 1934:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 14<sup>th</sup> inst., and thank you for drawing my attention to the Ukrainian pamphlet. There is any amount of such pamphlets full of lies circulated by counter-revolutionary organizations abroad, which specialize in the work of this kind. There is nothing left them to do but to spread false information or to forge documents.<sup>39</sup>

Under democratic governments, whose vitality depends upon the continued good will of the governed, a state of famine within that country causes rapid, effective action to forestall or prevent negative reflection upon that government that might bring about its downfall. However, “the [authoritarian] state faces less compulsion to prioritize the basic needs of its citizens – famines will go unpunished – and this is largely explains why famines are more likely to occur under authoritarian regimes.”<sup>40</sup>

The Soviet regime did not escape entirely unscathed. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in July 1934, addressed the House of Lords in London about the Famine. In terms reminiscent of a call to the Crusades, he urged his fellows to render humanitarian aid “in which all ‘Christendom must participate.’ Lord Charnwood . . . quoting passages from the League [of Nations] Covenant . . . demanded that the Soviet Union be allowed entrance into the League only if it fulfilled these conditions.”<sup>41</sup> However, as Malcolm Muggeridge later testified, “They (the British Foreign Office) realized that it was an enormously dangerous and ruthless arrangement, and that people were being killed with great ease and without apologies.” Muggeridge explained, “The British government did not act against the famine in order to avoid straining relations

38. Devereux, “Famine in the Twentieth Century,” p. 27.

39. Maxim Litvinov, Letter to US Congressman Herman P. Kopelman (CT), January 3, 1934, quoted in Dmytro Soloviy, *The Golgotha of Ukraine: Eye-Witness Accounts of the Famine in Ukraine Instigated and Fostered by the Kremlin in an Attempt to Quell Ukrainian Resistance to Soviet Russian National and Social Enslavement of the Ukrainian People* (New York: Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, 1953), p. 5.

40. Devereux, “Famine in the Twentieth Century,” p. 22.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 159.



with the Soviets from whom the British were purchasing large amounts of grain at the time."<sup>42</sup>

Dr. Mowinkel, the Norwegian Prime Minister, and President of the League Council tried to bring the matter before the League for appropriate discussion and humanitarian action. However, The League referred the topic of the famine to the International Red Cross. When it appealed to the Soviet Red Cross as the functional agency in this case, The International Red Cross found that the Soviet organization towed the Communist Party line, and denied the existence of famine in the USSR.<sup>43</sup> Describing a similar political famine of later years, D. Keen points out in his 1994 book, *The Benefits of Famine: A Political Economy of Famine and Relief in Southwestern Sudan, 1983-1989*:

... their near-total lack of rights or political muscle within the institutions of the state ... [implies] the real roots of famine may lie less in the lack of purchasing power within the market (although this will still be one of the mechanisms of famine) than in a lack of lobbying power within national (and international institutions).<sup>44</sup>

Later, in a well-known statement of the World War II Era, Stalin said, "A single death is a tragedy, a million deaths is a statistic."<sup>45</sup> Statistics undoubtedly have a valid place in historical study, but focusing strictly on numbers allows the historian and reader to distance themselves from the realization that for even *one* person to die the death of starvation is unacceptable. The *Holodomor* took the lives of up to fifteen million people through starvation and related diseases, including typhus and bubonic plague.<sup>46</sup> Epidemic disease rates were increased by deprivations experienced during migration (forced or not) in order to find food, and, in this case, deportation to the GULag labor camps. The death toll further increased due to exposure, harsh weather conditions, and the poor-to-none food situation experienced after the familial units and in some cases entire communities were forcibly deported. The population took a further decline due to the lack of normal reproduction

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42. Malcom Muggeridge quoted in "Muggeridge Testimony Confirms British Government Knowledge of Famine," Universal News Services, Ltd., PR Newswire European, June 28, 1988.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 160.

44. Devereux, "Famine in the Twentieth Century," p. 21.

45. Joseph Stalin, quoted: <<http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/statistics/>> (Dec. 1, 2002).

46. Jaroslaw Sawka, "American Psychiatrist: Fifteen Million Died in the Thirties Famine," *The Ukrainian Quarterly*, 38, no. 1 (1982), 64.

47. Devereux, "Famine in the Twentieth Century," p. 4.

in the famine areas. Severe conditions and lack of proper nutrition decreases the natural fertility of women because they lack the physical strength and bodily resources to reproduce successfully.<sup>47</sup>

Jaroslav Sawka notes in his article, "American Psychiatrist: Fifteen Million Died in the Thirties Famine," that fifteen million is a figure higher than the generally accepted total, seven to ten million. He notes that his source for this higher figure, Dr. W. Horsley Gantt, was a prominent American psychiatrist and author of the book, *Medical Review of Soviet Russia*. Dr. Gantt traveled to the USSR in 1933, and had direct contact with medical professionals there. In a letter to Mr. Dana G. Dalrymple, of the United States Department of Agriculture, dated March 6, 1964, Dr. Gantt discussed his sources:

[After noting that the Soviet government forbade news correspondents to travel from Moscow or Leningrad to outlying areas of the country, he continues] However, I, as a scientist, was allowed in areas outside of the cities, and I could talk with doctors who gave me first-hand reports of both the famine and the epidemics. These latter were a complicating picture of the famine. [Referring to Dalrymple's own work, "The Soviet Famine of 1932-1934"] Your highest estimate of the famine-deaths is put at ten million, while I got the maximal figure of fifteen million, received privately from Soviet authorities in Russia. Since starvation was complicated by the epidemics, it is not possible to separate which of these two causes was primary in casualties.<sup>48</sup>

To comprehend such large figures and to understand the magnitude of the Famine, the death toll of fifteen million people equals the entire 1986 population for the countries of Greece, and Finland or Denmark. Averaging the lower figure of seven to ten million, the resulting figure represents the expected population of eight million persons in the country of Austria in the year 2000.<sup>49</sup>

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48. Sawka, "American Psychiatrist," p. 65.

49. Gerard Chaliand and Jean-Pierre Rageau, *Strategic Atlas: A Comparative Geopolitics of the World's Powers*, trans. from the French by Tony Berrett (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), p. 220.

JOHAN ÖHMAN (Lund, Sweden)

*HOLODOMOR AND THE UKRAINIAN  
IDENTITY OF SUFFERING: THE 1932-1933  
UKRAINIAN FAMINE IN HISTORICAL CULTURE*

The past seems to have changed at accelerating pace during the last century. Continuous interpretation and reinterpretations have drastically changed the way in which we perceive history. But the twentieth century has also been the century of genocide, wars and other mass violence. Looking back one is tempted to ask what is to remain of this past? Is it that which is the least disturbing, successes and victories, or is it the most disturbing episodes that will remain with us? Certainly, the past and remains thereof are all about us in the present, as the last decades proved that the Western world has been prone to interest in the most disturbing episodes in the past. An increased interest in the Holocaust and the study of other genocides has spawned an almost enormous amount of research into the darker sides of humanity. A shift from epistemology to ethics in the sciences seems to have influenced this turn toward the most disturbing parts of the past. Contemporary changes also influence changes in our perception. The breakup of the Soviet Union is probably the best example since it made possible investigation into areas that had previously been taboo, and radically changed the bipolar worldview.

Crisis, disasters and traumas are common and important in histories all around the world. Yet, these historical events are the most difficult to approach, bring to order and analyze – enterprises which historians are expected to perform. Often a topic or event is brought to order by analyzing it in terms of what is already understood – a war is compared to another war, and so on. Sometimes, however, an event is of such a shattering character that any attempt to integrate it into a larger, comprehensive and meaningful historical narrative fails, since some events may have such a profound impact on how persons think about themselves or their community that the apparent continuity of their historical narrative seems drastically and permanently changed.

Interpretations of the past are never solely about the past. They always involve an understanding of the interpreter's present setting and his or hers expectations of the future. Behind dominant perceptions and interpretations of the past lie significant reflections of what contemporary societies



look like and where they are heading. No doubt, such mental processes are among the most important factors behind historical development in itself.

A case in point is the turbulent years ending the Cold War era. The *glasnost* debate on history proved that late Soviet historians with few exceptions were out of step with the popular understanding and use of history, while some Western observers claimed that history had finally come to an end. The decade following the breakup of the Soviet Union proved them both wrong. National histories emerging in the wake of constructing post-Soviet nations and states was not merely occupied with the past *per se*. It was an enterprise aimed at constructing new identities, often concerned with ideals rather than reality. History or representations thereof often became intricate constructions, not always intended to reflect what a state or a nation was, but rather what it wanted to be.

The Ukraine that emerged in the wake of the crumbling Soviet Union was the first internationally recognized Ukrainian State in modern times. Independence posed several problems, such as deconstructing an empire and its institutions as well as transcending from planned to market economy. But perhaps the most pressing problem was constructing a state and a nation, in turn raising questions as, What was Ukraine? What was the historical relationship to Russia? In sum, the Ukrainian independence questioned identities and perception of history became the chief battleground. This was symptomatic of the more general tendency to assert the nations' right to self-determination. Nationalist leaders in post-Soviet Ukraine argued that the top priority for the new state in 1991 was to protect the collective right and cultural heritage of the nation. History became a reservoir of raw materials from which to build a national identity and underline legitimacy of the state. Inherited regional, ethnic, linguistic and religious differences have, however, severely limited the appeal of modern Ukrainian nationalism and national history, creating preconditions for polarization in Ukrainian society. And unlike most other post-communist states modern Ukraine faced, and still today to a large degree faces, a dual task: building a new Ukrainian state and forming a Ukrainian nation.<sup>1</sup>

In Ukraine re-writing history had started in the late 1980s and the history of Ukraine soon became labeled as "tragic. The nation quickly replaced the proletariat in the historical narratives as the central actor and driving force."<sup>2</sup> Thus, the new history that emerged was quite different from the official Soviet version. History also became an enterprise that attracted other actors than academic historians, as politicians and common people

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1. Andrew Wilson, *Ukrainian Nationalism in the 1990's: A Minority Faith* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), p. 1.

2. Stephen Velychenko, "Restructuring and the Non-Russian Past," *Nationalities Papers*, 22, no. 2 (1994): 330-32.

soon started to ask the question: who was to blame?<sup>3</sup> In no other case was this as prominent as in the case of the Famine of 1932-1933, which was first officially recognized in 1987.

The object of this article is to analyze the Ukrainian famine of 1932-33, the *Holodomor*, in the new national history of independent Ukraine, or rather how this traumatic event has been incorporated into a historical culture and made an object of identity. Because, it is through history most nations, as well as individuals, choose to define themselves. History should in this context not be thought of as simply the past, but rather past events given meaning in the present.

### Historical culture and identity

As a relatively newly invented but still frequently used concept, the problem of "historical culture" is that there is somewhat a shortage of useful definitions of the concept. At first the concept of "historical culture" is closely akin to "culture". Elaborated and conceptualized "culture" has for long been an analytical tool in history and neighboring disciplines. Traditional definitions have stressed culture's role as a container of concepts, experience, norms, values, and other achievement that man has acquired as human beings and as members of society, as a way of bringing order and direction into life. Culture described, in this way, as an achievement means that it is based on historical experiences and that culture derives its meaning from history. In this sense, any culture is a historical culture. Rival definitions have put less stress on the past in favor of every-day interaction between human beings. Nevertheless, it is hard to imagine aspects of culture, which have not been tried out and valued by relating to history.

Distinguishing between structural and processual understanding of culture is useful in order to define the field of historical culture. Culture can be understood either as a system of knowledge, attitudes and values providing the individual with meaning and keeping society together, or as a process in which culture is evaluated and transferred from one generation to the next over time. By defining historical culture as the "life practice" taking shape when individuals and institutions adjust themselves in time, or as the place of historical thinking in life Jörn Rüsen has pointed to the fact that the structural aspect is important in history-cultural analysis.<sup>4</sup> Historian Claus Bryld, on the other hand, has defined historical culture as "the individual and collective process in which history is communicated and used from fixed forms (genres) and norms," has stressed the need to focus

3. Taras Kuzio, "History, Memory and Nation Building in the Post-Soviet Colonial Space," *ibid.*, 30, no. 2 (2002).

4. Jörn Rüsen, "Geschichtskultur als Forschungsproblem," in Klaus Frölich *et al.*, eds., *Geschichtskultur* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992), pp. 39-40.

on the historical transfer as an instrument of socialization.<sup>5</sup> Although there are differences between the two definitions of historical culture they could both be used simultaneously, accounting for a historical culture that is both structural and processual at the same time. Nevertheless, a basic assumption is that history-cultural products give evidence of the notions and valuations of history that individuals and various collectives hold and make use of in and as part of a society, a nation and a state.

National history and, as a function thereof, national identity should consequently not be seen as an enterprise exclusive to historians. Rather, it should be considered a social and cultural process in which different actors are involved. The purpose, however, is to delimit a nation. This history, as a formalized social past, must legitimate the present as well as orient a community in the past, present and future, by highlighting certain historical periods and events, and at the same time downplay, or omit altogether, embarrassing episodes, with the purpose of constructing a narrative of a *We*.<sup>6</sup> Historical truth is something that is firmly anchored in the present and set with a clear date of expiry. All history thus becomes contemporary history, in the words of Benedetto Croce. Producers, of history, live and act in an environment that understands itself through a history, at the same time as the producers can contribute and mould this particular history. Historical culture contains and reproduces a society's perceptions about itself in the present as well as in the past alive.<sup>7</sup>

In traumas and crisis conditions perceptions of history are at stake; often history refuses to go away or provide alternative paths, due to its traumatic impact. Jörn Rüsen has pointed to the fact that crisis forms the foundation of or even constitutes our identity, since our notion of history is activated by the temporal experience of rupture and discontinuity that he denotes contingency. He introduces a logic of story-telling as a means of psychologically handling contingent events in general, but he admits that convulsive, "catastrophic" crises might rather have a destructive impact on historical consciousness, precluding a meaningful reconstruction of temporal sense into life.<sup>8</sup> This directs the scholars attention towards those events

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5. Claus Bryld, "Fra historieskrivningens historie til historiekulturens historie? Idéer til en udvidelse af det historiografiske begreb," in *Historien og historikerne i Norden efter 1965. Oplæg fra den 21. Nordiske fagkonference i historisk metodelære*. Studier i historisk metode, XXI (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag 1991), pp. 86-87.

6. Frank Furedi, *Mythical Past, Elusive Future: History and Society in an Anxious Age* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 29. See also David Carr, *Time, Narrative and History* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991), p. 163.

7. Benedetto Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000), pp. 8, 218.

8. Jörn Rüsen, "Holocaust Memory and Identity Building: Metahistorical Considerations in the Case of (West) Germany," in Michael S. Roth & Charles G. Salas, eds., *Dis-*

that are possibly the most difficult to "digest" in a national history. The Famine is a good example of such an event. Its part in the national historical narrative in Ukraine, as well as possible function and what lessons are supposed to be drawn from it, are of great importance for understanding the new Ukrainian nation.

### Ukrainian school and education

The teaching of Ukrainian history has become an integral part of the nationalizing project in present day Ukraine. Schools and history textbooks play a major role as conveyors of a national history. Generally, control over education, or rather what is taught, facilitates transmission of "national values" and socialization into the nation. The educational apparatus, therefore, becomes an ideological tool that the state can use to legitimate the political as well as the social order.<sup>9</sup> The structure of education in Ukraine, however, proved difficult to change.

Ukraine inherited a centralized and unified educational system from the Soviet era. First introduced in 1934, this system was initially aimed at improving knowledge about the Soviet society and to further ideological indoctrination of students. The principal function of education was thus to inculcate students with Marxist-Leninist ideology. The prescribed "History of the USSR" became a road map of socialism. Together with the subject of history in general its primary task was to illustrate the progress of the national republics in socialist construction and to serve as a blueprint for revolution as well as for building socialism.<sup>10</sup> A relatively stable function of history in the Soviet Union that remained remarkably constant until the end of the 1980s was therefore legitimization of the political system. A historical record has an impact upon political norms, values and beliefs in any state. But, the political system of the Soviet Union and its use of history present this universal political-historical relationship in unique combinations as well as intensity.<sup>11</sup> In many respects this combination coupled with the prescribed official Soviet history filled the same function as nationalizing histories in other states, albeit in a socialist guise.<sup>12</sup>

After independence authorities in Ukraine pledged to undertake sweeping reforms in the area of education, aimed at eliminating uniformity and

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*turbing Remains: Memory, History and Crisis in the Twentieth Century* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute Publication Programs, 2001), pp. 253-55.

9. Michael W. Apple, *The Politics of the Textbook* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 10.

10. "Istoričeskuiu nauku na unroven velikikh zadach," *Istorič-Marksist*, 2 (1934): 3, 7.

11. Nancy Whittier Heer, *Politics and History in the Soviet Union* (Cambridge & London: MIT Press, 1971), p. 263.

12. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Univ. Press, 1993), ch. 3.



state monopoly. In practice, however, the centralized system of Soviet education has remained, despite huge government spending in this area. Schools are still obliged to work according to programs dictated by the Ministry of Education and to use its recommended schoolbooks. Authorities still regard education as the prime instrument for ideological indoctrination, despite promises of political neutrality.<sup>13</sup>

To this day the educational system remains centralized, with the Ministry of Education making all decisions regarding curricula and textbooks. Every three years, the Ministry of Education publishes plans for each subject in secondary schools. A collective of authors writes the plans under the editorship of an academician. Every year the Ministry publishes a list of textbooks approved for use as well as additional teaching material. New textbooks go through a complex process of review and revision before they are included on this list. In this process scholars as well as experts are included, ensuring that changes in the interpretation of Ukraine's history at the scholarly level have been translated to secondary school texts.<sup>14</sup>

Studying the history found in any state's official history textbooks is productive for understanding a society's self-representation and representations of other nations, states and societies. Hidden beneath, the often, chronological presentation of kings, queens, heroes, and wars, is often an "implicit narrative", i.e., a representation of the way a society wishes to be seen by its own people as well as representations of "the other". Therefore, the content of textbooks approved for use in public schools present an image of the society, which is often conceptualised as the nation, past, present, and future.<sup>15</sup>

Strong state control over the educational structure thus remains in Ukraine. However, it would be misleading to conclude that nothing has changed since independence. A curriculum as well as content in many instances have changed dramatically, as well as the teacher's, and the parent's possibilities to express their opinions. All parts of the educational apparatus have gained more autonomy than in Soviet times, although little compared to many other countries.<sup>16</sup>

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13. Victor Stepanenko, *The Construction of Identity and School Policy in Ukraine* (New York: Nova Scotia Publishers, 1999).

14. Nancy Popson, "The Ukrainian History Textbook: Introducing Children to the 'Ukrainian Nation'," *Nationalities Papers*, 29, no. 2 (2001): 328.

15. Hugh B. Mehan & Sarah A. Roberts, "Thinking the Nation: Representations of Nations and the Pacific Rim in Latin American and Asian Textbooks," *Narrative Inquiry*, 11, no. 1 (2001): 196-97.

16. Jan Germen Janmaat, *Nation-Building in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Educational Policy and the Response of the Russian-Speaking Population* (Utrecht/Amsterdam: Royal Dutch Geographical Society, 2000), p. 71.

The changes made in the field of education is perhaps most visible in curricula and textbooks. A quick glance at these reveals, not surprisingly, a shift from teaching in Russian to teaching in Ukrainian and a greater stress at teaching Ukrainian history instead of Soviet or World history. The first history that students encounter is in the fifth grade, where they are introduced to the whole history of Ukraine from its ancient times to modern days. This reveals the notion about the value of one set of knowledge over another.<sup>17</sup> Separating one's own history from another's stresses the uniqueness of Ukraine, and its history, and forms an "in-group" of pupils of the nation, implying other countries and pupils as an "out-group".<sup>18</sup>

### **Ukrainian national history – a paradigm of suffering**

Reinterpretation of Ukrainian national history started already during the last years of the Soviet Union. When the political climate "softened" under Gorbachev new interpretations of monolithical and monotonous histories were made possible. These eventually led to a virtual battle over writing of history in general and particularly over writing new history textbooks, a battle that culminated the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 1988 when *Izvestiia* announced that the all-union history tests had been cancelled until new and more appropriate history textbooks had been produced.<sup>19</sup> In this process the re-publishing of old documents and historical monographs, that had previously been banned, played an important role. In Ukraine these were thought to contain the "truth" and if only published again the past would be set straight.<sup>20</sup>

The final breakup of the Soviet Union prompted many observers to conclude that the last great empire had crumbled and a process of decolonization was about to begin. It was therefore common to view the subsequent state- and nation-building processes in the new republics in terms of so called "post-colonial perspectives", implying that the republics such as Ukraine had previously been colonies.<sup>21</sup> Dealing with this "colonial past" in Ukraine centered around a number of issues ranging from new forms of political representations to trade agreements and the drawing of borders with and between Russia. Although there are different views and

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17. Henry A. Giroux and Anthony N. Penna, "Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum," *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 7, no. 1 (1979): 29.

18. Popson, *Ukrainian History Textbook*, p. 328.

19. *Izvestiia*, June 10, 1988. A good account of the functions and uses of history in the Soviet Union during the late 1980s is given in: Klas-Göran Karlsson, *Historia som vapen* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1999).

20. Velychenko, "Restructuring and the Non-Russian Past," pp. 330-32.

21. Marco Pavlyshyn & J. E. M. Clarke, eds., *Ukraine in the 1990s: Proceedings of the First Conference of the Ukrainian Studies Association of Australia* (Melbourne: Monash University, Slavic Section, 1992).

opinions concerning Ukraine's "colonial" status under Russian, and later Soviet, rule, its implications are of importance for the understanding of the country's past, present and future.<sup>22</sup>

Colonialism, however, is not only about economic dependence and exploitation. It also carries a cultural or mental component with it, which is probably the most important part in the Ukrainian case. The mental processes of "de-colonization" in Ukraine came to center around legitimizing and rationalizing the new and independent Ukraine, as well as establishing a credible nation. This de-colonizing and at the same time nationalizing process housed a paradox somewhat unique to the post-soviet republics. The core of the colonial power had vanished, separating the colonial other in time from the present. In turn this left a number of "post-colonial" republics. Defining the Ukrainian nation against the former "colonial" center was thus an enterprise bound to take place in the past.<sup>23</sup> History, in the first place, had played a major role in blurring the distinctions between what was Ukrainian, Russian and Soviet. In the 1930s and 1940s, Soviet historiography assumed more and more of the new state-oriented patriotic ideology reminiscent of tsarist "great power" and russocentric traditions.<sup>24</sup>

The new and tragic national history of Ukraine often used the same historic persons and events that had been used as positive examples of Russian and Soviet dominance, to show the tragedy of that same dominance. One such historic person was Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi, who during Soviet times represented the merging of little and great Russia, but after independence came to symbolize the greatness and sovereignty of the Cossacks. In the historical genealogy of the state and nation this became an important re-interpretation, since this marked an almost complete rejection of the Soviet model. Both of the Ukrainian presidents, Kravchuk and Kuchma established new father figures in Ukrainian history, by consciously referring to Khmelnytskyi as an important national hero, but, more importantly, both presidents invoked Mykhailo Hrushevskyi's scheme of history.<sup>25</sup>

The rehabilitation of Mykhailo Hrushevskyi and his historical works provided several functions at once. Republishing his books was, in itself, an

22. Stephen Velychenko, "The Issue of Russian Colonialism in Ukrainian Thought: Dependency Identity and Development," *Ab Imperio*, 1 (2002): 328.

23. Johan Öhman, "Ukrainas post-kommunistiska historia – fast i det förflutna?," *Nordisk Østforum*, 4 (2002): 417-32.

24. D. L. Brandenberger and A. M. Dubrovsky, "'The People Need a Tsar': The Emergence of National Bolshevism as Stalinist Ideology, 1931-1941," *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50, no. 5 (1998): 880. See also M. N. Riutin, "Stalin i krizis proletarskoi diktatury," *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 9 (1990): 76.

25. Kataryna Wolczuk, "History, Europe and the 'National Idea': The 'Official' Narrative of National Identity in Ukraine," *Nationalities Papers*, 28: 4 (2000): 672-94.

act of protest as they had been banned in the Soviet Union since the 1930s. Substantially, however, the interpretation of history, or historical narrative, provided by Hrushevskyy offered an alternative view of the historical relationship between Russia and Ukraine. In this version Ukraine takes on the role of "elder brother" and Russia is reduced to an accidental sidetrack in history. This interpretation offered Ukraine an alternative, or *Sonderweg*, where it became the legitimate heir of Kievan Rus and thereby the East Slavic Civilization's European heritage.<sup>26</sup>

The focus of most new history textbooks is on pre-Rus, Kievan Rus, the history of the Cossacks and on the twentieth century. These periods are often linked in to one long historical narrative of the development of the Ukrainian nation and state. By emphasizing these periods and accomplishments of the Ukrainian people most textbooks culminate in the establishment of the modern day Ukrainians nation. Most new textbooks follow the outline of Mykhailo Hrushevskyy's *History of Ukraine-Rus*, which is often used as reference.<sup>27</sup> This narrative focuses on a set of repetitive and almost mythic patterns of a founding myth, a golden age, a period of decay, and finally a promise of regeneration or revitalization of the nation.<sup>28</sup> However, periods of decay are often noted in the narrative but in the passing, instead moving quickly towards revitalization. Although quickly passed all periods of decay have one thing in common; namely, that decay is often initiated by a foreign occupying or destructive force.<sup>29</sup>

Although it could be argued that the new national narrative in Ukraine, is a narrative that skips from success to success the opposite is rather the case. Seen independently the story of Kievan Rus or the Cossacks is of course histories to take pride in, since they are all histories about a Ukrainian nation in the making. Taken as a whole though, the narrative is a story of failure and trauma through the centuries, leading up the final synthesis of the nation in the 1990s. The few moments of glory in the historical narrative is also precisely the moments were the new Ukrainian historiography clash with the old Russian and Soviet ones, as noted by Jan Germen Janmaat. Potentially this could be troublesome to the historical narrative. But most history textbooks employ a strategy of de-nationalization,

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26. Mykhailo Hrushevskyy, "The Traditional Scheme of 'Russian' History and the Problem of Rational Organization of the History of the Eastern Slavs," *From Kievan Rus' to Modern Ukraine: Formation of the Ukrainian Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Studies Fund, 1984).

27. See, for example, V. I. Semenenko & L. A. Radtjenko, *Istoriia Ukraini. S drevnei-shikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Khar'kov: Torsing, 1999).

28. For a discussion of myths of nationhood, see Geoffrey Hosking & George Schöpfung, eds., *Myths and Nationhood* (London: Hurst & Co., 1997).

29. This view is also represented in Ivan L. Rudnytsky, *Essays in Modern Ukrainian History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1987).



whereby that which is deemed as non-Ukrainian is made alien or part of another regime, such as that most of the new history textbooks in Ukraine does not acknowledge, or even mention, that there were large numbers of Ukrainians in the regular Soviet forces during the Second World War.<sup>30</sup>

By nationalizing most of history the narrative turns into a genealogy of the nation. More importantly, the history of Ukraine turns into a historical narrative of Ukrainians. Again, the history of the Second World War provides a good example. Either outlining the war in very general, or going into excessive detail, the history textbooks center around the Ukrainian experience. Little or no mention is made about the war in Europe or the Holocaust. Ukraine simply exchanged a "red fascist terror" for a "brown fascist terror". The Second World War is thus portrayed as an attack by Nazi Germany on the Ukrainian nation-as such.<sup>31</sup>

### The 1932-1933 Famine in Ukrainian textbooks

The part of history that has seen most re-writing in modern Ukraine is perhaps the era of collectivization, and more importantly the following Famine. Old, Soviet, textbooks appreciated the collectivization drive initiated by Stalin, as it was seen as way of removing the last elements of capitalist and anti-revolutionary resistance. The liquidation of *kulak* households and founding of an agricultural industry was seen as a "natural" process that first and foremost followed the "laws" of history.<sup>32</sup> More importantly however, most soviet textbooks emphasized that although the authorities initiated the collectivization drive, once it got underway-ordinary people, and peasants followed and helped topple the unwanted elements.<sup>33</sup> Mention is rarely made of any exaggerations in the collectivization campaign, and absolute silence is the characteristics of the Famine.

As could be expected the new textbooks in Ukraine strongly condemn the collectivization campaign. Most often the Famine is conceptualized as a "pillaging of the countryside," that served Moscow and Stalin in their aims to rapidly industrialize the Soviet Union.<sup>34</sup> Dealt with under the heading of "Massive Collectivization and Starvation" in most textbooks it is not difficult to interpret how this event is conceptualized or what lessons

30. Jan Germen Janmaat, *Nation-Building in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, pp. 86, 99.

31. See, for example, M. B. Koval, "Dryha svitova viyna," in S. A. Smolia, ed., *Istoriï Ukrainii* (Kyiv: Vidavnychii dim: "Alternatyvy," 1997), pp. 307-23.

32. See, for example, *Istoriia SSSR (1917-1971)* (Moscow: Vyshaia shkola, 1972), p. 296.

33. This aspect is especially emphasized in *Istoriia SSSR* (Moscow: VPSch i AON pri TsK KPSS, 1963), p. 609.

34. F. H Turchenko, *Noveishaia istoria Ukrainy: chast' pervaiia (1917-1945 gg.)* (Kyiv: Heneza, 1995), p. 221.

are meant to be drawn from it. Thereby, the causes are most often described as inherent in the collectivization campaign itself. Excessive grain procurements are often given as the main reason for the widespread starvation, however it is equally acknowledged that even though this fact was known to the authorities they did little to help. Rather, the authorities bolstered the effect of the Famine further with the help of the Politburo, on orders from Molotov.<sup>35</sup> The Famine is thus yet another hurdle in history that Ukraine had to cross, this time however it was instigated by Stalin.

The changing interpretation of the Famine of 1932-1933 has not been simply a national Ukrainian business. To some degree, the revolutionary changes in history, as well as education in general, have been aided by the Diaspora historians. Most notably is the fact the Orest Subtelny's book *Ukraine: A History* has sold over 800,000 copies in translation to Ukrainian and Russian.<sup>36</sup> However, this book is very reluctant to draw any final conclusions regarding the causes of the starvation in Ukraine. Either it was perceived, by the Soviet elite, as a necessary aspect of industrialization, or it was a way of wiping out resistance in a troublesome region of the union, i.e., a means of destroying Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>37</sup> Use of research by other overseas historians leads Raisa Ivanchenko, in her book *Istoriia bez mifiv*, to draw the conclusion that Stalin personally is the person bearing the responsibility for the Famine in Ukraine. Direct reference to Robert Conquest concludes that the Ukrainians did not become "citizens of terror" because of the decline in gross output of bread or excessive grain procurements, but rather as a consequence of an attack against the revived Ukrainian nationalism and national self-consciousness.<sup>38</sup>

The fact that the Famine of 1932-1933 affected other areas of the Soviet Union is seldom mentioned, and if so only briefly. Starvation in the Caucasus and other areas are simply described as relatively small compared to the war waged by Molotov in Ukraine.<sup>39</sup> The fact that the geographical spread of starvation is acknowledged in some textbooks has led some to draw the conclusion that the Famine is not perceived as targeting Ukrainians specifically, in the national narrative of the event.<sup>40</sup> By choosing facts, such as claiming that the authorities deliberately induced a famine in order

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35. Semenenko & Radtjenko, *Istoriia Ukraina*, pp. 365-72.

36. Taras Kuzio, *Ukraine: State and Nation Building* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 205.

37. Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto, Buffalo & London: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1991), pp. 413-16.

38. Raisa Ivanchenko, *Istoria bez mifiv. Besedi z istorii Ukrainskoi derzhavnosti* (Kyiv: Ukrainskyi Pysmennyk, 1996), pp. 277-79.

39. S. V. Kulchitskii, "URSР v unmovach utberdzenna totalitarnoho ladi," in S. A. Smolia, ed., *Istoriia Ukrainii* (Kyiv: Vidavnychii dim: "Alternatyvy," 1997), pp. 285-88.

40. Jan Germen Janmaat, *Nation Building in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, pp. 97-98.

to crush the Ukrainian nationalism, and quotes that only adhere to the Ukrainian this could hardly be said to be the case. Instead, the Famine is portrayed as a Ukrainian phenomenon, affecting Ukrainians, and instigated by the Soviet Government or Stalin personally. Although the history textbooks differ somewhat in their discussion of the causes, the Soviet government always looms in the background of the historical narrative. If Stalin did not personally instigate the widespread starvation, he certainly did take advantage of it once it had started.

While the causes of the Famine are seen as inherent in the collectivization politics, and the targets Ukrainians, the victims are consequently portrayed as Ukrainians. Affecting peasants in the rural areas of Ukraine it easy to reason that this was a policy targeting Ukrainian nationalism, since most of the Ukrainian speaking population had traditionally resided in the rural areas and "national values" have been perceived as the values of the simple peasant. The helpless people are thus portrayed as oppressed by a foreign power against which they had no real weapons and no allies. This is summed up in an illustration accompanying the chapter on the Famine in one book, portraying a starving family. The mother is seen holding an infant in her arms and behind her stands two younger girls, all of them are bowing their heads as if in mourning. In front of them stands a little girl, naked and clearly marked by starvation, as her belly is bloated. With sad eyes, she is the only one looking directly at the observer. The accompanying text simply reads "*Holodomor . . .*" – the simple weapon against the Ukrainian people.<sup>41</sup>

Perpetrated by the Soviet authorities, or Stalin, and aimed at the heart of the Ukrainian nation, the Famine is easily interpreted as genocide. This conceptualization is further strengthened since most textbooks interpret the Famine as a weapon whereby the authorities tried to physically destroy the old Ukraine's "troublesome" population and especially the intelligentsia. Although the term genocide is not always explicitly used to denote the horrible event, it is either substituted for terms such as "sociocide" or "destruction" (*unichtozhenie*), or it is simply implied.<sup>42</sup> Thereby, the event becomes a "draconian" act, where the Ukrainian nation was punished, through nature. And the silence surrounding what was actually going on in the villages makes it even worse.<sup>43</sup> The elimination, thus, becomes not

41. Kulchitskii, "URSR," pp. 285-88.

42. See, for example, Ivanchenko, *Istoriia bez mifi*, pp. 277-79. The concept of genocide is more explicitly summoned in other accounts of the Famine. See, for example, Valeriy Smolii, "1933 rik b nashiy pamati, v nashiy istorii," *Holod-genosid 1933 roky v Ukraini. Istoryko-politohichnyi analiz sotsialno-demohrafichnikh ta moralno-psykhohichnykh naslidkiv* (Kyiv & New York: Vydavnytstvo M. P. Kots, 2000), pp. 11-15.

43. Kulchitskii, "URSR," pp. 285-88.

only a physical one but also a psychological, since the nation was deprived of its memory of the event. No memorials were erected and nor were there any remembrance days, during Soviet times.<sup>44</sup>

In the respect of invoking genocide the historical narrative of the Famine differ significantly from accounts during Soviet times, since the concept of genocide was completely alien to Soviet historiography. This was partly due, as has been observed by Ernest Gellner, to the Marxist-Leninist theory of history, since it presumes that ethnic conflicts in practice was camouflaged class conflicts. If only the masks were torn off humanity would benefit greatly as people became clear sighted and thereby freed from nationalist prejudice.<sup>45</sup> Consequently the most gruesome genocide of the twentieth century, the Holocaust, was not mentioned in official Soviet History.<sup>46</sup> Instead, the Nazi-German attack on the Soviet Union was interpreted as an attack spurred by fascist ideology with the goal destroying the first socialist state.<sup>47</sup> A war between good and evil is the trial that the new socialist state has to pass to fulfill the construction of the new nation.<sup>48</sup> As an attack on the whole country, and aimed at its destruction, the Second World War soon replaced the October Revolution as the founding myth of the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup> Thereby, the event became nationalized and consequently an historic event that primarily was Soviet or Russian but not pan-European or global.

By invoking the concept of genocide in the historical narrative focus is also put upon nationality, or ethnicity, instead of class. However, this shift is not as great as first could be expected, since, as noted above, Ukrainian nationalism and national values is was perceived as based on language and values most common to the countryside and peasant population, thereby closely linking the peasant "class" with the nationally Ukrainian. Thus, an "attack" against the peasant population easily facilitated a perception of an

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44. Ivanchenko, *Istoriia bez mifi*, pp. 282-83.

45. Ernest Gellner, *Nations & Nationalism* (Oxford & Cambridge: Blackwell, 1993), p. 93.

46. See, for example, the official Soviet history of the Second World War *Istoriia velikoi otechestvennoi voiny Sovetskogo Soiuza, 1941-1945gg*, 6 vols. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1962-65), in which neither anti-Semitism or Jew is mentioned. For a good discussion about the Holocaust in Soviet and Russian historical culture, see Klas-Göran Karlsson, "The Holocaust in Russian Historical Culture," in Klas-Göran Karlsson & Ulf Zander, eds., *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), pp. 201-22.

47. A description of note is made in *Istoriia Latvīskoi SSR. Sokrashchnii kurs* (Riga: Zinatne, 1971), p. 618.

48. *Istoriia SSSR* (1963), p. 730.

49. Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: The Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Princeton, NJ & Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press), 2001.



attack against the nation, a perception quite close to Robert Conquest's summing up of the events that took place.<sup>50</sup> The exchanging of class for nation is further assisted by the fact that the categories of class were often ethnicized during Soviet times, with intensification of the "homogenizing" drive as a result.<sup>51</sup> Ethnicization or nationalization turns the Famine into a strictly Ukrainian topic, since the victims are turned into a national category instead of a class or simply anonymous class-enemies. In the same fashion the executors of the Famine, or perpetrators, are conceptualized as Russian or Soviets. The functioning logic underlying the Soviet decisions are not seen as historically determined by Marxist-Leninist laws, rather it is thought that "Great-Russian chauvinism," nationalism and Bolshevism was the driving force.

A continuing stress upon nationalization and ethnicization of the victims as well as stressing the fact that the Soviet perpetrators carried out their measure according to an underlying logic clearly presents any reader of the Ukrainian textbooks with a genocide of great proportions. This clearly follows the UN genocide convention. However, the narratives in all history textbooks clearly differ in one respect from most other histories of genocide in general and in particular the Holocaust. The question of bystanders, that has been and still is a persistent theme, is all but missing.<sup>52</sup> Most textbooks simply account for Stalin and Molotov's policies and decisions and the actual victims. Interest is thus not directed towards understanding the "bureaucracy of genocide" or who the perpetrators actually were, even though the perpetrators and the hierarchical structures that made the atrocity possible are present in the textbooks, albeit to a small degree.<sup>53</sup>

Since collectivization and starvation are presented as a genocide, committed by the Soviet authorities and affecting Ukrainians, and linked to a national narrative of suffering, filled with "historical obstacles" that the nation has to negotiate it fits well with the national narrative and interpre-

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50. Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (London: Hutchinson, 1986), p. 4. The perception that the Famine was indeed a genocide has consequently led the Ukrainian government to apply to the United Nations for recognition of this point.

51. Amir Weiner, "Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialization," *The American Historical Review*, 104, no. 4 (1999): 1129-31.

52. Instead, the topic of bystanders has been pursued more vividly by scholars in North America. See Johan Öhman, "From Famine to Forgotten Holocaust: The 1932-1933 Famine in Ukrainian Historical Cultures," in Klas-Göran Karlsson & Ulf Zander, eds., *Echoes of the Holocaust. Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), pp. 232-33.

53. Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1998), p. 96.

tation of history, as a long winding road that leads to eventual realization if the nation in the 1990s. But, no discussion about moral judgements concerning the bystanders or the fact that there were Ukrainians taking part in the grain procurements is present in any of the surveyed history textbooks. Stalin is instead presented as the embodiment of all things wrong and the person bearing responsibility. Thereby, no acknowledgement or discussion about the complicity of the event is made, nor are students and scholars encouraged further inquire into the systemic and hierarchical structures that made the atrocity possible.

### ***Holodomor and identity construction***

It is clear that the Famine of 1932-1933 has been integrated into an historical narrative in Ukraine. This narrative in turn focuses on hardships and suffering of the Ukrainian nation, throughout history. Always present is the full realization of the sovereign Ukrainian nation. Thus the *Holodomor* is integrated and interpreted as yet one hardship, or crisis, that the people as well as nation had to go through. This point to the fact that Ukraine has seized and recorded its own history, apart from the old Soviet interpretations. The rewards of seizing and recording one's own history is an affective and political gain in the enablement, as well as deepened sense of identity. However, a sense of identity is not only nourished by simple "boosterism." Rather, the most important factor in shaping identity is "shared quarrels," that is to say shared disagreements with someone that can broadly be termed as the "other."<sup>54</sup>

Quarreling with the other over interpretations of the Famine in Ukraine is mainly done with a past historiography, since the antagonistic interpretation is more or less only present in past Soviet historiography.<sup>55</sup> But this does not necessarily set Ukrainian historiography apart from other national historiographies. On the contrary, most historical events gain specific importance from temporal connection to other events, thus creating a chain of events, in the Ukrainian case a national narrative, which people rely on to explain to themselves who they are and how to understand the "otherness" of others. Events may constitute identity in a negative way, thereby constituting identity in opposition to events or ideas used by a rival group to constitute its identity. The German focus and claim of a specifically Ger-

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54. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Who Owns History?," in Anne Ollila, ed., *Historical Perspectives on Memory* (Helsinki: SHS, 1999), pp. 21-22.

55. It could be argued that Russian historiography inherited the Soviet interpretations. But with regards to recent developments in Russian historiography and politics the opposite seems to be the case. See Vera Tolz, "Rethinking Russian - Ukrainian Relations: A New Trend in Nation-Building in Post-Communist Russia?," *Nations and Nationalism*, 8, no. 2 (2002): 235-54.

man *Sonderweg* is perhaps the best example.<sup>56</sup> However, similarly it could be argued that the adoption of Hrushevskyi's scheme of history is analogous. That the quarrel is with another temporarily separated from the present is thus of little matter. This separation in time is due to the inherent paradox in most post-Soviet republics' tendencies to define themselves against the former "colonial" center, which actually collapsed with the breakup. As a negative event the *Holodomor*, as conveyed in history textbooks, reaffirms the Soviet/Russian as the other and clearly convey moral and normative resent. Therefore, it can be concluded that, seen from the processual perspective on historical culture, the norms and values conveyed by the state intended for school children's consumption, is an almost total distancing from what is perceived as Soviet. That the *Holodomor* is an event exceptionally laden with moral and normative elements was demonstrated in the summer of 2002, when the announcement of a joint inter-governmental commission of Ukrainian and Russian historians, supposed to write a common history about some of the most sensitive events in their joint past, sparked mass demonstrations on the street of Kyiv. It was thought that "harmonization" of historical facts between the two countries indicated the reintroduction of the imperial Russian as well as Soviet view of history.<sup>57</sup>

The structural aspects of historical culture, how individuals and institutions adjust themselves in time or how historical thinking is used, concerning the *Holodomor* is more difficult to discern. As this aspect focuses on the way in which history is written and though it is quite closely akin to *mentalité*, or perhaps more precisely the *modus operandi* of historians. Concerning the Ukrainian Famine it is observable that most history textbooks clearly nationalizes the atrocity, presenting it as directed towards the nation and making it first and foremost into a national matter. This practice is innate in most of the Ukrainian history presented in the textbooks, since one of its aims is merely to portray the history of the nation. Accordingly focus is put on national matters. In this respect the structural aspects closely follow the processual. But the structural differs in one important way.

Though the norms and values perceived as inherent in the *Holodomor* have changed greatly in official publications since independent the structural presentation of this atrocity have not changed as much as one would expect. Certainly the narrative now presents the collectivization campaign

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56. Rüsen, "Holocaust Memory and Identity Building," p. 256.

57. Faras Kuzio, "Ukrainian-Russian Historical Commission Raises Storm," RFE/RL, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine Report, 26 (July 2, 2002). <http://www.rferl.org/pbureport/2002/07/26-020702.html>

in a completely different light, and the use of categories such as nation, nationality and genocide are clear departures from the previous Soviet practice of history. Structurally, however, the narrative still bears a lot of resemblance to earlier practices of history. Histories of the USSR, and especially histories of the party, influenced all Soviet historical writing. Combining economic determinism, class conflict and elite conspiracy, it blended into a specific vision of the good society. History thus became a model of social development, a model for verifying ideas.<sup>58</sup> The simple difference is that the modern Ukrainian national narrative focuses on the nation instead of the class-less communist society. Determinism and linear development towards a goal in the end of history is thus still present, and deemed credible by the state as well as by the historians producing textbooks.

Perhaps this similarity is due to the circumstances relating to national as well as Soviet histories and their inherent similarities, as both traditionally focus on linear development and realization of an end in history, and as both narratives focus on the ideal society or condition at the end of the long and winding road of history. But, although this certainly helps to explain similarities to an extent it probably is not the sole explanation. One other relevant factor is most likely the fact that most professional historians engaged in the rewriting of history in the 1990s were in fact taught their profession during Soviet rule. However, future generations of Ukrainian historians will most likely reinterpret the *Holodomor*. How this is done will certainly prove the potency of the Ukrainian historical culture, with regards to both its structural aspects as well as processual ones. It is possible that future historians will extract other lessons from this atrocity and arranging it into a new pattern of meaning or a different type of national narrative, since writing history is mostly about the present. Reinterpretation and rewriting the history of the Famine might very well turn the event into a catastrophic crisis, whereby the cultural process of identity formation is hindered or destroyed completely. Further investigation and problematizing of the issues of victims, perpetrators and more importantly bystanders might very well turn the event into such a traumatic one that it will seriously disturb the collective "self-esteem".<sup>59</sup> The lessons might not be as clearcut and could in fact prove to be a threat to national identity in Ukraine.

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58. George M. Enteen, "Writing Party History in the USSR: The Case of E. M. Iaroslavskii," *Journal of Contemporary History*, 21, no. 2 (1986): 321.

59. Rüsen, "Holocaust Memory and Identity Building," p. 258.



## Conclusion

The object of this article was to analyze how the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933 has been integrated into the new national history, as well as historical culture, of Ukraine. By focusing on history textbooks intended for use in schools around Ukraine this study has highlighted the "image" promoted by the state of itself as well as of the nation. It has been demonstrated that, reinterpreting the national history as a history of suffering of the nation, by invoking Mykhailo Hrushevskyi's scheme of history has clearly distanced Ukraine from Russia and the Soviet Union as well as their interpretations of a common history. Emphasis has instead been placed on the Ukrainian nation as the most important driving force in history.

Although this narrative, or interpretation, was formulated before the actual Famine took place it is still easily incorporated into it, since most lessons supposed to be learnt from this event are the same as from previous events, namely that the Ukrainian nation has suffered a number of hardships on its way to full realization in the 1990s. Even though these lessons differ greatly from Soviet interpretations of collectivization and the Famine, the structure of the narrative bears a lot of resemblance of Soviet historiography. Therefore it can be concluded that the content may very well have changed by the structure and use of history as well as the *modus operandi* of Ukrainian historians have not changed as much.

As continuing interpretation and reinterpretation change the way in which history is perceived, the future most likely hold new interpretations of the *Holodomor* in stall. What lessons will be deemed useful and in what way this atrocity is presented will exclusively depend on the present, and changes therein. It seems plausible however to guess that Ukraine will continue to focus on its darker side of the past, as this has been the general tendency in history and politics over the last decades.

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## *IS THE UKRAINIAN GENOCIDE A MYTH?*

In 1988 the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine arrived at nineteen findings, among them (No. 16) that what happened to the Ukrainians in 1932-1933 constituted genocide.<sup>1</sup> This was, in fact the most important of the commission's conclusions, and as the person who drafted those conclusions for the commission's approval, I feel a certain responsibility to defend it in this journal in the light of new evidence that has been made available after the collapse of the Soviet Union and published by scholars in Ukraine.

### **United Nations reports**

There have been two major United Nations documents on genocide, the Ruhashyankiko report of 1978 and the Whittaker report of 1985.<sup>2</sup> Both are major studies of genocide from the standpoint of the commission, with the second intended as a corrective to the former. The Ruhashyankiko report had been forced to delete any mention of the Armenian genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire because of extensive pressure by the government of Turkey. The Whittaker report was intended as a corrective and did hold that the Armenian massacres had constituted genocide. These reports, however, were merely adopted by a UN subcommittee and did not necessarily reflect the views of higher UN bodies, let alone of the UN as a whole. The same is true of the US Commission on the Ukraine famine, which was adopted by and thus reflected the opinion of a temporary joint (hybrid) commission of the Congress, representatives of the president of the United States, and public members appointed by the members from Congress but was in no way binding on either Congress or the president, since it required approval from neither.

Neither of the UN reports mentioned Ukraine. If Turkey had been able to block findings not to its liking, imagine what the Soviet Union could have done. Moreover, while the Whittaker report was being prepared, I corresponded with the author, who said that since the issue was one of only three million or so Ukrainians, about 10 percent of the total Ukrainian SSR popula-

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1. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1988), pp. vii, xxiii.

2. Nicodeme Ruhashyankiko, *Report to the U.N. Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of National Minorities: Study of the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (E/CN.4/Sub. 2/416, 4 July 1978), 186 pp.; Ben Whitaker, *Revised and Updated Report on the Question of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (E/CN.4/Sub. 2/416/1985/6, 2 July 1985), 62 pp.

tion at the time, it really did not merit consideration as genocide. As a person having no standing with the body in question, there was little I could do to pursue the matter further.

However, it should be kept in mind that when Ukrainians raise the issue of the international recognition of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33 as genocide, about all that is feasible is something on the order of the UN reports, and any attempt to get an amendment to or revised and updated report would likely face the same obstacles placed by the Russian government as those placed by that of Turkey to any recognition of the Armenian genocide in past years. In addition, it must be kept in mind that Russia, unlike Turkey, is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and thus carries far more weight in all UN organizations. Still, what is not feasible today might well become so in the future.

### **The International Commission of Inquiry**

Unlike the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine, in 1990 the International Commission of Inquiry Into the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine, a moot court sponsored by the then World Congress of Free Ukrainians, stopped short of such a conclusion, stating:

If the intent to eliminate seems to have been present, was it nevertheless bent upon eliminating "a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, *as such*"?

There is no doubt that the famine and the policies from which it arose were not confined to Ukraine, even if the territories with a Ukrainian majority appear to have been tragically privileged. Moreover, history has since largely confirmed that Stalin's hatred extended beyond the Ukrainians. One is led to envisage the possibility of a series of genocides, however frightful that might be, but this does not in itself rule hypothesis of a genocide during the 1932-33 famine.

To this extent, and with due regard for the substantiating data supplied it, the Commission deems it plausible that the constituent elements of genocide were present at the time.<sup>3</sup>

This is a little like the Scottish verdict of "not proven," that is, the charge is one explanation that does not necessarily exclude others but not enough for a conviction. It was adopted because the chairman of the commission, Prof. Jacob Sundberg, argued:

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3. International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine, *The Final Report: 1990* (Toronto: International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine, 1990), p. 61.

... such prosecution would have to take the general defences into account, the most important of which perhaps would be that invoking the Genocide Convention would mean its retroactive application to a moment in Europe's history when no European or American power was willing to intervene in favour of the victims of the famine, not even by relief on purely humanitarian grounds, much less by a forcible humanitarian intervention of the type that used to hit the Ottoman Empire.<sup>4</sup>

While this was presented as a dissenting opinion of the chairman, it was certainly taken into account by his colleagues in drawing up the majority opinion. In fact, with the exception of this point Prof. Sundberg's dissent was perhaps stronger than that of the majority of his colleagues in its condemnation of the Soviet policies that brought about the famine. While Prof. Sundberg found that among the multiple goals Stalin's regime pursued in creating the famine was "destroying the Ukrainian nation,"<sup>5</sup> it was precisely on this point that the majority, which found that the Genocide Convention applied to acts committed before its legal adoption,<sup>6</sup> found its reason for dancing around the issue of whether this element needed to demonstrate genocide had been legally proven or merely proven to be one of several "plausible" explanations.

### Why the *Holodomor* was genocide

With all due respect to the distinguished legal scholars on the tribunal, the only real reason for not finding that a crime of genocide had been perpetrated was that those most obviously culpable were almost all dead by the time the given commission announced its findings, and finding something to charge with a crime now, thirteen years later, would be well nigh impossible. However, Professor Sundberg, not the majority, was quite correct in finding on the basis of the limited evidence we had at the time that the intent was there. Consider a private letter of September 11, 1932, from Stalin to Kaganovich, recently published from the personal archives of Lazar Kaganovich:

... The main thing is now Ukraine. Matters in Ukraine are now extremely bad. Bad from the standpoint of the Party line. They say that there are two oblasts of Ukraine (Kyïv and Dnipropetrovsk, it seems) where almost 50 *raikomy* [district Party committees] have come out against the plan of grain procurements, considering them unrealistic. In other *raikomy*, they confirm, the matter is no better. What does this look like? This is no party, but a parliament, a caricature of a parliament. Instead of directing the districts, Kosior is always waffling between the directives of

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4. *Ibid.*, pp. 87-88.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

the CC VKP(b) and the demands of the district Party committees and waffled to the end. Lenin was right, when he said that a person who lacks the courage at the necessary moment to go against the current cannot be a real Bolshevik leader. Bad from the standpoint of the Soviet [state] line. Chubar is no leader. Bad from the standpoint of the GPU. Redens lacks the energy to direct the struggle with the counterrevolution in such a big and unique republic as Ukraine.

If we do not now correct the situation in Ukraine, we could lose Ukraine.

Consider that Pilsudski is not daydreaming, and his agents in Ukraine are much stronger than Redens or Kosior imagine. Also consider that within the Ukrainian Communist Party (500,000 members, ha, ha) there are not a few (yes, not a few!) rotten elements that are conscious or unconscious Petliura adherents and in the final analysis agents of Pilsudski. If the situation gets any worse, these elements won't hesitate to open a front within (and outside) the Party, against the Party. Worst of all, the Ukrainian leadership doesn't see these dangers. . . . Set yourself the task of turning Ukraine in the shortest possible time into a fortress of the USSR, into the most inalienable republic. Don't worry about money for this purpose.<sup>7</sup>

Transforming Ukraine at any cost in the shortest possible time into a fortress of the Soviet Union and the most inalienable republic is a pattern that the late Hryhory Kostiuk as early as 1960 was able to describe on the basis of Soviet official press sources as Hryhory Kostiuk's *Stalinist Rule in the Ukraine: A Study in the Decade of Mass Terror, 1929-1939*. Based on what could be learned from the official Soviet Ukrainian press of the period, Kostiuk called this policy one of turning "the non-Russian republics of the USSR into *de facto* provinces of Russia."<sup>8</sup>

Now, of course, with Ukrainian historians having had over a decade to work in the archives, we know much more about the details. We know about Molotov's and Kaganovich's direct role in Ukraine and the Kuban after being appointed heads of special commissions on October 22, 1932, to oversee the grain procurements in those places and how they were able to send the very top Communists in their own jurisdictions wherever they decided in order to fulfil whatever tasks they assigned.<sup>9</sup> We now have the terrible decree of No-

7. *Komandyry velykoho holodu: Poyizdky V. Molotova i L. Kahanovycha v Ukrainu ta na Pivnichnyi Kavkaz, 1932-1933 rr.*, Valerii Vasyli'iev, Iurii Shapoval, eds. (Kyiv: Heneza, 2001), pp. 174-175; Ukrainian translation, pp. 160-161. Originally published in *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, Nov. 30, 2000.

8. Hryhory Kostiuk's *Stalinist Rule in the Ukraine: A Study in the Decade of Mass Terror, 1929-1939* (London: Atlantic Books, 1960), p. 1 *et passim*.

9. *Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini: ochyma istoriykiv, movoiu dokumentiv* (Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo politychnoyi literatury Ukrainy, 1990), pp. 228, 245, 260-61.



vember 18, 1932, that Molotov pushed through the Ukrainian Politburo, taking away everything but the seed (that would be taken under a separate decree in late December) if they had not fulfilled their quotas, placing collective farms on blacklists and fining individual peasants in other foodstuffs (in kind) for "maliciously" not having enough bread to seize.<sup>10</sup> We have the Moscow Politburo decree signed by Stalin and Molotov on December 14, 1932, blamed "shortcomings in grain procurements" in Ukraine and the North Caucasus (read the Kuban) on "*kurkul* and nationalist wreckers" in order to unleash a reign of terror on Party officials, decree how many years specific officials in several districts should receive from the courts, end Ukrainization in the North Caucasus, condemn its "mechanistic" implementation (thereby *de facto* eliminating it there also), and the following day ending Ukrainization in the rest of the USSR.<sup>11</sup> We have Kaganovich's diaries recalling how on his first day in the North Caucasus he told the local leadership, "Without doubt among those who have come from Ukraine [i.e., Skrypnyk's Commissariat of Education – J.M.] there were organized groups leading the work [of promoting kulak attitudes – J.M.], especially in the Kuban where there is the Ukrainian language."<sup>12</sup>

We also now have thousands of eyewitness accounts recorded in Ukraine itself, basically identical to what the Commission on the Ukraine Oral History Project began to collect almost twenty years ago from those who had fled to North America.<sup>13</sup> The first outpouring was when Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi published a list of highly "Party-minded" questions in *Sil's'ki visti* (Village News) for a book of people's memory that the Writers Union had commissioned the late Volodymyr Maniak to compile. Maniak sorted through 6,000 letters sent in response to Kul'chyts'kyi's questions to publish 1,000 accounts.<sup>14</sup> Now there are enough individual memoirs and collections of eyewitness accounts to make up the bulk of an impressive biography.<sup>15</sup> These witnesses can no longer be dismissed as fascist collaborators. Many fought in the Red Army during the Second World War and were exemplary Soviet citizens.

In short, under such pressure from the very pinnacle of Soviet power, witnessed to both by the documents of the perpetrators and the memories of those who survived, the question ceases to become, how many millions died? One is forced to ask instead, how could so many still survive when literally every-

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10. *Ibid.*, pp. 250-60.

11. *Komandyry*, pp. 310-12.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 254.

13. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine*, edited for the Commission by James E. Mace and Leonid Heretz, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1990).

14. *33-y holod: Narodna kniha – Memorial*, Lidiya Kovalenko and Volodymyr Maniak, comps. (Kyiv: Radians'ke pysmennyk, 1991).

15. *Holodomor v Ukrayini 1932-1933 rr. Bibliohrafichnyy pokazhchyk* (V-vo M.P. Kots': Odesa -L'viv, 2001), 654 pp.

thing possible was done to starve them to death? Each account is individual, but taken together their collective accounts of traumatization cannot fail to move even the most "scientific" of historians.

Still, the basic outlines of what happened and why remain basically the same in general outline as what we learned from classical Sovietology working on the basis of the official Soviet press. The only difference is that now we know in much more detail just how invasive Moscow's interventions in Ukraine were. And what Raphael Lemkin – the Jewish jurist from Poland who coined the term *genocide*,<sup>16</sup> wrote the basic documents, and lobbied them through the United Nations – had in mind when he first developed the term is quite clear:

Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressor group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population that is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and colonization of the area by the oppressor's own nationals. Denationalization was the word used in the past to describe the destruction of a national pattern. This author believes, however, that this word is inadequate because: (1) it does not connote the destruction of the biological structure; (2) in connoting the destruction of one national pattern, it does not connote the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor; and (3) denationalization is used by some authors to mean only deprivation of citizenship.<sup>17</sup>

Some scholars have called for defining genocide in either too narrow or too broad for scholarly purposes.<sup>18</sup> But what the author of the term had in mind and what was actually adopted by the international community were actions "subordinated to the criminal intent to destroy or cripple permanently a human group."<sup>19</sup> Few would doubt that Ukraine was crippled by the Stalinist period and ways that are both painfully obvious and agonizingly difficult to define. For this reason, in my more recent work I have tried to understand how and why independent Ukraine has thus far been unable to transform itself in the

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16. Explaining that he was combining "the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing)," he added in a footnote, "Another term could be used for the same idea, namely, *ethnocide*, consisting of the Greek word 'ethnos' – nation – and the Latin word 'cide'." Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation—Analysis of Government—Proposals for Redress* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, 1944), p. 79.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

18. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonasson, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (New Haven & London: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), pp. 23-27.

19. Raphael Lemkin, "Genocide as a Crime Under International Law," *The American Journal of International Law*, 41 (1947), p. 147.

ways we might think appropriate and its people deserve. For this reason I have found it useful to describe contemporary Ukraine as a post-genocidal society.

### **Holocaust or *Holodomor*?**

Ukrainians have sometimes spoken of the *Holodomor* as the Ukrainian Holocaust. With all due respect to those who have chosen to do so, I must point out the pitfalls of such a usage of the term. The word *holocaust* is usually traced to Wycliffe's translation of the Bible as a burnt offering to the Lord, and indeed it is an English word from the ancient Greek words *holos* (whole) and *caustos* (to burn). In reference to Hitler's destruction of the Jews, it came to be used as a not quite exact translation of the Hebrew word *shoah* (complete and utter destruction), yet eerily evocative of what Hitler tried to do to with a people traditionally considering themselves to be chosen by God, the Jews, to destroy them entirely as a people, including burning them in ovens specially designed for that purpose. It is not a generic term for a certain kind of crime against any given group but a specific word for a specific event and as such has entered many languages.

Almost until the end of the Soviet Union, Ukrainians in the West used such terms as the Great Famine or the Manmade Famine in Ukraine. Only when the veil of silence began to gradually lift at the end of 1987<sup>20</sup> did it become clear that the word *holodomor* become the label that stuck in people's memory in the place where it happened. The word itself is interesting, *holod* (hunger or famine) and *mor* (mass death as in a plague, like *chumats'kyi mor*, the Black Death). For this reason, to speak of the Ukrainian Holocaust makes about as much sense as speaking of the Jewish Holodomor. It is a unique term that has arisen from the depths of a victimized nation itself. As the unique tragedy faced by Ukrainians in the USSR becomes more a part of the consciousness of the larger world, the use of the word that Ukrainians in Ukraine have chosen will inevitably enter other languages as well.

As is the case with any culture of which we are not a part, those who are not part of the Ukrainian nation that has lived through the Soviet period, a nation that has been shaped or distorted by precisely that experience, cannot tell them how to understand themselves any more than we can tell them how to overcome all the obstacles that their past has burdened with. Ukrainians in Ukraine will make their own Ukrainian history. Having lived there for a decade not as an expatriate but as one of them, I might be more aware of this than most. Ukrainian historians today have largely retreated from the Party-mindedness of yesterday into the compilation of facts and documents, leaving them to the historians of tomorrow to figure out what it all means for them. We have written our books and will continue to do so. They will either embrace or reject what skills we can offer, preserved in the various works we will

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20. Volodymyr Shcherbyts'kyi cracked the door open in a long speech on December 25, 1987, stating that in 1932-33 there has been hardships and even famine in some areas.

leave behind. It is, after all, their country, and they will make their own history for the rest of the world and their own posterity to deal with. We can only hope that they will find what we have to offer of some use. For the reason, Raphael Lemkin, believed that genocide was a crime against humanity because nothing else can "convey the specific losses to civilization in the form of the cultural contributions which can be made only by groups of people united through national, racial or cultural characteristics."<sup>21</sup> It is up to them to define and recover their own losses in this sphere.

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21. Lemkin, "Genocide as a Crime Under International Law," p. 147.

modern agricultural machinery. Everywhere there were new buildings, and he noted that, industrially, Soviet Russia was progressing at a rapid rate. At the state farm, he was given excellent meals, in contrast to those given to the starving peasants working there.

A week later, on August 26th his arrival in Berlin, near the station for Saxony, he wrote another letter to his parents:

*Hurray!* It is wonderful to be in Germany again, absolutely wonderful. Russia is in a *very bad state*; rotten, no food, only bread; oppression, injustice, misery among the workers and 90 percent discontented. I saw some very bad things, which made me mad to think that people like Bernard Shaw go there and come back, after having been led round by the nose and had enough to eat, and say that Russia is a paradise. The winter is going to be one of great suffering there and there is starvation. The government is the most *brutal* in the world. The peasants hate the Communists. This year thousands and thousands of the best men in Russia have been sent to Siberia and the prison island of Solovki. In the Donetz Basin conditions are unbearable. Thousands are leaving. One reason why I left Hughesovska so quickly was that all I could get to eat was a roll of bread – and that is all I had up to 7 o'clock. Many Russians are too weak to work. I am terribly sorry for them.

Never-the-less great strides have been made in many industries and there is a good chance that when the Five-Year Plan is over Russia may become prosperous. But before that there will be great suffering, many deaths.

The Communists are doing excellent work in education, hygiene and against alcohol. Butter is 16/- a pound in Moscow; prices are terrific and boots, etc. cannot be had. There is nothing in the shops. The Communists were remarkably kind to me and gave me an excellent time.<sup>2</sup>

On Gareth Jones' eventual return to Britain, three articles were published in *The London Times* by "Our Correspondent," outlining conditions in Soviet Russia.

In April 1931, Gareth Jones left the employ of David Lloyd George to join the renowned Public Relation Advisors, Ivy Lee and Associates of Wall Street, New York. Lee who had interests in Standard Oil, intended to write a book on the Soviet Union, and it was Jones' brief to undertake the research. That summer, he was invited to accompany young Jack Heinz II, the grandson of the founder of the "57 Varieties" organization to "Bolshevik Russia" – this time for a six weeks tour. They covered the length and breadth of the country, and finally visited Ukraine. Jones kept an extensive diary, which Jack Heinz

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2. Gareth Jones, letter to his mother, August 26, 1930.

then copied into a small book, entitled: *A Diary*, and published anonymously. Gareth Jones wrote the foreword to this book:

With knowledge of Russia and the Russian language, it was possible to get off the beaten path, to talk with grimy workers and rough peasants, as well as such leaders as Lenin's widow and Karl Radek. We visited vast engineering projects and factories, slept on the bug-infested floors of peasants' huts, shared black bread and cabbage soup with the villagers – in short, got into direct touch with the Russian people in their struggle for existence and were thus able to test their reactions to the Soviet Government's dramatic moves.<sup>3</sup>

Noted in the diary were the pitiful conditions of the peasants. A typical entry, made during their walking tour in the countryside, described when they met:

One old man with a cap on the back of his head who came up and greeted us. "And how is it with you, tovarishch (comrade)?" they inquired.

"It is terrible in the Kolhoz," he whispered. "They took my cows and my horse. We are starving. Look what they give us – nothing! Nothing! How can we live with nothing in our dvor (farm)? And we can't say anything or they'll send us away as they did the others. All are weeping in the villages today, little brother."

Outside, a horse was tied to a post – "one of the worst kept and fed they had ever seen," said our last mentioned friend. "That was my horse once; now he belongs to the Kolhoz. I fed him well, and now look at him – scraggy and dejected."<sup>4</sup>

Gareth Jones returned to his employment in New York for six months, but due to the American financial situation and the World Depression of 1931, he returned to his old "Chief," David Lloyd George, in London. There, unknown to many, he assisted the former Prime Minister in writing his *War Memoirs*.

Gareth Jones' true ambition was to be a journalist, and he arranged to join the Welsh newspaper, *The Western Mail*, in April 1933. However, before he left Lloyd George's employment, in February 1933, he visited Germany, and was present in Leipzig the day Adolf Hitler was made Chancellor. A few days later he was the first foreign journalist to fly with the Dictator to a rally in Frankfurt. On his return to Wales, Gareth Jones wrote his prophetic article de-

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3. The Author, *Experiences in Russia – 1931: A Diary* (Pittsburgh: Alton Press, 1932), the Preface.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 178.



scribing not only the flight, but also, the bleak future of Europe in the twentieth century with respect to Hitler.

In March 1933, Gareth Jones made his third and final visit to the Soviet Union. Immediately on his return to Berlin on March 29, 1933, he revealed to the world, the "Holodomor," the terrible Famine-Genocide in Ukraine brought about by Stalin's policy of Collectivization and Industrialization. The author and journalist, Malcolm Muggeridge's, first famine articles were published anonymously in the *Manchester Guardian* on March 25, 27 and 28, 1933, but none were published in his own name until May 5, 1933, in *The Morning Post*.

Meanwhile H. R. Knickerbocker reported Gareth Jones' statement in a *New York Evening Post* Foreign Service dispatch. (Similar statements also appeared in the British press including the then Soviet-sympathetic *Manchester Guardian*):

BERLIN, March 29th [1933] – Russia today is in the grip of a famine which is proving as disastrous as the catastrophe of 1921 when millions died, reported Gareth Jones of Great Britain, who arrived in Berlin this morning en route to London after a long walking tour through the Ukraine and other districts in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Jones, who speaks Russian fluently, is the first foreigner to visit the Russian countryside since the Moscow authorities forbade foreign correspondents to leave the city. His report, which he will deliver to the Royal Institute of International Affairs tomorrow, explains the reason for this prohibition. Famine on a colossal scale, impending death of millions from hunger, murderous terror and the beginnings of serious unemployment in a land that had hitherto prided itself on the fact that every man had a job – this is the summary of Mr. Jones's first-hand observations.

He told the EVENING POST: The arrest of the British engineers in Moscow is a symbol of panic in consequence of conditions worse than in 1921. Millions are dying of hunger. The trial, beginning Saturday, of the British engineers is merely a pendant to the recent shooting of thirty-five prominent workers in agriculture, including the Vice-Commissar of the Ministry of Agriculture, and is an attempt to check the popular wrath at the famine which haunts every district of the Soviet Union.

Everywhere was the cry, "There is no bread. We are dying." This cry came from every part of Russia, from the Volga, Siberia, White Russia, the North Caucasus, Central Asia. I tramped through the Black Earth region because that was once the richest [fertile] farmland in Russia and because the correspondents have been forbidden to go there to see for themselves what is happening.

In the train a Communist denied 'to me that there was a famine. I flung a crust of bread that I had been eating from my own supply into a spittoon. A peasant fellow-passenger fished it out and ravenously ate it. I

threw an orange peel into the spittoon and the peasant again grabbed it and devoured it. The Communist subsided. I stayed overnight in a village where there used to be 200 oxen and where there now are six. The peasants were eating the cattle fodder and had only a month's supply left. They told me that many had already died of hunger. Two soldiers came to arrest a thief. They warned me against travel by night as there were too many "starving" desperate men.

"We are waiting for death" was my welcome, but see, we still, have our cattle fodder. Go farther south. There they have nothing. "Many houses are empty of people already dead," they cried.

A foreign expert returning from Kazakstan told me that 1,000,000 out of 5,000,000 there have died of hunger. I can believe it. After Stalin, the most hated man in Russia is Bernard Shaw among those who read his glowing descriptions of plentiful food in their starving land. "The future is blacker than the present. There is insufficient seed. Many peasants are too weak physically to work on the land. The new taxation policy, promising to take only a fixed amount of grain from the peasants, will fail to encourage production because the peasants refuse to trust the Government."

In short, Mr. Jones concluded, the collectivization policy of the Government and the resistance of the peasants to it have brought Russia to the worst catastrophe since the famine of 1921, and have swept away the population of whole districts.

Coupled with this, the prime reason for the breakdown, he added, is the terror, lack of skill and collapse of transport and finance. Unemployment is rapidly increasing, he declared, because of the lack of raw materials. The lack of food and the "wrecking" of the currency and credit system have forced many of the factories to close or to dismiss great numbers of workers.

The Jones report, because of his position, because of his reputation for reliability and impartiality, and because he was the only first-hand observer who had visited the Russian countryside since it was officially closed to foreigners, was bound to receive widespread attention in official England as well as among the public of the country.<sup>5</sup>

On March 31, 1933, in *The New York Times*, Walter Duranty, a U.S. correspondent, and 1932 Pulitzer Prize Winner, who had long been in Soviet good graces, denied there was famine, and promptly presented a rebuttal, but it was a rebuttal of classic Orwellian "doublespeak":

It is all too true that the novelty and mismanagement of collective farming, plus the quite efficient conspiracy of Feodor M. Konar and his

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5. H. H. Knickerbocker, "Famine Grips Russia Millions Dying," *New York Evening Post* Foreign Service Dispatch, March 29, 1933.

associates in agricultural commissariats, have made a mess of Soviet food production. [Konar was executed for sabotage.]

But – to put it brutally – you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, and the Bolshevik leaders are just as indifferent to the casualties that may be involved in their drive toward socialization as any General during the World War [One] . . .

Since I talked with Mr. Jones I have made exhaustive inquiries about this alleged famine situation. . . . There is serious food shortage throughout the country with occasional cases of well-managed state or collective farms. The big cities and the army are adequately supplied with food. There is no actual starvation or death from starvation, but there is widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition. . . . In every Russian village food conditions will improve henceforth, but that will not answer one really vital question – What about the coming grain crop? Upon that depends not the future of the Soviet power that cannot and will not be smashed, but the future policy of the Kremlin.<sup>6</sup>

*The New York Times* on May 13, 1933 then printed a reply from "Mr. Jones" to Walter Duranty's article of March 30 in which Gareth Jones stood by his Berlin statement that the Soviet Union was suffering from a severe famine.<sup>7</sup> The censors had turned the journalists into masters of euphemism and understatement and hence they gave "famine" the polite name of "food shortage" and "starving to death" was softened to read as "widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition."

Gareth Jones' evidence was based:

On conversations with peasants, who had migrated into the towns from various parts of Russia [USSR]. Peasants from the richest [most fertile] parts of the U.S.S.R. were coming into the towns for bread. They told stories of the deaths in their villages from starvation, of the death of the greater part of their cattle and horses, and each conversation corroborated the previous one. . . . My evidence is based on my talks with hundreds of peasants who were not "kulaks" – those mythical scapegoats for the hunger in Russia – but ordinary peasants. I talked with them alone, and in Russian, and jotted down their conversations that were an unanswerable indictment of Soviet agricultural policy of Collectivization. These peasants said emphatically that the famine was worse than in 1921 and that fellow-villagers were dying.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Walter Duranty, "Russians Hungry, But Not Starving," *The New York Times*, March 31, 1933.

7. Gareth Jones, "Mr. Jones Replies," *ibid.*, May 13, 1933.

8. *Ibid.*

Countering Walter Duranty's rebuttal in *The New York Times*, Gareth Jones congratulated the Soviet Foreign Office on its skill in concealing the true situation in the USSR. "Moscow is not Russia, and the sight of well-fed people there tends to hide the real Russia."<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, in another letter, to the editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, which was published on May 8, 1933, Jones stated:

I hope that fellow-Liberals who boil at any injustices in Germany or Italy or Poland will just express one word of sympathy with the millions of peasants who are the victims of persecution and famine in the Soviet Union.

In Eugene Lyons' 1937 book, *Assignment in Utopia*, written after his disillusionment with the Great Soviet Socialist Experiment, he describes how Gareth Jones' portrayal of the shocking situation in Soviet Russia and Ukraine was publicly denied by the Moscow Foreign Correspondents, even after they had received queries from their home offices on the subject of the famine. However, these inquiries coincided with preparations that were under way for the show-trial of some six British engineers. The need to remain on friendly terms with the Soviet censors at least for the duration of the trial was a compelling professional necessity (possibly along with professional jealousy). Persuaded by the head censor in the Bolshevik News Agency, Comrade Umansky, these correspondents were placed in position where they, more or less, had to condemn Gareth Jones as a liar. To quote Lyons:

Throwing down Jones was as unpleasant a chore as fell to any of us in years of juggling facts to please dictatorial regimes – but throw him down we did, unanimously and in almost identical formulas of equivocation. Poor Gareth Jones must have been the most surprised human being alive when the facts he so painstakingly garnered from our mouths were snowed under by our denials.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the adverse criticism, Gareth Jones went on to write many articles about the plight of the Soviet peasants, and in particular that of the Ukrainians. These articles appeared in many British, American, French and German newspapers telling the world of the famine and terror that he had seen on his travels. Even he narrowly escaped arrest at a small railway station in Ukraine. In *The Daily Express* of April 5, 1933, Gareth Jones wrote of his journey to Ukraine:

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9. *Ibid.*

10. Eugene Lyons, *Assignment in Utopia* (London: George G. Harrap, 1937), p. 577.

I piled my rucksack with many loaves of white bread, with butter, cheese, meat and chocolate that I had bought with foreign currency at the Torgsin stores. I arrived at the station in Moscow from which the trains leave for the south, picked my way through the dirty peasants lying sleeping on the floor and in a few minutes found myself in the hard class compartment of the slowest train which leaves Moscow for Kharkoff. . . . In every little station the train stops, and during one of these halts a man comes up to me and whispers to me in German: "Tell them in England that we are starving, and that we are getting swollen." . . . The young Communist says to me: "Be careful. The Ukrainians are desperate." But I get out of the train, which rattles on to Kharkoff, leaving me alone in snow.<sup>11</sup>

On April 6, 1933 in *The Daily Express*, he wrote:

In one of the peasant's cottages in which I stayed we slept nine in the room. It was pitiful to see that two out of the three children had swollen stomachs. All there was to eat in the hut was a very dirty watery soup, with a slice or two of potato, which all the family – and in the family I included myself – ate from a common bowl with wooden spoons.

Fear of death loomed over the cottage, for they had not enough potatoes to last until the next crop. When I shared my white bread and butter and cheese one of the peasant women said, "Now I have eaten such wonderful things I can die happy." I set forth again further towards the south and heard the villagers say, "We are waiting for death."<sup>12</sup>

Everywhere Gareth Jones heard the tragic cry, "We have no bread."

In a letter to Gareth Jones on April 17, 1933, Malcolm Muggeridge wrote:

I am glad you liked the M.G. [*Manchester Guardian*] articles. They were villainously cut. Duranty is, of course, a plain crook, though an amusing little man in his way. I broke finally with the M.G. over the Metrovick affair [Six British Vickers engineers arrested and put on show-trial in Moscow in 1933].<sup>13</sup>

Muggeridge in this letter also stated that he would: "gladly write to *The New York Times* a letter of protest" when he had sight of Duranty's article. Later that year, Muggeridge wrote again to Gareth Jones, having seen the Duranty contribution and commented, "He just writes what they tell him."<sup>14</sup>

11. Gareth Jones, "Soviet Confiscate Part of Workers' Wages," *The Daily Express*, April 5, 1933.

12. Gareth Jones, "Nine to a Room in Slums of Russia," *ibid.*, April 6, 1933.

13. Malcolm Muggeridge, in a letter to Gareth Jones, April 17, 1933.

14. Malcolm Muggeridge, in a letter to Gareth Jones, September 29, 1933.

In February 1934, Malcolm Muggeridge published his book, *Winter in Moscow*. In the preface, he stated that:

The characters and events are real people and real events' (those with a taste for the sport may even amuse themselves by trying to spot the originals); but no particular character or particular event is necessarily real.<sup>15</sup>

A chapter entitled, *Ash-Blond Incorruptible*, describes an ash-blond, bearded, pipe-smoking, wine-drinking, elderly, Mr. Wilfred Pye. Jones, a young man was none of these, but the description in every other respect in the chapter suggests that Muggeridge had him in mind although he used a great deal of literary license. His recount is that of a man with "corduroy breeches" with "luggage fastened to his back" [rucksack].<sup>16</sup> It would be interesting to know whether Gareth Jones saw himself as Pye.

One Muggeridge paragraph recalls that, while on the train, three peasants watched Pye eat an orange and throw the peel into a spittoon. A young man (a Communist) on the train denied there was food shortage, at which the peasant: "leant forwards his hand went nearer the spittoon; suddenly made a dart and clutched the orange peel. He ate it up ravenously, giving none to his two companions."<sup>17</sup> These words are in essence identical to those of Jones in his Berlin press release of March 29.

The reader of *Winter in Moscow* can interpret for himself whether Gareth Jones appreciated Malcolm Muggeridge's description of him. At least he was called "Incorruptible". In concluding the highly imaginary passage, there is reference to a great English newspaper, an allusion that may relate to David Lloyd George. Muggeridge writes:

Pye's articles in the great English Liberal newspaper were widely read and widely quoted. Now at last, readers of the articles thought, we know what really is going on in Russia. It's a great comfort to think that there's at least one newspaper left that gives a balanced, objective, unprejudiced account of things; at least one journalist left who can be relied on not to lose his head; to give us the facts, truth, and leave us to form our own conclusions.<sup>18</sup>

After Gareth Jones' final visit to the Soviet Union in 1933, as a result of his Famine-Genocide exposé, he was never allowed to return. In a letter to a friend, Gareth Jones wrote:

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15. Malcolm Muggeridge, *Winter In Moscow* (London, Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1934), Preface.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

Alas! You will be very amused to hear that the inoffensive little "Joneski" has achieved the dignity of being a marked man on the black list of the O.G.P.U. and is barred from entering the Soviet Union. I hear that there is a long list of crimes that I have committed under my name in the secret police file in Moscow and funnily enough espionage is said to be among them. . . . As a matter of fact Litvinoff [Soviet Foreign Minister] sent a special cable from Moscow to the Soviet Embassy in London to tell them to make the strongest of complaints to Mr. Lloyd George about me.<sup>19</sup>

Unable to return to the Soviet Union, and aware that Japan was an enigmatic problem, Gareth Jones decided to undertake a "Round the World Fact-Finding Tour," and, in particular, to study Japan's intentions of colonial expansion in the Far East. At the end of October 1934, he left Britain – bound first for the USA. Three months later, he sailed from San Francisco for Japan, via Hawaii. After six weeks in Japan, interviewing several military and political leaders, he then toured the Far East, enquiring about the political situation in that area.

He arrived in the Philippines two days after Roosevelt had given the islands Independence. He journeyed on to visit the Dutch East Indies, Singapore, Siam, French Indo-China, and Hong Kong before travelling in China to reach his intended destination of Manchukuo.

Sadly, he never achieved his goal, as Chinese bandits captured him in Inner Mongolia, held him for the ransom sum of 1,000,000 Mexican dollars, and, after sixteen days in captivity, while making worldwide front page news, on the eve of his thirtieth birthday he was murdered by these men, disbanded Chinese soldiers controlled by the local Japanese Military.

There is no doubt that Gareth Jones was considered a dangerous man by the Japanese army in Manchukuo. At worst, they probably believed him to be a secret agent. It would not have gone unnoticed that an article of Gareth Jones was published at the time of his kidnapping ordeal. It was entitled [Japanese] "Rape of Manchuria." The Japanese feared he would expose to the world their ambition to build an Empire in the same fearless manner as he had exposed the man-made famine brought about Stalin's Five-Year Plan of collectivization and industrialization.

Gareth Jones was indeed a man who knew too much.<sup>20</sup>

19. Gareth Jones, in a letter to a friend, August 26, 1933.

20. For further details about Gareth Jones, please visit his commemorative website at: <http://colley.co.uk/garethjones>. Of particular interest is the book mentioned earlier in this article, *Gareth Jones: A Manchukuo Incident*. It is available for preview and purchase at this website. A Gareth Vaughan Jones Memorial Travelling Scholarship is still awarded today to young graduates of the University of Wales to promote a better understanding of the people of the world.



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## *IMAGES AND EVOCATIONS OF THE FAMINE-GENOCIDE IN UKRAINIAN ART*

"... they pervert our socialist reality, give a false image of the Soviet people, have no artistic or museum value and, as works created by enemies of the people should be destroyed." (Archive of the National Art Museum of Ukraine, file 7/141, 1937-1941, from the document of September 8, 1937 as quoted by Svetlana Ryabycheva, "The Spetsfond," in *The Phenomenon of the Ukrainian Avant-garde 1910-1935* [Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2001], p. 31.)

"... But often, what I saw was much too dreadful to put on paper. My medium was too limited and my paper too weak to bear all that I saw and felt." (Leo Haas, artist-survivor, East Berlin, 1979 in Mary S. Costanza, *The Living Witness: Art in the Concentration Camps and Ghettos* [New York: The Free Press, 1982], p. x.)

Despite the fact that most of the prominent visual artists of the Ukrainian cultural renaissance of the 1920s were alive and active in 1932-1933, there are no surviving images from the famine-genocide. It appears that no raw transcripts of this tragedy of incomprehensible proportions have survived. None have come to light in the work of such renowned artists as Vasyl and Fedir Krychevsky, Mykhailo Boichuk, Vasyl Sedliar, Ivan Padalka, Lev Kramarenko, Anatol Petrytsky, Vasyl Kasian, and Vasyl Yermilov. Whether lesser-known artists left behind a record of what they witnessed remains to be investigated. In fact there has been little research and documentation of the art of the famine-genocide.

During the Second World War witnesses left numerous documentary works of art portraying the suffering, brutality, and mass murder in Hitler's concentration and death camps. Some of the art produced in Soviet concentration camps has also survived and is available to researchers. Why then are there no images of the famine-genocide of 1932-1933?

The simple answer would be that most famous artists throughout history often chose not to portray scenes of devastation, war, and death. In the case of the famine of 1932-1933 the answer is more complex and raises some interesting questions.

Did the excesses of reality exceed the power of artists to portray what they experienced? Was what they witnessed much too traumatic to render unto paper or canvas? Was the fear of reprisals so great and the terror unleashed by Stalin and his regime so overwhelmingly murderous that artists were afraid to risk their lives and the lives of their families?<sup>1</sup> Was the belief in Communist ideology and in building a Socialist state so blinding that many of the artists followed the dictates of the Party unquestioningly and perhaps willingly? Were images of the famine recorded and then destroyed by the artists themselves or by relatives and friends? Were they destroyed by the Soviet state as were all the monumental frescoes painted by Boichuk and his followers?

These are some of the questions that arose during my search for the art of the famine-genocide of 1932-1933. Albeit important to art history, these questions are not easily answered as they are intertwined with Soviet Communist ideology, politics, sociology, psychology, and other disciplines.

In this article I would like to suggest some of the reasons for the absence of direct documentary portrayals of the famine-genocide and to share with you some of the related images. Also I would like to introduce a few of the growing number of works of art which emerged later, especially those evocations of the famine created more recently in the diaspora and in Ukraine.

As is known, for over fifty years the Communist Party of the USSR vehemently denied that the famine-genocide of 1932-1933 had taken place and attempted to erase it from public consciousness. Speaking out about the famine was ruthlessly punished as an offence against the State. Therefore, there can be no doubt that fear and the urge to survive played an important role in what the artists did or did not do.

I would like to begin by referring to images of the 1921-1922 famine in Ukraine, which were exhibited in the 1920s and later reproduced in books, in order to argue that artists did not avoid the first famine because they did not feel threatened.

One of the most prominent Soviet graphic artists, Vasyl Kasian (1896-1976), while still a student at the Prague Academy of Art, created two images

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1. In 1936 such key figures in Ukrainian art as Mykhailo Boichuk, Ivan Padalka, and Vasyl Sedliar were arrested and shot in 1937. Boichuk's wife, Sofia Nalepinska-Boichuk, was arrested and executed on December 11, 1937. The wife of Ivan Padalka, Maria Pas'ko, was arrested and sentenced to eight years in the camps. Property of arrested individuals was usually confiscated leaving families destitute. At the beginning of the 1930s the following artists, Boichuk's students, were arrested and disappeared into Stalin's GULag: Okhrim Kravchenko, Onufrii Biziukoy, Ivan Lypkivsky (executed), and Kyrilo Hvozdyk. Mykola Kasperovych and Yukhym Mykhailiv were also sent to concentration camps where they perished. Hvozdyk returned after Stalin's death a broken man and refused to discuss his experiences.

of the 1921-1922 famine. The first is a sepia ink drawing titled *Pietà* (ill. 1). It depicts a grieving mother with the naked, famine ravished body of a child across her knees. The title and the composition echo Michelangelo's sculpture of the same name where Mary holds the body of Christ in her lap. This relates the secular event to a religious experience.

In the poster *Help the Starving* (Dopomozhit holoduiuchym) (ill. 2) designed for the Prague Committee helping the famine victims in Ukraine, Kasian painted a peasant mother with emaciated children in an appeal for funds. Painted in oils on board this poster was displayed at the entrance to the Stromovka Park where donations were accepted.<sup>2</sup>

After graduation from the Prague Art Academy Kasian returned to Ukraine in 1927. Between 1931-1933 at the height of the forced collectivization and famine Kasian produced woodcuts, which exalted labor and industrialization and ignored what was happening in the countryside. In the woodcut *Bolshevik Harvest*, 1934 (ill. 3), he depicted three happy corpulent figures with lush, fertile fields of grain all around them. These images contradicted the tragic events. They were Kasian's contribution to the glorification of collectivization and the demands of the Communist Party that "... the artistic depiction of reality must be combined with the task of ideological transformation and education of workers in the spirit of socialism."<sup>3</sup>

Art produced in Soviet Ukraine of the 1921-1922 famine is scarce. Sofia Nalepinska-Boichuk (1882-1937), the Polish wife of Mykhailo Boichuk and an accomplished artist and teacher, engraved a woodcut titled *Famine* (ill. 4).<sup>4</sup> It shows four emaciated children with swollen bellies being fed by a woman beside a railroad car. Published sources do not provide a provenance of the work, but it appears that the woodcut was first exhibited in 1927 at the Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution Exhibition.<sup>5</sup> Although Nalepinska was sympathetic to the plight of starving children in 1922, there are no surviving depictions of the famine of 1932-1933 in her work, much of which was destroyed after her arrest and execution in 1937.

On the basis of these works one can assume that images of famine rendered in the 1920s were permitted and reproduced because they were considered to be the result of bourgeois capitalist oppression of the people.

2. L. Vladych, *Vasyl Kasian* (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1987), pp. 71-72.

3. For a complete definition of the Socialist Realist method, see "Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi s'ezd sovetskikh pisatelei" [The First All Union Congress of Soviet Writers] Stenographic transcript (Moscow, 1934), p. 716

4. This work has been published and exhibited in Canada under the name *Hunger*. See *The Phenomenon of the Ukrainian Avant-garde 1910-1935* (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2001), p. 151.

5. Serhii Bilokin, "Holodomor i stanovlennia sotsrealizmu yak tvorchoho metodu," unpublished article, 2003, p. 6.

In my quest for images of the famine-genocide I was able to find only a few works by Kazimir Malevych rendered in response to collectivization and indirectly to famine. These works survived outside of Soviet Ukraine.

Kazimir Malevych (1878-1935), one of the great innovators of the twentieth century and the leading figure of the Russian avant-garde art, was born in Kyiv and brought up in Ukraine. From 1904 to 1926 he worked mostly in Moscow and St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad where in 1915 he launched Suprematism, the first geometric abstraction movement. After the Bolshevik Revolution, which he supported, he held numerous important positions within the official Communist art establishment. However, in 1926 as a result of art policy changes he was relieved of the directorship of the Institute of Artistic Culture. When political pressures in Russia intensified, he was given refuge in Kyiv and taught at the Kyiv Art Institute from 1928-1930, as did Vladimir Tatlin, the father of Constructivism and a fellow Ukrainian.<sup>6</sup>

About the time of the First Five-Year Plan and the drive to collectivization, Malevych abandoned his Suprematist compositions and returned to painting peasants. However, they were no longer the sturdy peasants of iron and sheet metal of the Cubist period of the 1910s. Often they were faceless and inert puppet-like figures alienated from their surroundings. Those without arms and hands suggest mutilation and helplessness. It has been suggested that Malevych's return to representational depictions and peasant subject matter was not only prompted by political pressure to return to figuration, but also by his sympathy for the peasants.<sup>7</sup> According to Dmytro Horbachov, a respected art scholar in Kyiv, Malevych visited his sister in Zhytomyr Region every summer and was very distressed by the sight of starvation.<sup>8</sup>

The colored pencil drawing titled *Standing Figure* (ill. 5) (or *Selianyn z khrestamy rozpiattia* [Villager with Crucifixion Crosses] according to D. Horbachov) has been dated as early as 1927 and as late as 1932-33.<sup>9</sup> Thematically and iconographically it is more in keeping with the later works

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6. In 1930 there was a purge at the Art Institute in Kyiv in which the following artists-professors were ousted: Lev Kramarenko, M. Boichuk, F. Krychevsky, V. Kasian, K. Malevych, and V. Tatlin as "bourgeois specialists":

7. Jean-Claude Marcadé in *Malevitch* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Francaises Casterman, 1990), p. 245.

8. In a telephone conversation, March 2003.

9. *Malevich Artist and Theoretician* (Paris: Flammarion, 1991), fig. 158 indicates 1927 or later. D. Horbachov in *Khronika 2000*, no. 3-4 (Kyiv 1993), p. 127 gives 1932-33 as the dates. The fact that the work is in the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and was acquired from Hugo Haring in 1958 makes the earlier date more likely. Jean-Claude Marcadé in *Malevitch*, fig. 379, titles the work *Orant aux stigmates cruciferes orthodoxes* and dates it at the end of 1920s.

where facial features have been omitted or are indicated by crosses.<sup>10</sup> Here the Orthodox cross if seen only on the face, could be read as a simplification of facial features. However, the repetition of the crosses on the hands and feet suggests a deeper message, perhaps martyrdom. The raised arms echo the Oranta images common in icons. Thus the suffering peasant with arms raised in supplication has spiritual connotations.

The pencil drawing *Three Figures* (also known as *Trois personnages marques au visage par: la faucelle et le marteau, la croix orthodoxe, un cercueil noir*) has been called *De serp i molot, tam smert' i holod* (Where There Is the Hammer and Sickle, There Is Death and Famine), 1932-1933 (ill. 6) by D. Horbachov.<sup>11</sup> The latter title corresponds to popular songs of the time, known as "chastushky."<sup>12</sup> Facial features have been replaced by a hammer and sickle, a cross, and a coffin. This brave indictment of the regime and collectivization survived in the collection of Malevych's student, Alexandra Leporskaia in Leningrad.

In the oil on canvas known as *Man Running*, beg. 1930s<sup>13</sup> (ill. 7), Malevych departs from the static frontal peasant figures by painting a figure in motion in a flat barren landscape. Between the symbolic red and white house Malevych has suspended a sword and in front of the running man – a cross. The sword appears dipped in blood and points to a single sack, surely a reference to the brutal confiscation of all grain. The horizontal band on which the figure is running is also red as is the cross. Horbachov has called the work *Selianyn pomizh khrestom i mechem* (Villager between the Cross and the Sword) and has dated the work to 1932-1933.

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10. In the painting known as *A Complex Presentiment* or *A Complex Premonition* dated 1928-32 the figure is shown without facial features, beardless, and without arms. On the reverse Malevych had written "The composition is made up of the elements of emptiness, loneliness and the hopelessness of life in 1913 in Kuntsevo." The backdating to 1913 is generally interpreted as a safeguard. At the time Malevych painted the work he had lost his status, had been persecuted, and imprisoned briefly in 1930.

11. D. Horbachov and O. Naiden, "Malevych muzhyts'kyi," in *Khronika 2000*, no. 3-4 (Kyiv 1993), p. 226.

12. I first learned about "chastushky" (also known as *chastivky*), popular songs, often couplets, dealing not just with the famine, from Dr. Dagmara Duvirak in Toronto. She heard them from Prof. Mykola Hordiichuk, including ones about the famine. Hordiichuk was a famine survivor and musicologist in Kyiv. D. Horbachov refers to songs about the famine in "The Exuberant World of Ukrainian Avant-garde," in *The Phenomenon of the Ukrainian Avant-garde 1910-1935*, pp. 37-38. In *Ukrainian Avant-garde Art 1910s-1930s* (Kyiv: Mystetsvo, 1996), p. 5, Horbachov quotes a specific *chastivka*, which relates to Malevych's drawing: "Oi, na khati serp i molot, a u khati – smert' i holod" [Oh, a sickle and hammer on the house, death and famine in the house].

13. Marcadé, *Malevitch*, pp. 254 and 257 gives the date as the beginning of the 1930s, whereas D. Horbachov in *Khronika 2000*, dates the work as 1932-33.

Jean-Claude Marcadé, a French art historian, writes that "Malevych without a doubt was the only painter who showed the dramatic situation of the Russian peasants at the time of the criminal forced collectivization."<sup>14</sup> Indeed this appears to be the case. However, I would like to argue that this statement applies especially to Ukrainian peasants as their resistance was widespread and death toll mind-boggling.

Meanwhile in 1932 at the start of the famine the prominent artist, Mykhailo Boichuk (1882-1937), and his colleagues Vasyl Sedliar (1899-1937), Ivan Padalka (1894-1937), and Oksana Pavlenko (1896-1991) were commissioned to decorate the Chervonozavodsk Theatre in Kharkiv. The four huge murals depicted the progress and accomplishments of the First Five-Year Plan in Ukraine. Boichuk was responsible for *Harvest Festival in the Collective Farm* (ill. 8), a large fresco (5.5 x 6 m.) in the central foyer of the theatre. He was forced to make numerous revisions to his sketches to satisfy the authorities, and the work was not completed until 1935. What he painted was a departure from his previous work in terms of style and content. The end product was typical of the demands made on artists by the Communist Party to portray idealized, smiling collective farm workers celebrating the achievements of collectivization and to do so in a realistic three-dimensional manner. It was art custom tailored to hide the gruesome truth and to serve the propaganda purposes of the Soviet state. How ironic that one of the leaders of the Ukrainian artistic renaissance, a dedicated advocate of a national monumental school and the founder of what became known as the Boichukist School was required to do the regime's bidding to survive. However, even these efforts did not spare him from death.

After the arrest and execution of Padalka, Sedliar, and Boichuk on fabricated charges of membership in a counter-revolutionary terrorist organization, these frescoes, as well as all others done by the Boichukists were destroyed as the work of "enemies of the people."

As a result, it is perhaps understandable that at the time, fear, trauma and silence overwhelmed all the artists as it did the writers. But eventually, the writers, particularly those who fled Soviet Ukraine for the West, found their voices and recorded their experiences in memoirs or fiction. Why not the artists?

Vasyl Krychevsky and Mykola Nedilko, for example, were professional artists at the time of the famine, yet, they did not commit to paper their eyewitness responses as realistic visual records or transformed metaphorical experiences when they emigrated to the West, as far as I was able to determine.

Mykhailo Dmytrenko, who had worked as an assistant to Fedir Krychevsky at the Kyiv Art Institute and later was active in Canada and the

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14. Marcadé, *Malevitch*, p. 245.

USA, in an interview in 1995 recalled vividly the victims of the famine. He described an emaciated woman with a child in her lap sitting against a wall in Kharkiv, her face covered with flies. The starving child was trying to nurse despite the apparent death of the mother. Visible above them was a poster proclaiming Stalin's slogan, "Zhyt' stalo lutshe; zhyt' stalo vieseliie" (Life Became Better; Life Became Happier).<sup>15</sup>

Dmytrenko did not dare to record what he saw in any drawings or paintings at the time. When I interviewed him, the trauma of working under the Communist regime and his fear of retribution were still very much in evidence even though, at the time, he was 87 years old.

For the thirtieth anniversary of the Famine, in 1963, Dmytrenko painted *1933* (ill. 9). This was not the horrific image, which was etched in his mind, but a composition where he juxtaposed symbolic images: a famine victim vs. the Communist regime.

Another Ukrainian artist working in the USA, Bohdan Pevny, responded to the thirtieth anniversary of the famine with the painting *The Earth* (ill. 10). It shows a dying woman clutching the black earth which had nourished her, but which had been forcibly taken away, as had all grain. Pevny had not witnessed the famine. His depiction was based on a still from Oleksander Dovzhenko's film *Arsenal*. Reproductions of *The Earth* were widely circulated as post cards.

There were responses from other artists who were not witnesses. In 1950 Yuri Kulchytsky in France created a woodcut called *Famine 1933* in an expressionist manner. Yuri Solovij working in New York painted *Pièta: Homage to 1933* in the American abstract expressionist style in 1953.

Apparently in the diaspora the famine manifested itself in the work of individual artists sporadically usually with the approach of memorial anniversaries. At times it was encouraged by the Ukrainian community. As a direct result of the commemoration of the fiftieth Anniversary of the famine-genocide the Ukrainian Women's Society in Paris commissioned three Ukrainian artists Omelian Mazuryk, Volodymyr Makarenko, and Anton Solomukha to paint works dedicated to the famine. The work by Makarenko now hangs in the City Hall of the 6th Arrondissement in Paris.<sup>16</sup>

Ukrainian communities in Canada commissioned memorials to be erected in Edmonton and Winnipeg. The memorial monument in Edmonton was designed by Montreal/Toronto artist Ludmyla Temertey. It was inspired by her

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15. Audio and video interviews were conducted by the author with M. Dmytrenko Nov. 29-30, Dec. 1, 1995 for the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre in Toronto.

16. Makarenko was awarded a silver medal by the City of Paris for this work on June 1, 1987.



mother, who was a famine survivor. The one in Winnipeg was the work of Roman Kowal, a local sculptor, who was born in Western Ukraine. As a young man he heard of the famine from one of the survivors. His secular depiction of a mother and child squeezed between two pillars of granite stands in a prestigious location in front of Winnipeg's City Hall.

In Ukraine, most artists did not turn to the depictions of the famine until Ukraine's independence. In 1992 to mark the sixtieth anniversary of the famine-genocide "The Ukrainian Great Famine Art Exhibition" was held in Kyiv at the Teachers' Building (formerly the Central Rada Building at 57 Volodymyrska Street). Over one hundred artists participated.

Vasyl Perevalsky, a Kyiv artist designed the logo for the Great famine Memorial Events in 1993. This became the basis for the monument located in Mykhailivskyi Square near St. Michael of the Golden Domes Church. The design effectively combines the cross with the simplified silhouettes of the Mother of God the Protectress and Child. It was also used on a postage stamp in Ukraine and has become a popular symbol of the famine.

In December 2000 the "Great Tragedy and Hope of the Nation Exhibition: Through the Eyes of Ukrainian Artists" opened in Kyiv with about 500 participants. It appears that the new generations of artists with no direct ties to the famine have shown a heightened awareness and willingness to confront the catastrophic events. Amazingly the format of these large scale exhibits harks back to the big thematic shows that were obligatory during the Soviet period and in which artists participated in great numbers. The deification of the leader, the mythologizing of the revolution, and the glorification of labor have been replaced with representations of formerly forbidden historical events and condemnation of crimes of the Communist state.

Of the many artists in Ukraine and in the diaspora who paid homage to the famine-genocide, I would like to single out two: Roman Romanyshyn, a Lviv artist, and Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak from Houston, Texas.

In 1990 Roman Romanyshyn (1957-) composed a triptych titled *Year 1933*. All three prints are based on the events of Holy Week (Strastnyi tyzhden). In *Thursday* (subtitled *Square*) (ill. 11) the central figure of Christ is framed within a square format against a black square in the background. The apostles are arranged in four groups of three to form a cross around Christ. In the second and central frame *Friday* (subtitled *Vertical*) (ill. 12) there is a depiction of the Crucifixion with the same apostles arranged in an inverted pyramid. Judas is etched in black. The third print titled *Saturday* (subtitled *Horizontal*) (ill. 13) portrays the entombed Christ with the apostles arranged around him. Judas is not only black, but has been turned upside down. The title of the triptych *Year 1933* is significant because it provides the key to understanding the artist's intention of juxtaposing the suffering and death of the Son of God with the suffering and death of innocent Ukrainian

victims of the famine. There is no *Sunday*. Romanyshyn does not portray the Resurrection.

Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak (1953-), a second-generation American, had two extended working trips to Ukraine in 1991 and 1993. Upon her return she felt "a compelling need to document the horrors committed on Ukraine's people and land."<sup>17</sup> Two series of works, *Another Kind of Icon* and *Fragments*, resulted. Both were dominated by themes of humanity and inhumanity, death and rebirth as seen through the prism of tragic historical events in twentieth-century Ukraine. Several of these works on paper are evocations of the famine incorporating text and photo reproductions, which memorialize the historic events and Bodnar-Balahutrak's experiences as an artist in the post-modern tradition. According to the artist, "All the works are a personal, visceral piecing together and layering of the spiritual and human dimensions of my cultural identity."<sup>18</sup>

The mixed media work *Satan All Around Us, Dancing*, 1991 (ill. 14) was an early attempt to come to terms with the overwhelming horrors of the famine and to represent them using painted images, text, political commentary, and symbolic color. By 1993 the initial raw emotions and didactic approach had given way to more universal images incorporating appropriated religious art and photocopied photographic material of the actual famine as in *Another Crucifixion* (ill. 15). Here the figure of Christ has been replaced with photocopied images of famine victims. The gold background characteristic of precious icons and sacred spaces stands in stark contrast to images of death.

In *Another Kind of Icon #18*, 1995 (ill. 16) Bodnar-Balahutrak has appropriated the icon format but has replaced the Mother of God and Christ Child with a photocopied version of an actual starving mother and child. The incorporation of traditional Christian iconography, contemporary documentary evidence and art making, the layering of imagery and meaning have been successfully synthesized to create a powerful after-image of the famine-genocide.

It is interesting to note that both Roman Romanyshyn, as well as Vasyl Perevalsky, in Ukraine, and Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak in America have transcended the apocalyptic subject matter by sublimating the horrors of suffering through the use of Christian symbolism. They have raised their evocations of the famine to the level of the spiritual, thus paying homage to the universal tragedies, which have ravaged our world.

The number of artists who have illuminated the traumatic events of the famine-genocide through their art continues to grow as does the awareness of

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17. From "Artist's Statement," 1996.

18. *Ibid.*.

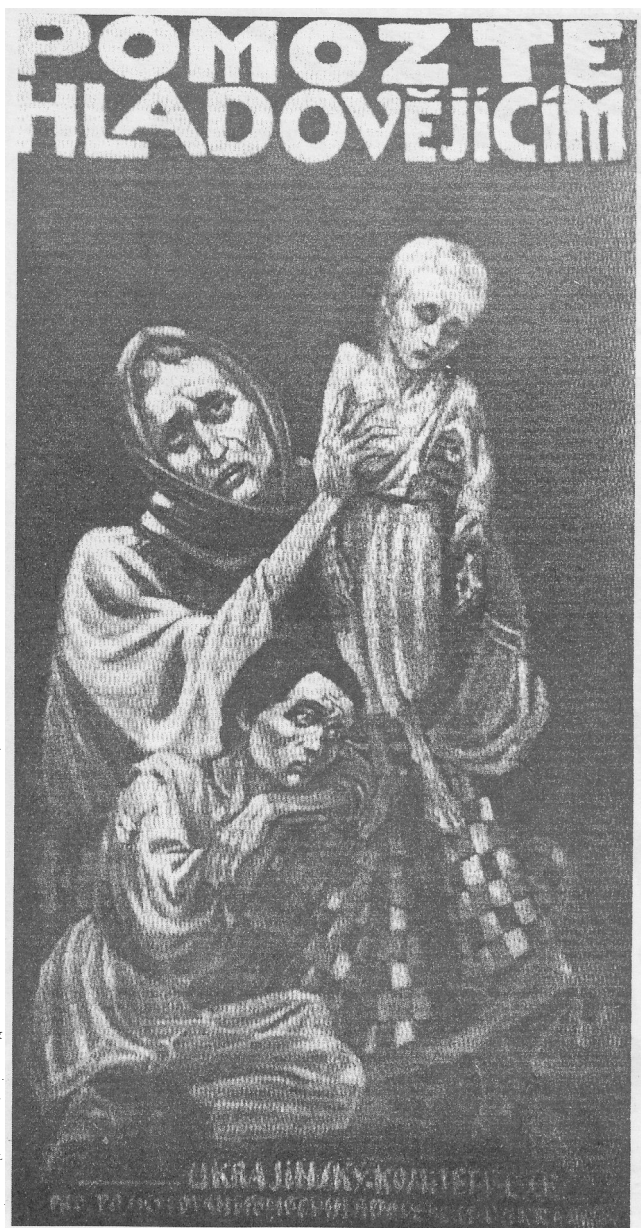
the famine-genocide. Unfortunately space does not allow me to discuss their work.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that more research needs to be done. I would also like to reiterate that although there is no documentary art contemporary with the famine, compelling after-images of the famine continue to be created. It would appear that the evocations of the famine of 1932-1933 in art created recently serve as a kind of unifying historical reminder of Ukraine's greatest catastrophe and one of the most brutal genocides in human memory.

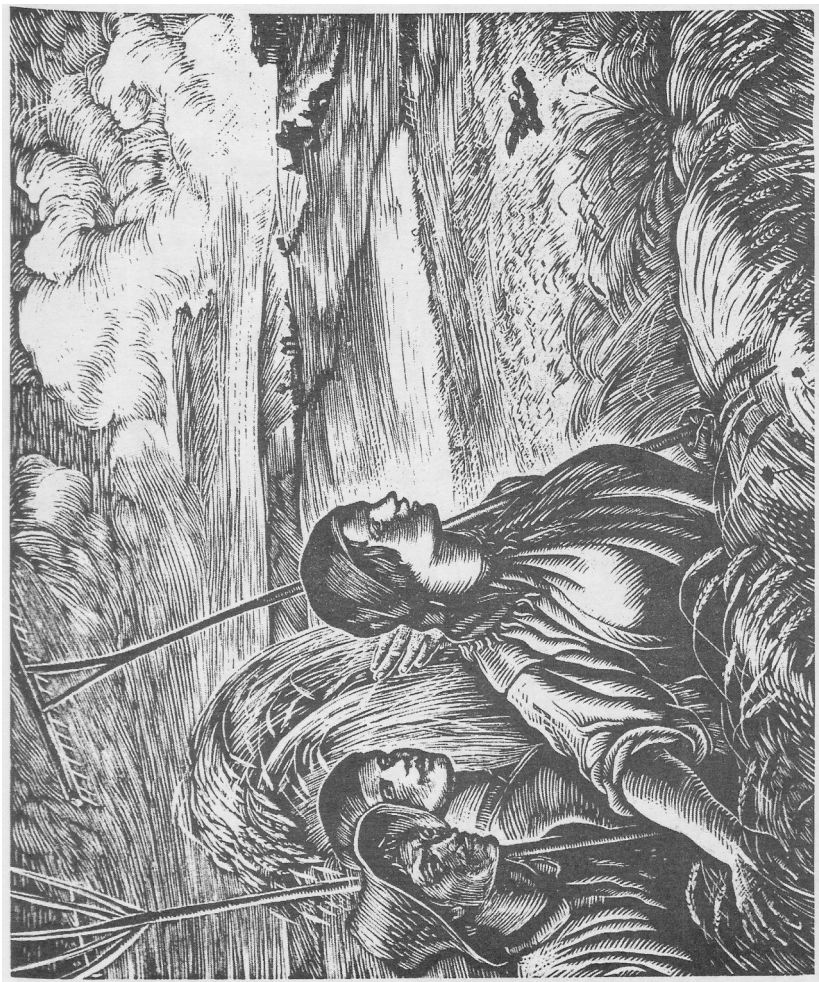
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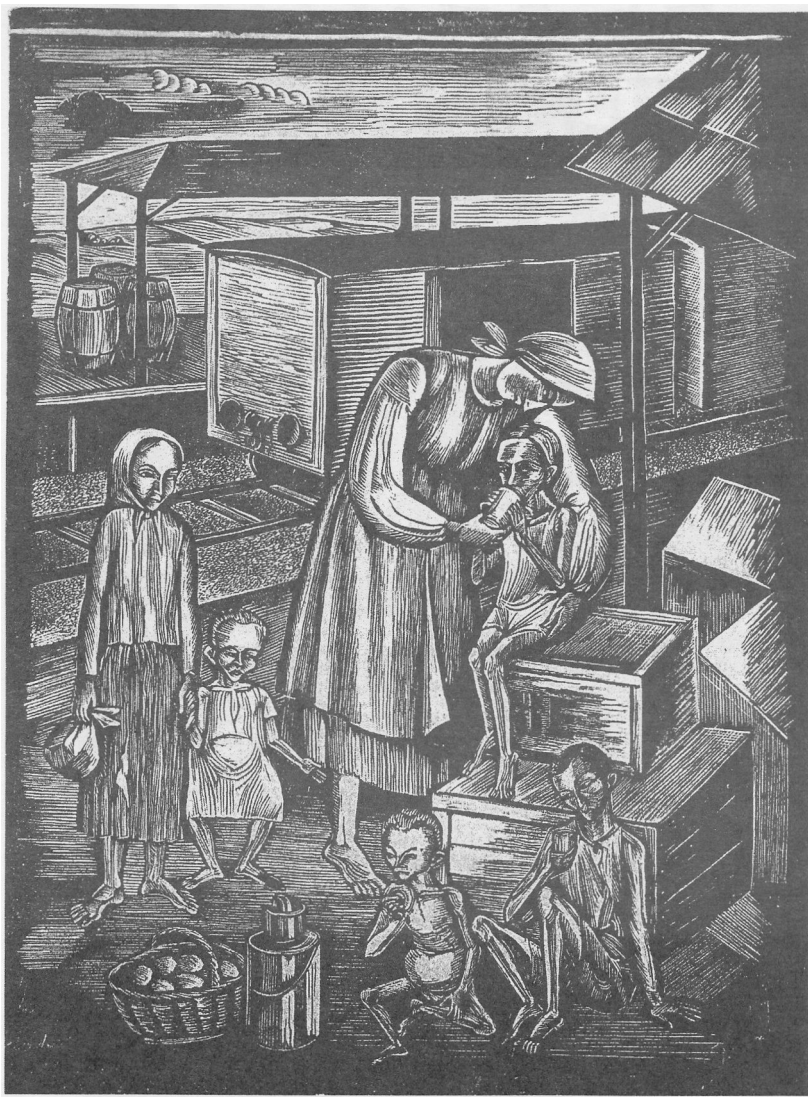
1: Vasyl Kasian. *Pieta*, 1921-1922, ink, sepia, size unknown (Leonid Vladych. *Vasyl Kasian* [Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1978], ill. 56).



2: Vasyl Kasian. *Help the Starving*, 1921-1922, oil on board, size unknown (Leonid Vladych. *Vasyl Kasian* [Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1978], ill. 57).

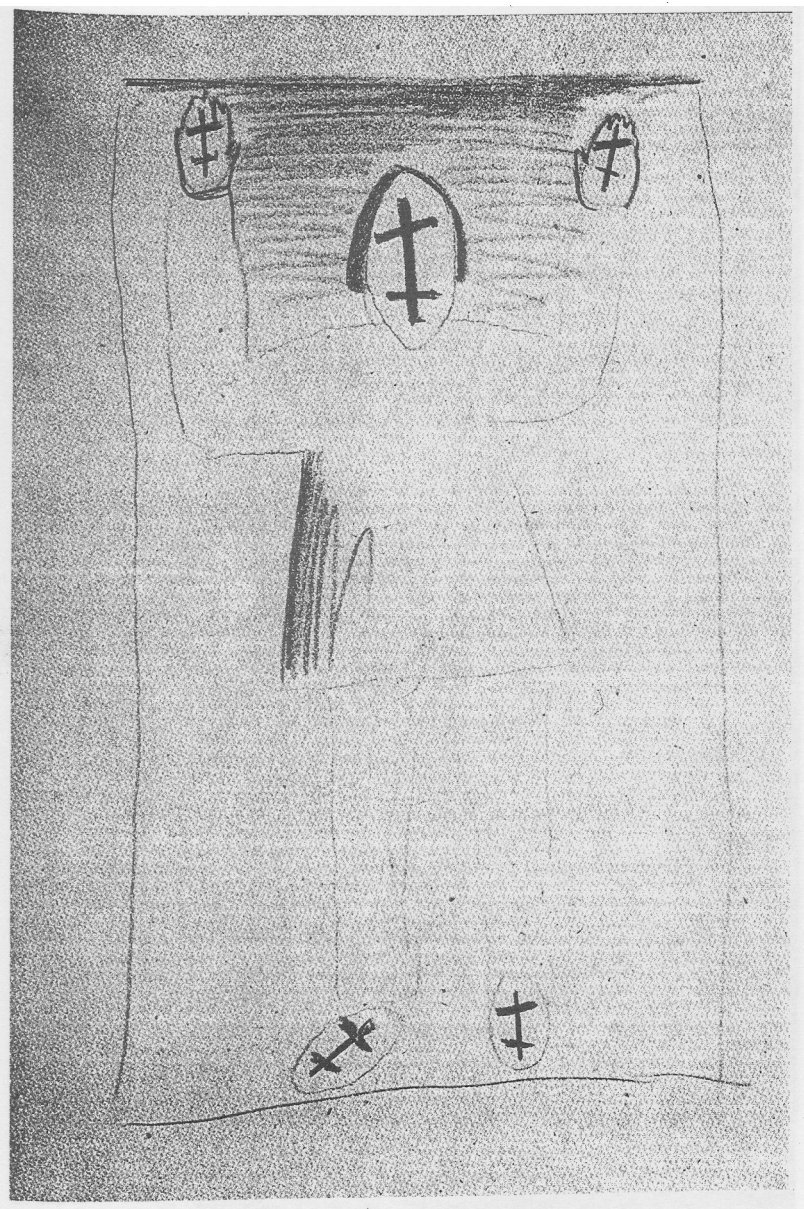


3: Vasyl Kasian. *Bolshevik Harvest*, 1934, colored woodcut on paper, size unknown (H. S. Portnov. *Vasyl Illich Kasian* [Kyiv: Derzhavne vydavnystvo obrazotvorchoho mystetstva I muzychnoi literatury UkSSR, 1962], p. 16)

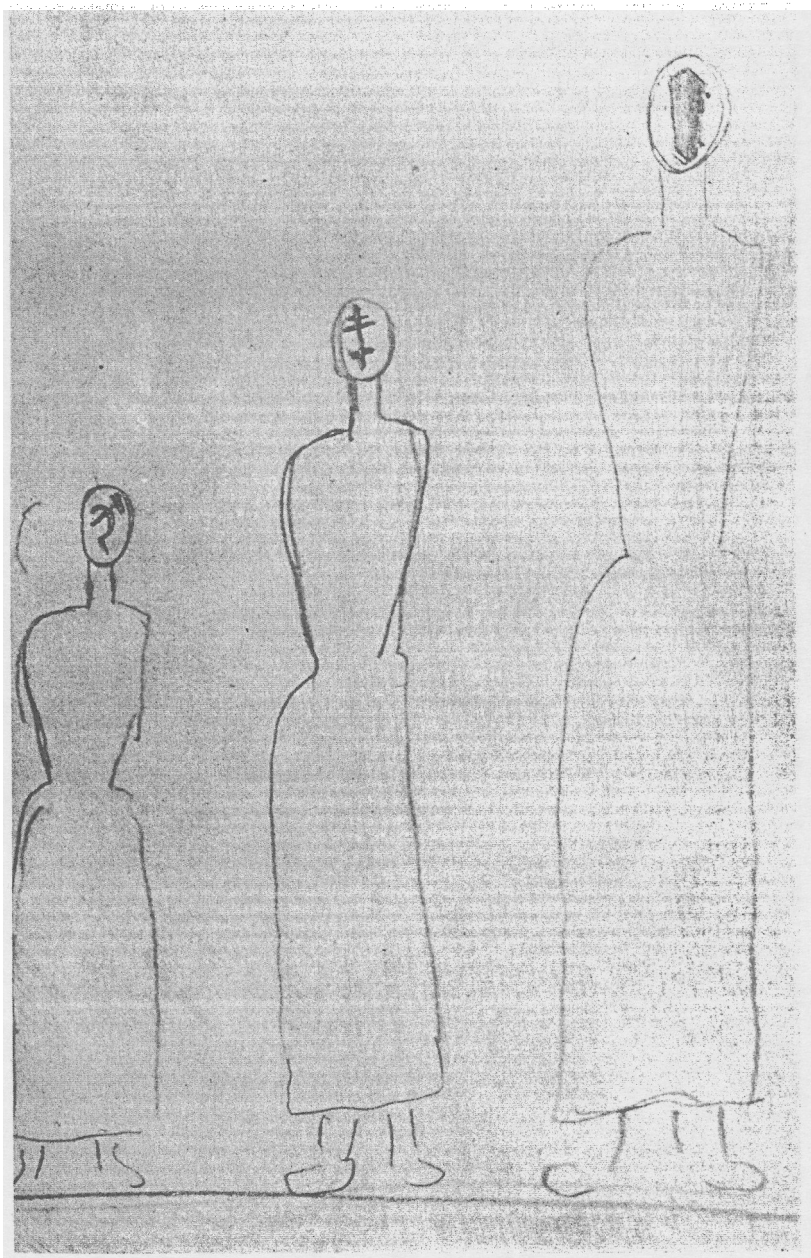


4: Sofia Nalepinska-Boichuk. *Famine*, 1927, woodcut on paper, 33 c 25 cm., collection of the National Art Museum of Ukraine, Kyiv (*The Phenomenon of the Ukrainian Avant-garde* [Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 2001], ill. 39).

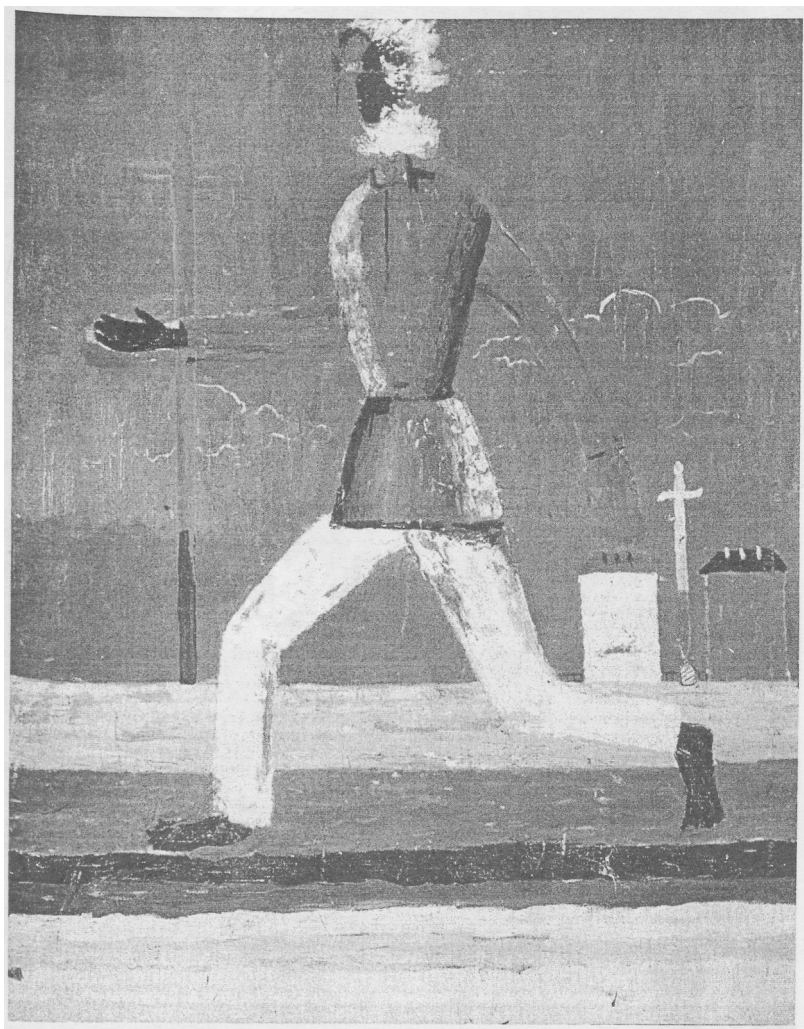




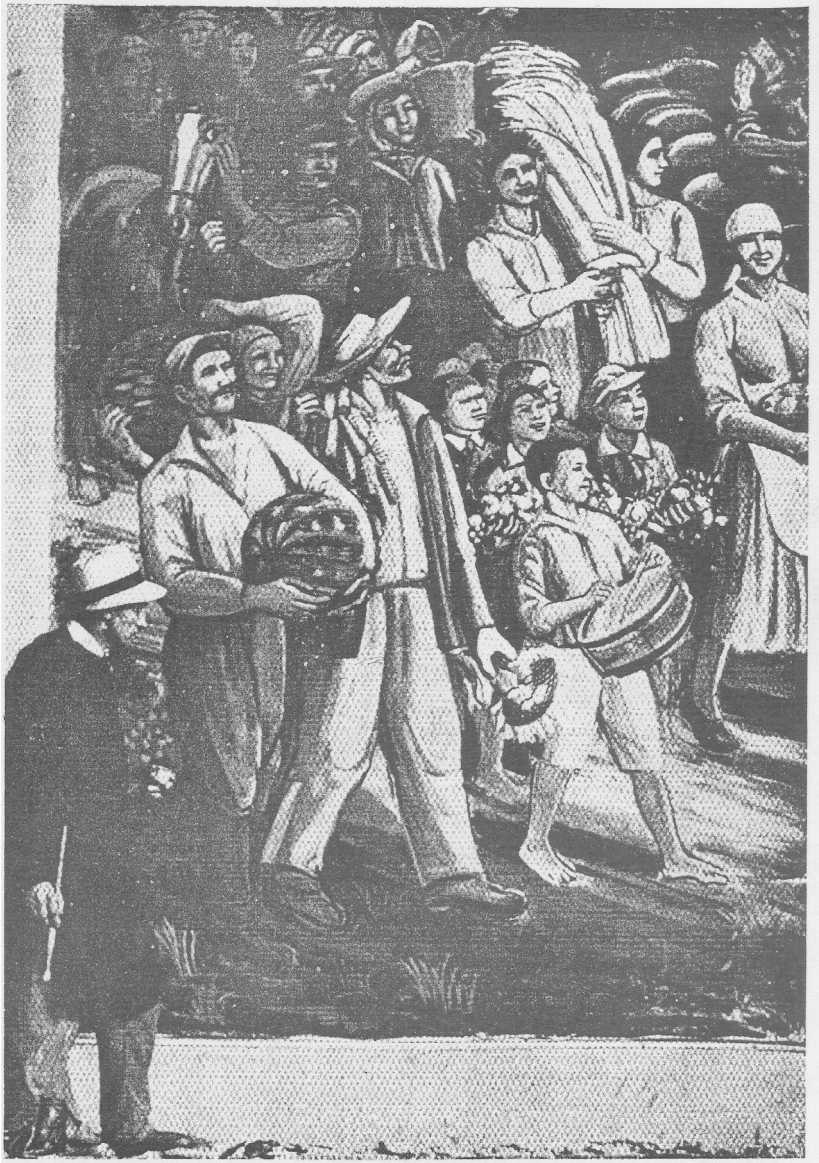
5: Kazimir Malevich, *Standing Figure*, 1927-1933, colored pencil on paper, 36.5 x 22.5 cm., Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (*Malevich: Artist and Theoretician* [Paris: Flammarion, 1991], ill. 158).



6: Kazimir Malevych. *Three Figures*, 1932-1933, pencil on paper, 36 x 22.5 cm., private collection, Leningrad (Jean-Claude Marcadé. *Malevitch* [Paris: Casterman, 1990], ill. 378).



7: Kazimir Malevych. *Man Running*, beg. 1930s, oil on canvas, 78.5 x 65 cm., Musée National d'Art moderne – Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (Jean-Claude Marcadé. *Malevitch* [Paris: Casterman, 1990], ill. 389).

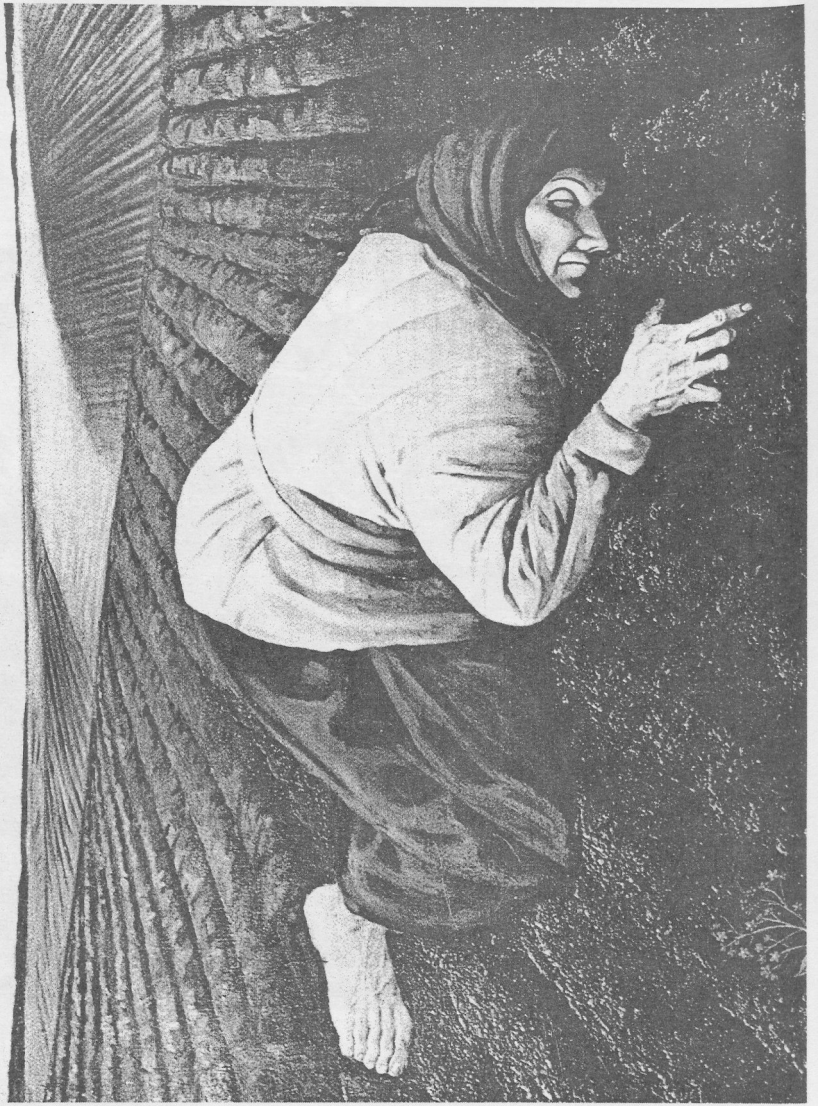


8: Mykhailo Boichuk. Detail of *Harvest Festival on the Collective Farm*, 1935, fresco mural, Chervonozavodsk Theatre, Kharkiv, destroyed (*Ukrainian Art Digest* [Philadelphia: Ukrainian Artists Association USA, 1968], no. 7, p. 48).

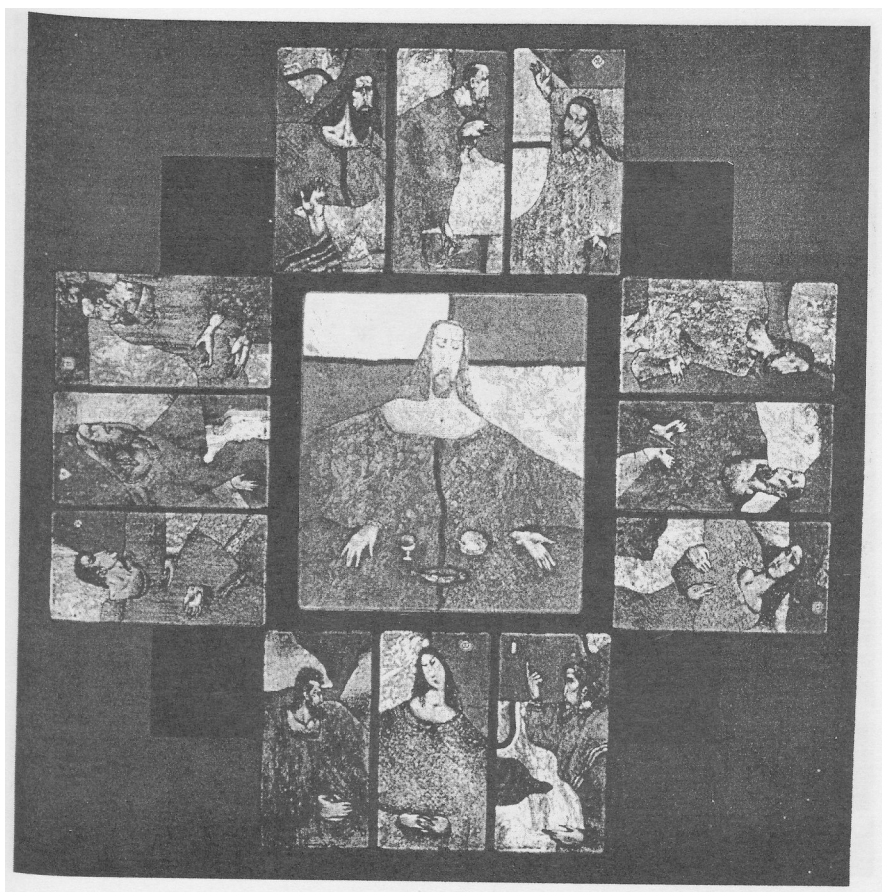


9: Mykhailo Dmytrenko. 1933, 1963, oil on canvas, size and location unknown (*Mychajlo Dmytrenko* [Detroit: Jubilee Committee, 1990], p. 92).



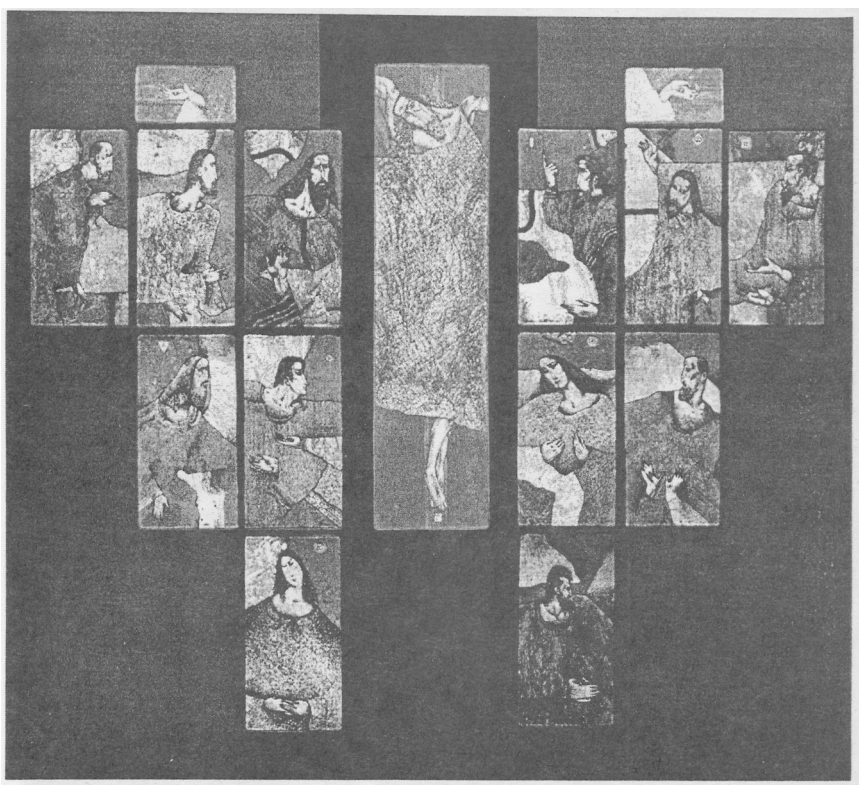


10: Bohdan Pevny. *The Earth*, 1963, oil on canvas, Art Gallery of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the U.S.A., South Bound Brook, NJ (post-card).

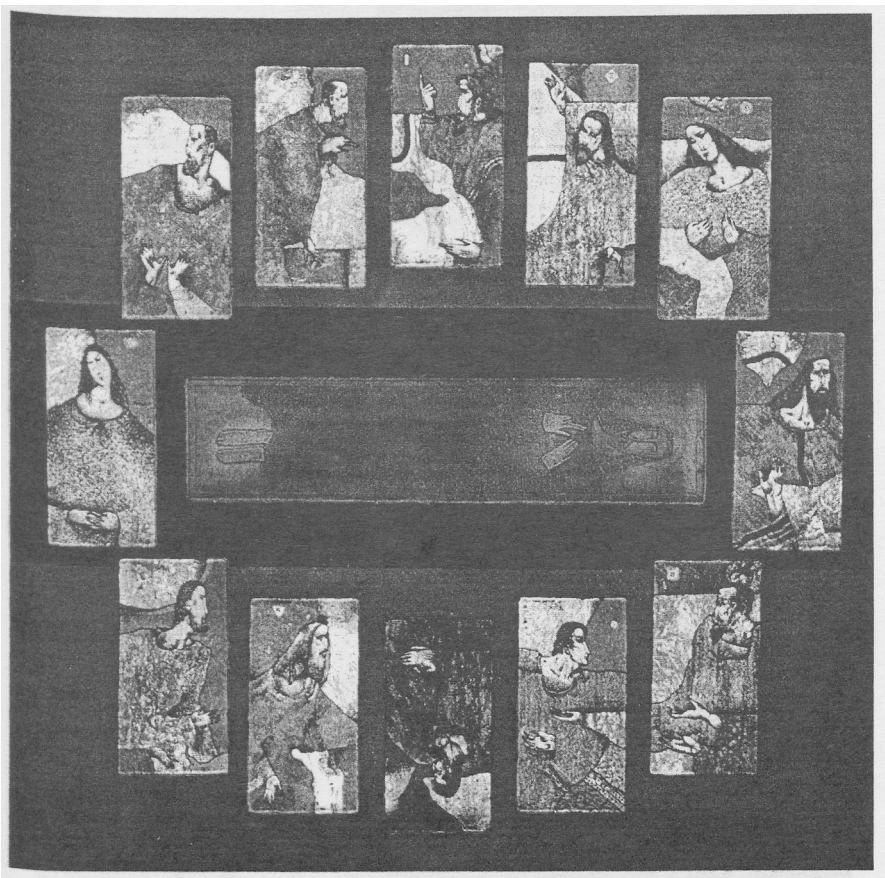


11: Roman Romanyshyn, *Year 1933: Thursday, 1900*, etching, aquatint, 35 x 34.5 cm., private collection, Canada.

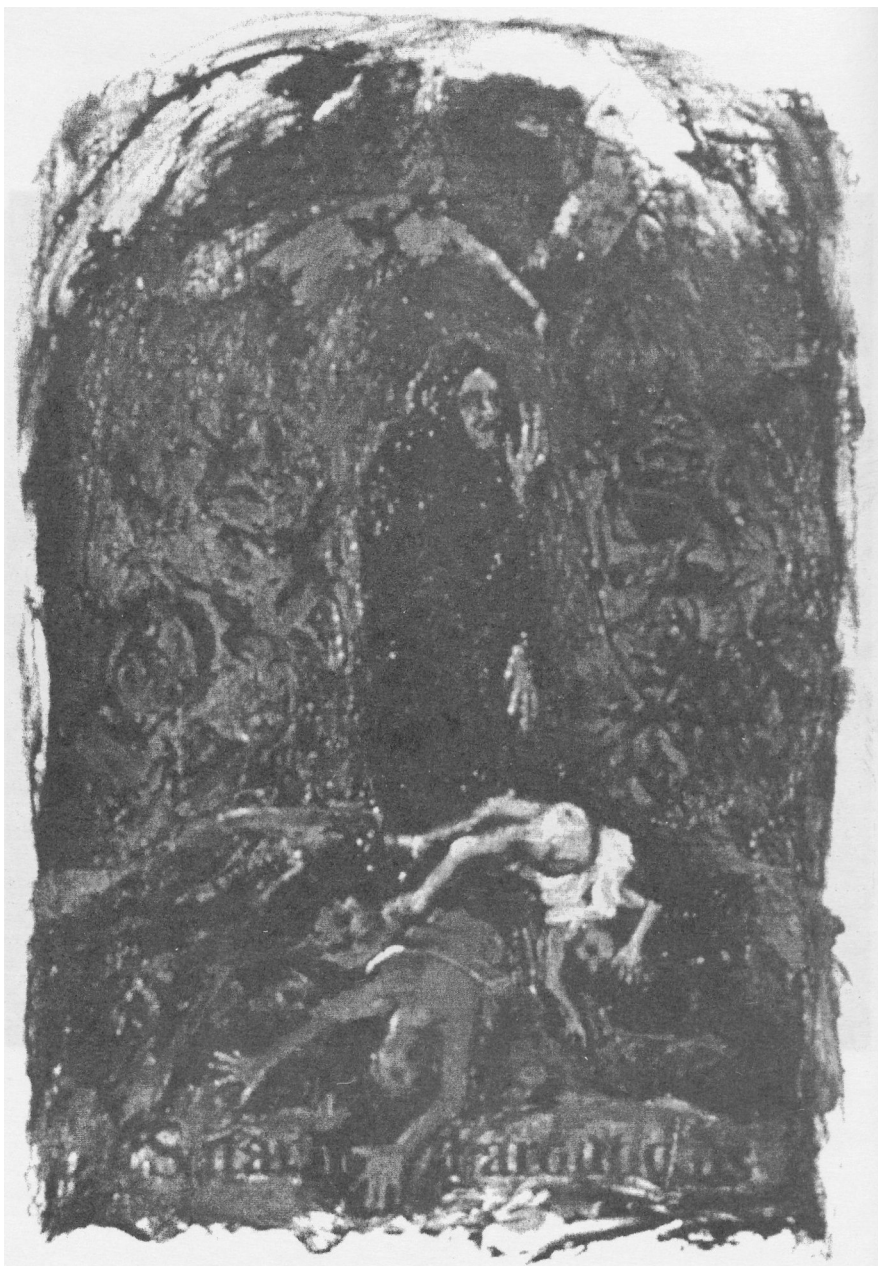




**12:** Roman Romanyshyn, *Year 1933: Friday*, 1990, etching, aquatint, 35 x 39 cm., private collection, Canada.



**13:** Roman Romanyshyn. *Year 1933: Saturday*, etching, aquatint, intaglio, 35.5 x 34.5 cm., private collection Canada (source: Daria Darewych).



14: Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak. *Satan All Around Us, Dancing*, 1991, oil, mm/paper, 30.5 x 41 cm., The Barrett Collection, Dallas, Texas (artist).



**15:** Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak. *Another Crucifixion*, 1993, gold leaf, photocopy, mm/paper, 30.5 x 41 cm., collection of the artist (artist).



**16:** Lydia Bodnar-Balahutrak. *Another Kind of Icon #18*, 1996, charms, rosaries, photocopy, gesso, mm, wood, 34.5 x 27 cm., collection of O. Bashuk Hepburn, Aylmer, Canada (artist).

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## *THE HOLODOMOR OF 1932-1933 AS PRESENTED IN DRAMA AND THE ISSUE OF BLAME*

Drama often deals with issues deeply felt in the soul of an individual or a group. Some of the artistic expressions of this genre can achieve universal symbolism and significance. Nevertheless, the dramatic form is also usually the very last genre to which writers turn or which they dare to tackle in order to develop certain vital issues.

While the Ukrainian genocide-famine of 1932-1933, or *Holodomor*, has received some representation in Ukrainian literature, especially in poetry and prose, it is least represented in drama. However, Ukrainian drama, more than the other genres, also had to face certain specific historical factors, which limited its expression. First, from 1932 until 1991 (with a two-year interlude of the Nazi occupation), the part of Ukraine that was subjugated to that genocide was still under Soviet rule; therefore, no explicit references to the famine could be published or staged. The leading contemporary Ukrainian literary scholar, Ivan Dziuba, recently recounted that the very word *holod* (meaning hunger or famine) was forbidden during that period.<sup>1</sup> Second, the period also included the horrors of World War II, which, as the more immediate trauma of the whole nation, pushed the 1933 event deeper into memory. Third, playwrights have to have some glimmer of hope that their plays might be staged; writers in Ukraine could not expect this to happen, neither under the Soviets, nor in the widely dispersed Ukrainian diaspora in the West. Yet, here and there, direct references to *holodomor* did manage to appear in Ukrainian plays; besides, one writer in the Ukrainian SSR and two émigré playwrights dealt with the topic specifically.

### **Yuriy Yanovskyi's *Potomky/Descendants***

Yuriy Yanovskyi (1902-1954) was a leading Ukrainian writer of his time. Known primarily for novels and film scenarios, he is also the author of one of the first direct references to the genocide-famine in Ukrainian drama – *Po-*

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1. Ivan Dziuba, "Literatura sotsialistychnoho absurdu," *Suchasnist'*, 1 (2003): 104.

*tomky* (Descendants, 1938),<sup>2</sup> Obviously, Ukrainian writers in the USSR were in a most awkward situation: on the one hand, they could not emotionally ignore the horrors of 1933, but neither could they write about it directly.<sup>3</sup> A possible compromise for some was to deal with it in terms of Socialist Realist tenets. Thus, if there are any references to people swelling from hunger and then dying, they would be only about the *kurkuls* (*kulaks*, or rich farmers).<sup>4</sup> As such, these once well-to-do farmers were shown as the only ones to suffer from the famine, since they supposedly hid the grain and did not want to join the collective farms. Yanovsky describes one of them, "*pukhnuv, ta od holodu i zdokh*" (he swelled up from hunger and died like an animal, 143). While members of the collective farms are shown fed, happy, and prospering – the *kurkuls* were starved to death, killed, or exiled to Siberia. In *The Descendants*, a once-rich farmer returns after a seven-year sentence. He is described as quite obnoxious, selfish, and arrogant (he even beats his pregnant former fiancée). As a result, his family cannot stand him, and even his own mother disowns him. The *kurkul* behaves in a dehumanized manner (apparently because of his former economic status); however, one should note that his mother acts in a rather unnatural manner, robot-like, but representing a new Soviet collective farm person.

Overall, the work is a very black-and-white *agitplay* praising Soviet life and collectivization. What is rather intriguing here, is the dating of the events in the play and the play itself (which was published first in 1939). On the very first page, the mother of the exile exclaims, "Five years have passed, you see. Sorry, no, I lie! It was seven!" (139). Following this exchange, there are eleven more references to the seven-year time span. Why this unnecessary stress on the seven years? If the author had written the play in 1938, as marked, then the first reference to "five years" would place it in 1933. Were the twelve references to "seven years" there from the beginning or were they inserted later to camouflage the year? Or, was the play actually written in 1939 (the year it was first published) and thus the "seven-year" reference was to 1932, when the famine had begun in the fall? Many of Yanovsky's archives are preserved in several holdings in Ukraine; they might shed some light on the issue of the dating of the events in the above play.

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2. It was first published in 1939 in a periodical and then in a collection of the author's works: Yuriy Yanovsky, *Tvory*. vol. III: *P'yesy* (Kyiv: V-vo Khudozhniiyi literatury, 1959), pp. 135-85.

3. Yuriy Yanovsky also wrote two film scenarios briefly touching upon the famine: "*Sertsia dvokh*" (The Hearts of Two, 1933) and "*Prystrast*" (Desire, 1934). This fact was also mentioned by Ivan Dziuba.

4. *Kurkul* – the word is of Turkic origin, meaning a foreign settler, or one who inspires fear.



**Serhiy Kokot-Ledianskyi's *Tysiacha dev'yatsot trydtsiati tretii rik/Nineteen Thirty Three***

During World War II, Serhiy Kokot-Ledianskyi escaped from Ukraine to the West and later settled in Detroit. While still a student in Ukraine, he published some poetry and later a play, with other plays to follow in the West.<sup>5</sup> His play *Nineteen Thirty-Three*<sup>6</sup> was written in 1942, and was later renamed *Velykyi Zlam* (The Great Break). It represents a very personal statement of an eyewitness. The writer explained, "I wrote it with the blood from my own heart, depicting the horrors of the famine which I had witnessed, and which had caused the death of half of the people in my own village, including my relatives."<sup>7</sup>

Judging by this statement, we could expect either a docudrama, or a play with enough historical or fictional accuracy to make it realistic. The events take place in and around Kyiv on May 14, 1933, a day after the famous writer Mykola Khvyliovyi committed suicide in protest to what the Communist Party was instigating in Ukraine. Discussion of the event among college students provides an appropriate historical reference point for the play.

In terms of *colour locale*, the play depicts some typical scenes or situations from Soviet life: university students who were *komsomol* members were required to obey Communist Party instructions not to visit their villages and their starving parents, even when the latter were dying. Many naïve young people could not believe that the Party would let them down or that the Party actually knew and instituted the whole famine.

Ledianskyi's play is composed of some unforgettable scenes: the Communist village council in a particular village hires workers to quickly dispose the corpses of the starved men and women. These workers get paid in food and drink; since they had to keep the area clean, whenever they found someone on the verge of death, they would take them anyway, knowing that soon the person would die. There is a scene depicting a woman who had just died, while her husband, who can still hold up a conversation, submits to be taken, so that he would be buried together with her. The gravediggers (in the play called Workers) assure him, that he will definitely die by the evening, since they can judge from experience. This might otherwise be a rather macabre scene, however it is presented with rather poetic calmness:

5. His play *Dyrektyva z tsentru* was staged in Kyiv in 1943, published in 1944, in Prague. Other plays are *Pid kosoyu*, 1940, and, *Zemlia pid Khmelem*, 1945.

6. It was first published in a weekly, *Ukrayins'kyi Vistnyk*, in Berlin, in 1943. The slightly revised text was renamed "Velykyi Zlam," and submitted to a drama competition organized by SUM (Union of Ukrainian Youth) in Munich, where it received honorable mention and a prize. Later, it was printed in mimeograph form. In 1972, the author changed the text slightly, and returned to the original title referring to the year of the dark event.

7. Serhiy Ledianskyi, personal correspondence to this writer of November 12, 1973.

FIRST WORKER: What are we going to do with you? Everyone on this street has already died. We're not going to come again just to pick you up.

MAN: You mean you want to take me alive to the cemetery? You want to bury me alive?

SECOND WORKER: No, we don't want to, but . . .

MAN: But what?

SECOND WORKER: In the afternoon we are going to work at the other end of the village. So when you do die, you're going to lie here for a long time, there won't be anyone around to bury you.

MAN: As you wish.

SECOND WORKER: I would advise you to be buried together with you wife. You won't last till tonight, anyway.

.....

MAN: Don't you people fear God? You want to bury me alive?

SECOND WORKER: No, that's not it!

FIRST WORKER: Those who are still barely alive, are piled separately under the tree, on the grass, until they go.

SECOND WORKER: Then when they are gone, we bury them.

FIRST WORKER: We can't come back here just for you. We don't have time for this.

SECOND WORKER: That's it. We don't have time. Before the night falls, we have to cover all the roads around the village and pick up all the dead; I don't know why people scatter all over, drifting like flies in the autumn, and then fall down and die on the road.

FIRST WORKER: And then the police come and make trouble for the village council because things are not in order.<sup>8</sup>

The people in Ukraine are presented as having two different realities: the Communist establishment (which included non-Ukrainians), and their children who are college students get paid vacations to the Crimea, while farmers starve in villages (only those serving on village councils get food).

The 1942 manuscript of the play and the 1950 published version vary by a few changes. In the second version, the old Man is described as "one of the millions who died in 1933," while a woman who visits the family is "one who was not killed yet by the famine of 1933." The two workers or gravediggers are not judged at all; they are described in quite an understanding and forgiving manner, as "those who saved their lives in 1933 in any way they could." There is some parallel in the play in accusing the rest of the citizens in being silent, just as the Germans and the rest of the world were accused of keeping

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8. Serhiy Ledianskiy, "Tysiacha dev'iat'sot trydtsiat' tretiy rik": drama na 5 kartyn; manuscript, p. 30. The translation is mine.

silent during World War II. However, the very mild accusation (if any) is addressed to the Soviet Ukrainians themselves, not the outside world. The author depicts the horrid event without anger or any judgment.

Rather than any direct accusations, there is some self-accusation: at the end of the first version, the author had one of the anti-regime students express a final comment on the people's passivity: "We die in captivity because we don't act when the critical moment comes, we just keep silent and hesitate, or simply submit to the enemy, because he is strong." (38)

### **Bohdan Boychuk's *Holod/Hunger* (1933)**

Bohdan Boychuk (b. 1927) left Ukraine as a teenager during World War II and after settling in New York, became one of the leading Ukrainian poets and one of the organizers of The New York Group. Besides numerous collections of poetry he has published several plays, among them *Hunger* (1933).<sup>9</sup> It was written almost twenty years after the event, in 1961-1962. Boychuk did not witness the *Holodomor* himself, only reacted as a poet and writer in a very lyrical and artistic fashion. The play includes a ballet-pantomime, which adds an elevated emotional intensity for the viewer or even reader.

*Hunger* is neither a documentary, nor a historical play. It rather deals with the historical event as a symbol of a larger symptom and develops its universal symbolism. There are two main characters: a Man and a Woman. There is also God's voice, commenting upon the events that people themselves have created.<sup>10</sup>

The Woman, suffering from hunger pains, and her baby rest near a traditional large crucifix at an intersection of two roads. Hungry, she has only one potato left, when the Man arrives and wants to take it from her. The unusual boundary situation of extreme hunger forces the two strangers to keep exchanging personal comments about their lives, and try to grasp the sense of the choices they had made earlier.<sup>11</sup> Losing strength, the Man can't stand to see the baby suffer from hunger. At first, he blames God for allowing such a situation to take place, and then he sees a way out, at least for the baby: he sacrifices himself and lets the baby suck blood from his finger. These main scenes are interspersed with a type of documentary background: an old man lovingly touching several remaining grains of wheat, while soldiers forcibly

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9. Bohdan Boychuk, "Holod (1933)," in *Dvi Dramy* (New York: The New York Group, 1968), pp. 7-49.

10. At that time other playwrights included God's comments in their plays, as in *J.B.* (1958) by Archibald MacLeach.

11. In some ways it has similar scenes and conflicts as in Graham Green's *The Power and the Glory*, or *The Labyrinthine Ways*, 1940.

take them away. There are also scenes of people driving the soldiers away from their homes. The soldiers do come back in larger numbers, grabbing the remaining grain, violating a young girl, and killing others. It seems that the Woman, the Man, and the baby are the only ones left in the whole world, until the Man loses his blood and dies.

Boychuk extends the particular symbol of 1933 to the general issue of man's inhumanity to man. At the time, the core of the Ukrainian rural society became not only marginalized by the Soviet regime, but it was also being exterminated. This author too does not make any specific accusations (except of the cruelty of those in uniform), and places no blame on anyone in particular. Only for a moment, God is blamed for allowing such cruelty to take place, but then the individual acts of choice, and of kindness do prevail, as the Man cares for his own young neighbor:

THE MAN: Here's some earth, change it into bread. I couldn't do it.

THE WOMAN: Help.

THE MAN: To a little piece of bread, just a very little. Why don't you answer? Doesn't she matter to you, then?

THE WOMAN: O-o-oh.

THE MAN (*With great effort approaches the crucifix and beats against the nails piercing Christ's feet.*)

Help her, help her! (*The wounded hands bleed and completely exhausted, he falls at the feet of the cross.*)

Forgive me, forgive me, I know you're sorry for them, you died for them, you really loved them . . .

VOICE FROM THE CRUCIFIX: HIS lips are gagged by indifference.

THE MAN: Yes, yes, gagged by indifference . . . and we're alone.

(*Gets up, lets his hands fall. The blood drips on the child's mouth and the child grows quiet. The man looks at it for a long time, kneels and gives it blood to drink from his hands.*)

There, there, drink it up, maybe you'll survive.

(translation by Vera Rich)<sup>12</sup>

### No demands for inculcation nor retaliation

While the first play, by Yanovskyi, clearly had to fit the limits set by censors and the Soviet propaganda about collectivization, accordingly it does present a guilty party, and thus the blame is placed on the *kurkuls*. The two plays written outside the Soviet Union, rather provide as if a visual memento, a glimpse at the painful event that took place in 1932-1933, without placing

12. Bohdan Boychuk, "Hunger": A One-Act Play. Translated by Vera Rich ca. 1965. Manuscript, p. 69.

the blame specifically. There are indirect references to the Soviet regime and the Communist Party who carried out the genocide (especially in Lediatskyi's play). However, there is no condemnation, no request for vengeance. Instead, there is rather a touching concern for the future, relying only on God:

And leave us not  
In the fields  
Where no children's  
Voices flower,  
And leave not  
Old women  
At the set of day  
With their children  
Who will not speak to them  
Send to us Thy Plenitude  
Send to us our daily  
Bread  
That our children need not  
Die . . .

(translation by Vera Rich)<sup>13</sup>

The latter two plays raise several questions in terms of placing the blame on someone for the extermination of the innocents. Is this absence of accusations typical only of the two particular writers? Or is it somehow associated with the Ukrainian culture and religion (which includes Christian forgiveness)? Is this the reason that so few plays (or even literary works in other genres) depict the horrid event? Or is it because of the seventy years of the famine/genocide denial: first by the Soviet Union (at least now the Ukrainian Parliament has admitted that the Soviets perpetrated this genocide), and second – by the West? Some members of the Western media had displayed an obvious love affair with the communist ideology, which to them is more important than the truth about the 7-10 million Ukrainian lives.<sup>14</sup>

These three examples of drama stand on their own and speak for the symbolism of the year “1933” for Ukraine, while the plays by Yanovskyi and Lediatskyi also speak for the particular human values. Boychuk's play raises the issue to a universal level, making the event represent humanity's weakness as well as strength and hope.

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13. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

14. A case in point is Walter Duranty and his denial of the famine in his reports from Ukraine written for *The New York Times* in 1932-33.

Very few plays<sup>15</sup> written in the newly independent Ukraine deal with the *Holodomor*. A few references are found in several plays, but no one particular play is based on it. Perhaps because of the horrors of World War II and the more immediate and still threatening Chornobyl, the *Holodomor* was pushed to the back of the communal memory.

With the presence of two foreign and totalitarian regimes in Ukraine since 1933, there was no chance for the performance of drama to release the society's emotions and to use such communal memory as a non-threatening bridge to the present. Perhaps the more immediate history provided several more layers of memory with equally shattering effects; or perhaps the society preferred to leave these layers of palimpsests to appear at a more appropriate time.<sup>16</sup> The postmodernist coloration of many current Ukrainian plays mixed with the present postcolonial situation, as well as a resulting certain historical amnesia, may also have contributed towards the flight from this painful subject matter, indicating, perhaps, that it isn't time yet to delve into the seventy-year-old event which decimated the Ukrainian nation.

When the time comes, the three plays discussed above, if staged in Ukraine, might provide the society with a viable discourse dealing with the historical event of 1933 in Ukraine.

#### *Shevchenko Scientific Society*

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15. There is some mention of the *Holodomor* in Olena Klymenko's "Ukrayins'kyi Vertep" ("... during the horrid Spring of 1933, when my nation's backbone was broken. . .", Kyiv, 1990s, manuscript, p. 37), in the Brazilian poet Wira Wowk's "The Ikonostasis," and in a Russian-language play by Ponover (Yaroslav Vereshchak and Ponomarenko) *Lisaia Gora* (Kyiv, 1999). Mykola Kovshun's *Voron kryache* (The Raven Croaks) was published in a 1954 (Hamilton) collection of his plays. It also is a statement play, written in the West (Canada) and pointing an accusing finger at the Soviet regime.

16. For a discussion of the topics appearing in contemporary plays, see Larissa Onyshkevych "Characters Revealing Issues of Identity In Terms of History Nation, Religion, and Gender in Post-Soviet Ukrainian Drama," in *Society in Transition: Social Change in Ukraine in Western Perspectives*, Wsewolod W. Isajiw, ed. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2003), pp. 327-48.

## TRANSLATION/TRADUCTION

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### TESTIMONY – FROM HOLOD 33

All the statistics, documents, and studies in the world are worthless without the first-person accounts, without the survivor and eyewitness testimonies of those living through an event. There can be no history without the stories of the individuals who were there.

Ukrainians in the diaspora knew about, publicized, and commemorated the Genocide by Famine of 1932-1933. For the most part, they were not believed when they spoke out about the Famine, and were dismissed and defamed for bringing it up for discussion. Historians in Ukraine began collecting testimonies of survivors only during the period of *glasnost*, and after Independence in 1991. The accounts translated here are from the first major such collection, *Holod 33: A National Memorial Book*, edited by Lidia Borysivna Kovalenko and Volodymyr Antonovych Maniak.<sup>1</sup> The publisher, Radians'kyi pys'mennyk ("Soviet Writer") no longer exists. It is now Ukrains'kyi pys'mennyk ("Ukrainian Writer"). The book was prepared and published before Ukrainian independence. The one thousand testimonies were collected in the seven *oblasts* [provinces] that comprised Soviet Ukraine in the 1930s. In Western Ukraine and in the diaspora, testimonies were collected much earlier.

There are common threads throughout the testimonies, no matter who the speaker is, and from where: collectivization, the good harvest the year before, the taking away of food, the government stores of food guarded from the population, the arrests, the hunger and bloating or shrivelling up, the deaths and burials, what was eaten in place of food, cannibalism, the children left at the railway stations and in the cities, the numbers of dead in each village, the lists of families and names. Many mention the availability of food across the border, in Russia. Some speak about scarce incidents of kindness. Others remember those who went insane. The mind and heart of the reader cannot absorb these testimonies all at once. Each of the survivors tells his/her story simply, with no embellishment, and barely any emotion:

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1. Lidia Borysivna Kovalenko and Volodymyr Antonovych Maniak, eds., *Holod 33: Narodna knyha-memorial* [Holod 33: A National Memorial Book] (Kyiv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk, 1991), p. 1.



... I am already 70, for me it is twilight. For those for whom it is only morning, I wish them a long life, but may the horror never repeat itself. If I see a piece of bread on the street, I must pick it up, and kiss it, because I do not know anything more precious than sacred bread.<sup>2</sup>

One hopes that now, almost a century later, their unspeakable pain and horror is acknowledged. The many testimonies must be republished in English and take their place in the mainstream of world history.

Testimony 1:

Stepan Kononovych Tymchenko.

b. 1915. Invalid 2nd category.

Resident of Horobiyi village, Zinkiv raion, Poltava oblast'

How terribly people die from hunger. My father, Konon Denysovych, defended our Soviet government with weapons in arms. When they started registering people into the *kolhosp* [collective farm], he was the first to bring his horse and give his farm inventory, whatever he had. And then he had to die of hunger. In our family, eight died in 1933. My sister Maria died, her husband Fedir, and their five children. Three girls, 8, 7, and 5 years old, and two boys, one 3, and the youngest was still in the cradle, where he died. If there had been no bread. But there was bread, they just hid it from the people under enormous locks in the churches (from which the crosses had been dismantled), and in storehouses, guarded day and night. And it was taken away by railway cars. And those who had sown and threshed the grain, they were writhing in agonizing hunger. And no one defended the people, no one sympathized or took pity on them.

In our village lived Onysiyka Kopytsia, a widow with three children. She was an invalid and could not walk. They issued the bread quota for her. Where will she get the bread? The authorities arrived, and carried her out of the house, into the rain. Tore the house apart, led away her cow. Snatched the cross off her neck. Where was the justice? There was silence for a long time about the famine in Ukraine, the one that mowed down so many people. Then the orphans grew up and went to defend their land from the Germans. ... I think to myself, that if the famine had not happened, maybe the Germans would not have come here. ...<sup>3</sup>

2. *Ibid.*, testimony of Anastasiya Ivanivna Duka, p. 491.

3. *Ibid.*, testimony of Stepan Kononovych Tymchenko, p. 482.

## Testimony 2:

Anastasiya Ivanivna Duka

b. 1920

Ustymivka village, Zachepyliv raion, Kharkiv oblast'

My younger brother was seven years old. Mama told me to take him to the railway station and leave him there. I did. Many people in our village left their young at the station. Maybe they'll survive, because here in the village, their fate was death. I took him there, but could not leave him. I can't get away from him, he runs after me, holds on to my skirt, and cries, "Don't leave me here, I won't ask for food, I'll sit quietly, just don't leave me!" He grabs me around my neck like a kitten, and I can't tear him away. So I brought him back home. There is nothing to eat at home – all five children are bloated. Our family had never known such misery. Our mother and father were industrious, liked to work, and we always had food. We had a milking cow, and a calf. They took everything: the bread, the *salo* [sowbelly bacon], and potatoes from the cold cellar, and the salted pressed cheese. All five of us yelled very much as they were taking all this away. One of the men who came to take everything away took pity on us. He climbed to the attic, and said, "There is nothing here." But there was – some corn and *makukha* [pressed seed cake] and some old *salo*. That man has died already, but I cannot forget him. That food did not last us too long. But it was better than nothing. After it was gone, we ate grass, and beet leaves. Mama worked on the beet plots and we, her two daughters, helped her out. We picked the beet leaves, cooked and ate them. And so, day after day. . . . Only the gardens of the officials were plowed and planted. We had nothing to plant. A bucket of potatoes cost 500 *karbovantsi*, a glass of beans cost 100. Where were we to get the money? Our father was taken away right at the beginning of the famine. Zakhar Kukhareno, the head of the *kolhosp*, and the head of the village council came into the house, and took father who knows where and why. To this day we still do not know.

Very many people were taken by the famine. The dead were even eaten. Our neighbors had five children, four of them died, they were placed in the cellar, and then eaten. . . .

Certainly, even then people knew that there was something foul about this famine. There was no drought, and what happened to all that they took away from the people? Today, if any disaster happens, a drought, or some tragedy, then even foreign countries help each other. When that earthquake in Armenia happened, when television showed that terrible disaster, all people sadly empathized, sent money for the victims, helped whatever way they could. Why then did they let us die? There was no one even to complain to, nor to say a word

about that famine. . . . I have lived a long life, and still have not heard anyone writing about the year 33.

Testimony 3:

Dmytro Trokhymovych Lykholit

b. 1923

Khots'ky village, Kyiv *oblast'*

now a resident of Pereyaslav-Khmel'nytskyi

veteran of war and labor

In 1932, as a kid I ran around the town square where a sale of *kurkul'* [kulak] property was being held. They bring in an old man's wooden chest, and in it are dirty linen shirts, a roller, and homespun linen cloth. The "activist" hangs the shirt on a stick and yells, "Who will pay more?" But if anyone does buy it, eventually this will be taken away from him also, and will again be resold. . . . And if you do not want to be "de-kurkulized" – go into the *kolhosp*!

Once I dropped by to visit my friend. The brigade of "activists" was raging around in his house right then. One of them found a small cup with millet *kasha* [porridge] in the oven [the *pich* – clay oven/hearth]. He took the cup out of the *pich*, slammed it to the floor, and crushed the *kasha* with his enormous boot. And the children (there were five) fell to the floor and began to eat the *kasha* from beneath his boots.

The cemetery was right behind our garden. The village council paid those who dug large holes for the dead from hunger with a kilogram of bread and a half litre of milk daily. And here these men had dug up very wide holes, into which the dead were being brought on big wagons. Few of the villagers had the strength to bring their own relatives themselves. But those that did could not bury them, and just left them on the cemetery ground. They themselves would be brought here tomorrow.

I remember one little girl, about 9-10. Flaxen braids, and blue-blue eyes in which you can see the sky. You can see them because the eyes of those dying from famine did not close. Someone needed to close them after death, but there had been no one to do that for her. And it did not matter anyway. I also remember the dead, still sitting along the fences with their hands stretched out – they begged, begged, and stiffened as they were.

Our poor mother barely moved on her legs. Father and I were bloated, while mother and my sister dried up into toothpicks. Mother had already selected the place where she was going to bury my sister and me. And then father heard that

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4. *Ibid.*, testimony of Anastasiya Ivanivna Duka, p. 491.

in Kyiv they were selling bread, a pound per soul. He took his medals from the Imperial War [World War I], mother's earrings and neck cross, and went to Kyiv. He returned to find my sister and me dying. We had eaten flat cakes made from the dried cobs of corn. Father with mother heated some water, and soaked each of us in the hot water, steaming out our stomachs. Then they fed us crumbs of bread at a time, because it would not have been good to give us more.

Mother packed some fabric into a bag, and father and I smuggled ourselves into Belarus. There they didn't let us die. But we so wanted to come home, to Ukraine, where my mother and my sister Katya were. Are they still alive? We got home, and were eating "borshch" made of weeds. Again we must go somewhere, or else we will die. . . . This time, we went to the Krasnodar region, and settled in Tymoshivka. Thus as a youngster I "studied" geography. . . .

And then I remember 1937. The "black raven" drives around the village at night. In the morning we hear that so-and-so were taken, because they are the "enemies of the people." In school, systematically we cross out one writer after another. They are also "enemies of the people." And in the village club, on stage, I clearly recite the poem [in Russian]: "We will tell, that we sought bliss, we will tell that we found bliss, we will say: 'May Stalin live long – the great truth of the world!'"<sup>5</sup>

Testimony 4:

Frosyna Korniyivna Dmytrenko

Oradivka village, Khrystyniv raion, Cherkasy oblast'

now a resident of Uman'

It is horrible to remember, and difficult to even think of it. During that hungry spring my father died, my mother died, my younger brother and sister died. I was 7. And I was left alone in the world, not wanted by anyone. . . . All my life I have wept for my family: why, for what sins did they die such a death? They do not even have graves to mark where they lie. May their names be recorded in this Memorial Book: father, Korniy Vlasovych Mazurenko, mother, Sofiya Volodymyrivna Mazurenko, sister, Hanna Korniyivna Mazurenko, brother Il'ko Korniyovych Mazurenko.<sup>6</sup>

5. *Ibid.*, testimony of Dmytro Trokhymovych Lykholit, p. 239.

6. *Ibid.*, testimony of Frosyna Korniyivna Dmytrenko, p. 249.

## Testimony 5:

Ye. M. Koval'chuk

Zbarzhivka village, Pohrebyshcheny *raion*, Vinnytsia *oblast'*now a resident of Honchariv, Tlumats'kyi *raion*, Ivano-Frankivs'ke *oblast'*

Publications and programs about the famine of 1932-1933 bring me painful memories. But to forget about all that would be a sin. Sometimes I blame myself for surviving. . . . And how do those who created that famine feel? If I could meet even one of those criminals, I would incinerate him with my anger! That would be my repayment for my mother, sister, my villagers, who innocently and prematurely left this life.

Some people protest, some are unhappy about these "boring" (in their words) conversations. To my mind, these are people who had not been affected with this horror, who cannot imagine what hunger is, these are people with a blind and deaf soul.

I know what famine and war are. I lost the ones dear to me in 1933 and in 1944. But, to me, famine is even more horrible than war. I walked around bloated, as did my family and our neighbors. And you cannot beg anything from anyone, because all are starving. And you can't go stealing from the rich or those secure, because you won't escape; your swollen legs, like logs, won't carry you. We did not see bread for close to a year. We lived on the hope for the stalks that were ripening in our gardens. Some ate the unripe stalks and died.

We went to school not to study, but because there we could slurp some thin gruel (and were grateful for this). How can learning enter your head when your hungry stomach reminds you of itself all the time. We were not awaiting vacation, as students do nowadays. We hoped vacation never came, because what would we have to eat then, at home? While my mother and sister were still living, we had traded all their kerchiefs and other items for a few mugs of millet. This did not save us. So, we wanted to go to school. We had a very good teacher then. He made sure that the weakened children got the thicker gruel, because they would have swelled up even more from the thin. I still see him before me, my good righteous teacher Mykola Todosiyovych Paladiychuk. Things like this one does not forget.

For a long time I could not agree, and still do not agree, with the motto, "No one is forgotten, nothing is forgotten." I read this and say to someone, or to myself, "Oy, how many are still forgotten!"

My soul aches for those who perished from the unknown famine of 1933. I also ache for those who without cause were proclaimed "enemies of the people" and died or lost their health in the torture chambers of Stalin's regime, and who, unable to withstand the torture, ended their lives by suicide. For all of these peo-

ple our souls should ache, those of us living today. And for those who lay down their heads defending their homeland in the Great National War [World War II].

Those, whom this tragedy missed, do not understand us. But they must understand, so that the memory about these victims is preserved. Only then will we be not only just people or a population, but a nation.<sup>7</sup>

Testimony 6:

Anatoliy Stepanovych Bakai

b. 1924

Hrebinka, Poltava *oblast'*

now residing in Stryi, Lviv *oblast'*

veteran of World War II and of labor

... In 1932 the grain harvest was not worse than in the previous years, and people expected a good price. But the news came that the grain quotas placed on the *kolhosp* were raised, so there was less grain distributed to the people. The version going around was that the *kurkuls* and the enemies of socialism were not handing in their grain quotas. Suspicion and distrust were rampant, and there was an atmosphere of hatred of one towards another. Many were called *kurkuls*, even those that did not even own a horse. . . .

Brigades created by the *sil'rada* [village council] drove on a truck from house to house a few times a month. Without mercy they took away from the starving people "left-over" produce. They were trained to search for a glass container of flour, grain, or anything edible. These brigades, headed by "activists" and "those authorized" rummaged under beds, in the hearth, the attic, in the garden, the orchard, the sheds, and took away what they found.

There was a flood of more and more crowds of bloated, hungry peasants to the railroad station in Hrebinka, expecting mercy from the train passengers. Some were saved from death this way, including I, to a certain extent. Numerous militia units chased the people, gifting the beggars with their fists. I personally was beaten often by the militia because I wanted to come up to the passenger cars and ask those on the train for a piece of bread. I was only 9, but full of bravery. Many passengers, who were travelling from Moscow to Odesa, did not know that a famine was raging in Ukraine, and were moved seeing at the station those bloated from famine. Every day there were dead people in various parts of the station and nearby streets, in the ditches, under bushes, at the bazaar, outside of store doors. Weakened, they had sat down to rest, and that is how they remained for all time, rigid. There was no one to work the fields. So every so often the mi-

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7. *Ibid.*, testimony of Ye. M. Koval'chuk, p. 100.

litia would surround the bazaar and capture people and send them to the *kolhosp*, to the fields. . . .

A few days after my mother's death, we received a parcel from her sister in the Urals. It contained five kilograms of flour and a letter saying that there was no famine there, and that not all there believe that in Ukraine there is this horror.

Later, vegetables and fruit appeared, and it became easier to live. Soon people were issued a bit of grain. But in some villages of the *raion* [county] there were no people left alive, and in others people were ready to escape to the ends of the earth to forget these places and these horrible times.

There are no markers nor monuments at the places where those starved by the famine were buried in mass graves. Everything is covered in wild growth.

Thinking about the various aspects of this tragedy of our people, I have come to the conclusion that the famine in Ukraine was a diabolical insidiously planned action of extermination, deportation, and denationalisation of Ukrainians. In one word, this was genocide.<sup>8</sup>

Testimony 7:

Teodor Hryhorovych Zakalo

b. 1921

Kryvyi Rih

In the Kryvyi Rih region there is the hamlet Chornohirka. People spoke about a *babusia* (old woman) in Chornohirka who charmed with spells the silence out of infants who could not speak. Even though I do not believe in superstition, I went to this *babusia* under pressure from my wife, because of our ill child. This was in 1963.

The house is full of people, all there for healing. Then the *babusia* walks in, old as the world, but tall and slim, dressed in something long and black, like an abbess. In conversation, someone mentioned the famine of 1933, and the *babusia* began to relate her story. . . . As soon as I returned home, I wrote down what I had heard from her. Why, I do not know myself, because then and even later, no one spoke about that famine, as if it had not happened at all.

"My husband and I lived with our children in the Mykolayiv region. No one was expecting a famine, because the grain harvest was good that year. Why would there be a famine? But then officials began going from house to house, taking away everything to the very last grain. I told my husband, 'Ivan, we are going to die.' My husband replied, 'The government won't let us die, we have a house full of children!' Spring came, everything turned green. My husband is ly-

8. *Ibid.*, testimony of Anatoliy Stepanovych Bakai, pp. 484-85.

ing near the fence, bloated. I am barely alive, but still moving, because the children need me. I'm cooking weeds, and carrying my bloated children one after another to the cemetery. God gave us fourteen children, and nine died of hunger. . . . One time, I am taking two of them to the cemetery in a wheelbarrow, when I hear my neighbour cry out from beyond the gate, 'In God's name, take mine, too, because I have no more strength.' I placed him on top. But suddenly, the neighbor's son opened his eyes and says, 'Auntie, if you give me a bit of bread, I won't die.' This did not frighten me, nor did I cry, because I and no one else had any tears left. No tears, no grief, no fear. I wheeled them to the hole that I had dug earlier that morning, and placed them on the grass, and waited for a long time. I pricked their bloated bodies with a needle, thinking that they were still alive, but there was no blood, just a watery liquid oozing out. And when the neighbor's son died, I buried the three of them in the shallow grave, and forever covered them with the soil. And so, almost all the children in the village died this way, because their stomachs could not digest the weeds. . . ."

I cannot forgive myself that I did not write down the name of this woman-martyr, nor the village in Mykolayiv where all this happened. All her life this woman wore black, not being able to forget those deaths. Why did the world forget about the millions of innocent victims?<sup>9</sup>

Testimony 8:

Kseniya Oleksiyivna Holovashchenko

b. 1912

Vinnitsia raion

In the fall of 1932 they took everything away from us, because we did not fulfil our quota. From the population they took away cows, horses, destroyed the barns, stables, took away all possessions. From us they took our cow, chickens, pillows. There was one new kerchief, and they even took that.

Then people began hiding what was left in the woods. But the authorities found it there and confiscated it.

In the spring and summer of 1933, we picked leaves off the linden trees, dried and pounded them, and made some sort of pancakes out of them. When the snow melted, we dug up last year's rotten potatoes in the fields. There was nothing left. Dying from hunger were my sisters Hania and Tania and my brother Tymofiy.

It came to that, that people started eating people. One unfortunate man (I won't mention his name because his daughter is still alive) watched as the

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9. *Ibid.*, testimony of Teodor Hryhorovych Zakalo, p. 416.



neighbor's daughter went outside to eat wild sorrel. He caught her, choked her, and ate the child.

Who worked in the kolhosp received 100 grams of bread. Who could not work, died.<sup>10</sup>

Testimony 9:

Viktor Dmytrovych Kozoriz

b. 1930

Nova Obodivka village, then Obodivs'kyi *raion*, now Trostianets'kyi *raion*, Vinnytsia *oblast'*

Engineer, now residing in Lviv

I was three years old when my parents returned from the Far East, where they had gone with fellow villagers to seek a better life. They returned to their native village to find famine. How do I remember this? Because for a bowl of barley, my mother gave our neighbor Kateryna Kharabara her new skirt. Eventually, for one litre of milk, she gave her my new felt boots. Later, my father found a job in the dairy farm, which was at the Obodivka sugar beet factory. Sometimes he would bring from work some coarse ground rye [*dert'*, used for fodder], full of awn, the prickly chaff. Mama had put the rye into a dish and placed it on the *pich* (the oven-hearth) to dry out. I quietly climbed up there, grabbed handfuls of the rye and stuffed it into my mouth.

One time mother noticed how I was eating the rye and spitting out the sharp chaff. She began to cry. Even now I see her standing in the middle of the room, pointing at the *pich* so that my father would see me, tears pouring from her eyes. But it was probably the sparrows that saved me from starvation.

Mama's brother, Mykyta Lahun, himself still a boy, somehow managed to catch sparrows. Mother singed them, then fried or baked them and, in small pieces, fed them to me.<sup>11</sup>

Testimony 10:

Oleksandra Yakymivna Yambors'ka

b. 1917

Yaroslavka village, Shpoliany *raion*, Cherkasy *oblast'*

I remember these events very well, and will not forget them to the end of my days. This was a horror, more terrible and worse than war, because in the war it

10. *Ibid.*, testimony of Kseniya Oleksiyivna Holovashchenko, p. 75.

11. *Ibid.*, testimony of Viktor Dmytrovych Kozoriz, p. 75.

was an enemy-foreigner that attacked us viciously. But this enemy – famine – we did not know whence it came and who brought it upon us.

After the war, there remained graves, obelisks, memories, honor of the memory of those who lost their lives in the war. But for these [the famine victims] there are no graves, no names, no mention even of what was their offence and in the name of what they died. Their bones are scattered all over, in the weeds, in the roads, and in the fields.

To make this clearer, I will just mention our corner of the village, one fourth of it. There were 48 homes. In them, 39 people died from famine. There were homes where the whole family died.

I also want to record that in our village then five activists were arrested: the head of the *kolhosp*, Spyrydon Romanovych Boiko and Hryts'ko Yukhremovych Kryzhanivskyi, Roman Karpovych Kolotylo, Mykola Kolomiyets', Hryts'ko Pypka. Supposedly for distortion of the party line. Two returned, and the others disappeared somewhere.

Write this book – write the truth for our descendants, so that they would know what happened in this world. We will die soon, and there will not be any living witnesses of this horrible truth.<sup>12</sup>

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12. *Ibid.*, testimony of Oleksandra Yakymivna Yambors'ka, p. 314.

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### *A SELECTIVE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS IN ENGLISH REGARDING THE HOLODOMOR AND STALINISM*

Bright-Holmes, John, editor. *Like It Was: The Diaries of Malcolm Muggeridge*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1982. 560 pp. Index. ISBN: 0-688-00784-8. Describes the years September 16, 1932-June 2-6, 1962. "Russia Diary" (pp. 13-74). Especially note entries for September 16, 1932-January 29, 1933. September 22, 1932: "These people are starving – that's a fact." (p. 19). Description of food store for foreigners (p. 19). George B. Shaw's comments, and Muggeridge's opinion thereof, "He's a preposterous old fool" (p. 22). November 4, 1932: "A classless society, if that is desirable, can only be achieved by one class killing off all the others, or at least starving them into helpless submission, and that is being done in Russia. I am appalled at the cruelty involved." (p. 42). November 17, 1932: Soviet news coverage regarding the North Caucasus (pp. 45-46). November 19, 1932: His meeting with Duranty: "As a prophet of the Five Year Plan he's despicable." (p. 47). December 21, 1932: Story of a peasant woman who killed children and an officer of the OGPU (p. 57). January 4, 1933: "What has happened is simply that the Government having, by its collectivization policy, ruined agriculture, is now engaged in extracting every ounce of food left in the country to feed its friends during the winter. . . . Meanwhile the peasants have to live through the winter as best they can. Millions of them will die." (p. 61). January 15, 1933: "I had a queer fancy walking about them, that, when the crash came, even if Russia became a chaotic wilderness, men in leather coats with a bullying manner would still meet in the Kremlin and announce statistics and pass unanimous resolutions about how the Party would proceed unflinchingly with its task of building Socialism. This is how I see the thing – the logic of simple, and often debauched, minds, cut off from the population of Russia, from the peasants and even from the workers, existing, a little separate world and listening to the echoes of its own words. Whose only reality is the armed force at its disposal; the logic

growing staler, shriller, more unreal; desolation in its naked, oriental form, more real. If I ever had any doubts about the existence of evil, this place would have convinced me!" (p. 65). January 24, 1933: Quoting Duranty, "I regard this new decree in the North Caucasus as victory – harnessing the peasants to the plough because their horses are all dead – Victory!" (p. 69). Discusses Muggeridge's articles for *The Manchester Guardian*, "The articles appeared, heavily sub-edited, but even so caused some stir." (p. 74, written in the spring of 1933).

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vation-death (pp. 253-258) define horrors perpetrated against the people by the Stalinist regime. The chapter, "The Terror-Famine" includes these subchapters: 11. "Assault on the Ukraine" (pp. 217-224); 12. "The Famine Rages" (pp. 225-259); 13. "A Land Laid Waste" (pp. 260-273); 14. "Kuban, Don and Volga" (pp. 274-282); 15. "Children" (pp. 283-298); 16. "The Death Roll" (pp. 299-307); 17. "The Record of the West" (pp. 308-321); 18. "Responsibilities" (pp. 322-330).

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khoz June 1, 1928-September 30, 1930" (p. 184); Table Four: "Kolkhozy by Type of Statute, 1927-1930" (p. 185); Table Five: "Socialization of Draught Animals in Kolkhozy, 1929-1930 in thousands" (p. 180); Table Six: "Socialized Livestock, 1929-1930" (p. 187); Table Seven: "Debts and Indivisible Funds (IF's) of Kolkhozy, 1929-1930" (pp. 188-189); Table Eight: "Peasant Income in Money and Kind by Social Sector, 1930 (millions of rubles)" (p. 190); Table Nine: "Methods of Renumeration in Kolkhozy, 1928" (pp. 191-192).

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Isajiw, Wsevolod W., editor. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933: Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*. Introduction by Wsevolod W. Isajiw. Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Center, 2003. vi + 212 pp. Black-and-white photographic illustrations from The Collection of Cardinal Theodore Innitzer. About the Authors. ISBN: 0-921537-56-5. Divided into six sections: 1) "The Famine in the Western Archives" – Orest Subtelny, "German Diplomatic Reports on the Famine of 1933" (pp. 13-25); Andrea Graziosi, "Italian Archival Documents on the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933" (pp. 27-48); Jaroslaw V. Koshiw, "The 1932-1933 Famine in the British Government Archives" (pp. 51-65); 2) "The Famine Witnesses" – Ieoida Wynnyckyj and Wsevolod W. Isajiw, "The Famine Witnesses: Oral History in North America" (pp. 67-75); Sally J. Taylor, "A Blanket of Silence: The Response of the Western Press Corps in Moscow to the Ukraine Famine of 1932-1933" (pp. 77-95); John P. Humphrey, "Famine, International Law and Human



Rights: A Statement on the 1990 Report of the International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine" (pp. 93-95); 3) "Famine Initiators and Directors: Personal Papers" – Terry Martin, "The 1932-1933 Ukrainian Terror: New Documentation on Surveillance and the Thought Process of Stalin" (pp. 97-114); 4) "Testimonies from Kyiv" – Volodymyr Maniak, "To Return to People Their History and to History the Truth" (pp. 117-134); Lidia Kovalenko, "Spiritual Ruin: On the Question of the Effects of the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine" (pp. 137-162); 5) "The Other Famines" – Roman Serbyn, "The Origin of the Ukrainian Famine of 1921-23 in the Light of Recent Research" (pp. 165-183); Peter J. Potichnyj, "The 1946-47 Famine in Ukraine: A Comment on the Archives of the Underground" (pp. 185-189); 6) "Famine Bibliography" – Olya Pavlyshyn, "Famine 1932-1933: Selected Bibliography" (191-212).

Ivanova Galina Mikhailovna. *Labor Camp Socialism: The Gulag in the Soviet Totalitarian System*. Edited by Donald J. Raleigh. Translated from the Russian by Carol Flath. Armonk, NY; London: M. E. Sharpe, 2000. English translation of: *GULAG y sisteme totalitarnogo gosudarstva*, by G. M. Ivanova and MONF (Moscow: Moscow Fund for the Social Sciences, 1997). xxiv + 208 pp. \$24.95 (paper). Tables, Black-and-white Photographic Illustrations, List of Abbreviations, Index of Personal Names, Index of Camp Names, Bibliography, ISBN: 0-7656-0427-2. Memories and perceptions of the GULag system were still fresh in post-Soviet Russia when Ivanova wrote her survey of the Soviet system of forced labor. Particularly interesting are the photographs of the Soviet officials of the NKVD and GULag Administration; "The Monument to the Victims of Stalin's Repressions – The Mask of Sorrow" at Magadan; Butyr'skaia Prison in Moscow; and some of the work projects completed by forced labor. Following the Introduction dedicated to the subject of "Courts and Convicts in Tsarist Russia" (pp. 3-11), chapters include: "Repression and Punishment" (pp. 12-68); "The Camp Economy" (pp. 69-126); "Gulag Personnel" (pp. 127-184); "What Was the Gulag?" [Conclusion] (pp. 185-190). Tables: 1. "Quantitative Composition and Proportion of Hired Workers to Prisoners on Staff in the White Sea-Baltic Camp Administration (BB Lag)" (p. 154); 2. "Staff of Glavenskiseistroi" citing TsKhSD (p. 167); 3. "Delegates at Party Conferences of Corrective-Labor Camps and Colonies of the MVD Administration of the City of Moscow and Moscow Oblast" (p. 174); 4. "Educational Level of Core Party Members (*aktiv*) in the Production Administrations of Corrective-Labor Camps and Colonies of the City of Moscow and Moscow Oblast" (p. 175); 5. "Total Number of Prisoners in Places of Deprivation of Liberty" (p. 187).

Lih, Lars T., Oleg V. Naumov, and Oleg V. Khlevniuk, editors. *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925-1936*. Annals of Communism, edited by Jonathan Brent. Foreword by Robert C. Tucker. Introduction by Lars T. Lih. Translated from the Russian by Catherine A. Fitzpatrick. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995. vi + 276 pp. Black-and-white photographic illustrations, Note on Document and the Narrative, Appendix which describes the Eastman Affair (Lenin's Testament), Glossary of Names, Index. Photo-document: Stalin's letter to Molotov of September 7, 1930 (p. 212). This book is divided into chapters by date: 1925, 1926, 1927, 1929, 1930, 1931-1936. The editor notes that Molotov's selection of letters that he gave to the Central Party Archive "suggest that only the most 'harmless' documents, those that in no way touched Stalin's and Molotov's darkest and most criminal activities were selected for the archive." (p. 224). See notes 3-5, referring to Stalin's letter of June 19, 1932. These notes quote the Ukrainian Politburo Appeal to Kaganovich and Molotov of June 17, 1932, the telegram of the Central Committee signed by Stalin and Molotov of June 21, 1932 refusing to authorize and "deviation" in "amounts or deadline for grain deliveries," and the June 23, 1932 Politburo Resolution on the matter. (p. 230).

Marat, G. P., editor. *Politics and Economics of the Soviet Union: An Annotated Bibliography*. Cormack, New Jersey: Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 1992. v + 179 pp. Subject and Author Indices. ISBN: 1-56072-048-4. Deals with the subjects: Business, Finance, Economics, Foreign Trade, Foreign Policy, Foreign Affairs, Military, Domestic Politics, Elections, Culture, History, Education, Science, Technology, Environment, Soviet foreign relations with China, and Japan.

Taylor, Sally J. *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty, The New York Times Man in Moscow*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990. xx + 404 pp. Notes, Select Bibliography, Index, Black-and-white Photographic Illustrations. ISBN: 0-19-505700-7. Taylor's biography details: Duranty's early life and career; the controversies regarding his lack of integrity as a reporter; his failure to accurately report the Famine; his drug use; sexual penchants and perversions; his eventual decline from wealth and influence; and his death. Duranty quoted discussing World War I: "While we were talking, there came a phone message from the line that a stray shell had hit one of the tanks, which had gone up in flames. . . . I had ridden in [it], and that they were sending back the bodies. . . . So, I saw them and felt sick . . . [the burnt bodies were] black and incredibly shriveled, like three little faceless nigger boys" (p. 69, quoting Duranty's *I Write as I Please* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1937], pp. 7-8). Chapters particu-

larly relevant to the *Holodomor* are: "Luck Broke My Way" (pp. 97-116); "The Mysterious Fatalism of the Slav" (pp. 135-153); "Applied Stalinism" (pp. 154-171); "Dizzy with Success" (pp. 172-192); "A Blanket of Silence" (pp. 193-209); "The 'Famine' Is Mostly Bunk" (pp. 210-223); "The Masters of Euphemism" (pp. 224-240). Specific points discussed in the book are: Duranty's conversation with President Franklin D. Roosevelt about U.S. diplomatic recognition of the USSR (pp. 3-4); Pro-and-anti-Durantism (pp. 159-161); Duranty's claim that "October 1928-March 1929 - the period when Stalin was formulating his views on the kulak. . . ." (p. 163); Duranty's description of an exile-bound train of the banished kulaks (p. 164, referring to quote found in Duranty's autobiography, *I Write as I Please*, p. 228); Duranty, Hindus, and Lyons regarding Stalin (pp. 165-171); 1920s Famine (pp. 97-105); Malcolm Muggeridge regarding Soviet statistics: "The original item was almost certainly untrue or grotesquely distorted. . . . Soviet statistics have always been almost entirely fanciful, though not less seriously regarded for that. . . ." (p. 180, referring to: Malcolm Muggeridge's *Chronicles of Wasted Time*, vol. 1: *The Green Stick* [London; Collins, 1972], pp. 215-216); Duranty's "Omelet" quote (p. 185); Stalin quoted regarding Duranty's coverage of USSR; "I am sure you have not lost by it" (p. 192, referring to Duranty. *I Write As I Please*, p. 166). Stalin interview took place on December 25, 1933 (p. 223); Andrew Cairns' visit to famine areas and witnessing starvation (pp. 193-196); Gareth Jones, Malcolm Muggeridge, Arthur Koestler, Eugene Lyons (pp. 200-209); Deportation, exile, suicides, dekulakization, denunciations, dehumanization of kulaks described (pp. 211-213); Starvation death's physical manifestations described (pp. 213-125); Calculation of *Holodomor* deaths: "World War II - 6,000/day; the Famine - 25,000/day"; Citing Marco Carynnyk, "The Famine the Times Couldn't Find," *Commentary* (November 1983), pp. 32-40; Famine as Nazi propaganda (p. 238).

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## REVIEW ARTICLE/CRITIQUE EXHAUSTIVE

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### *ETHNIC GERMANS IN THE USSR REVEAL SOVIET REALITIES: 1925-1937*

*We'll Meet Again in Heaven: Germans in the Soviet Union Write Their American Relatives, 1925-1937.* Translated and edited by Ronald J. Vossler. Illustrated by Joshua J. Vossler. Fargo, ND: Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota State University Libraries, 2001. v, 268 pp. Illustrations, Notes, Map, Index of Family Names, Chart of Weights, Measures, and Money. \$35.00 (paper). ISBN: 1-891193-23-6.

During the early Soviet years, it was still possible for Soviet citizens to communicate by mail with their relatives in America and Germany, who had emigrated from Russia during the late Tsarist era (1870-1914). University of North Dakota Professor Ronald J. Vossler translated and edited two hundred such letters sent by ethnic Germans in the USSR to their American relatives detailing the series of escalating repressive Soviet policies and actions during the years, 1925-1937. *We'll Meet Again in Heaven: Germans in the Soviet Union Write to Their American Relatives, 1925-1937*, is divided into five chapters delineating this escalation process: "Things Are Not As They Once Were (1925-1927)," "Hold Your Tongues (1928-1931)," "Crucifixion by Hunger (1932-1933)," and, "All the Signs of the End Are Here (1936-1937)." By arranging his material chronologically, Vossler makes it possible to trace the effects of dekulakization, forced deportations, forced collectivization, and the early years of the purges, thereby gaining a fair understanding of this period of Soviet history.

Some "famine deniers" question the veracity of oral testimonies gathered about the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933, charging that nationalistic points of view influence these testimonies. The letters in Vossler's book are, therefore, of singular historical importance, as they are "contemporary firsthand testimony . . . from those actually suffering the famine as they wrote."<sup>1</sup> These

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1. *We'll Meet Again in Heaven: Germans in the Soviet Union Write Their American Relatives, 1925-1937*, ed. by Ronald J. Vossler (Fargo, ND: Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, North Dakota State University Libraries, 2001), p. xxxiii.

German-Russian primary source documents consistently confirm Ukrainian charges regarding the deliberately fatal nature of these Soviet policies.<sup>2</sup> A letter of July 20, 1933, describes the situation quite clearly, "We have nothing but a cat, and I will butcher that today. After the cat is eaten, we are finished."<sup>3</sup>

That many of these Famine letters sent to Germany, where they were publicly displayed, is another significant nail in Stalin's coffin.<sup>4</sup> The German diplomatic corps, however, proved a fatal disappointment to these German-Russians. In March 1930, a delegation of twelve approached the German ambassador in Moscow seeking political asylum. "The German embassy put forth no effort in trying to allow us to emigrate. . . . If we can't emigrate, then we are hopelessly lost. We are facing starvation. . . . The ambassador robbed us of our last hope."<sup>5</sup>

Vossler provides a comprehensive introductory historical overview helpful to those unfamiliar with the various aspects of Soviet history discussed in his book. For documentation of the points made in his Introduction, Vossler endnotes scholarly works of other historians, but the letters themselves stand forth on their own merit. The Index of Family Names is helpful to those examining the book for genealogical purposes. A subject index would be a useful addition in future editions.

Evocative artwork by Joshua Vossler includes charcoal drawings such as, "The Hunger Pieta," in which a Famine victim is grasped by a Communist skeleton wearing a Budennovka military cap with a prominent Hammer and Sickle emblem. The illustration on the front cover, "Writing in Blood," shows a hand pierced by a pen, the bloody ink from which seeps into the ground below, thereby bringing to mind the biblical story of Cain and Abel:

And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the

2. See the book, *Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book*, S. O. Podhainy, et al., eds., (Detroit: Democratic Organization of Ukrainians Formerly Prosecuted by the Soviet Regime in U.S.A. [DOBRUS], 1955), the second volume of which deals similarly with the various aspects of the Famine.

3. Letter by Phillip and Rosina Hauck, dated July 20, 1933, quoted in *We'll Meet Again in Heaven*, ed. Vossler, p. 208.

4. Vossler recommends in endnote # 45: "For photos of stacks of 'hunger letters' sent from Soviet Union to Germany, particularly during 1932-33, see Dr. Adolf Ehart, ed., *Brüder in Not! Dokumente der Hungersnot unter den deutschen Volksgenossen in Russland* (Berlin-Steglitz: des Evangelischen Presserverbandes für Deutschland, 1933), pp. 4-5."

5. Letter dated March 20, 1930, quoted in *We'll Meet Again in Heaven*, ed. Vossler, pp. 103-04.

ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your own hand."<sup>6</sup>

Many of the letters reflect the abiding faith of the writers, and, as illustrative of their own agonies, refer to biblical prophecies of doom, and to the sufferings of Job, Lazarus, and Jesus Christ. Some of the victims believed dispossession, deportation, and starvation that they suffered, and from which so many loved ones died, were divine punishments for their lack of resolve to leave Russia when they had the opportunity to do so: "Congruent with the thought processes of traumatized people of all ages . . . [they] search for faults in their own behavior. They blame their own sinfulness, or the sinfulness of the world, and behind the famine see God's purging hand" (p. xxxv).

Victimized by governmental policies and practices way beyond their ability to control or counteract, nevertheless, they shouldered unwarranted blame because of their self-sufficient work ethic and sense of responsibility for their family's wellbeing. This feeling of personal responsibility for governmentally sponsored tragedies that befell them was not exclusive to the German-Russians, or to this part of the world, or at that particular time. Social historians of American history of this same time-period observe this same psychological phenomenon among American poor, who were unable to work their way out of their poverty-stricken situations even by assiduous application of hard work.<sup>7</sup> Such self-blame was especially evident among those who had fallen to poverty from the position of self-sufficiency, as was the case with most of the German-Russians under discussion:

I am already 62 years old, with pains that press in the bottom of my being, for I know my husband and child are near starvation. . . . That's why, dear brother, along with your children, send us alms, if you can. My confident trust is in you, and if you can't help, then we must go on

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6. Gen. 4: 10-11. *The Holy Bible*, King James Version.

7. See articles demonstrating this same assumption of unnecessary guilt by Americans in Stud Terkel's *Hard Times* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970; reprint New York: New Press, 1986) and Michael Parrish, *Anxious Decades: America in Prosperity and Depression, 1920-1941* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992). A letter signed, "Mrs. H. B." of Illinois, who wrote to the Children's Bureau about her distress at being unable to adequately feed her children: "I also have a little girl 8 years old who is frail, and the school doctor tells her to eat fresh eggs and milk and lots of it, but where am I to get it? I can see her going into decline right along, but what am I to do? . . . I trust you will look at this in the right light and excuse me for crying out my soul to you. . . . Please do not use my name in publication as the children would be jeered at by the neighbor's children." Quoted in *Major Problems in American History, 1920-1945: Documents and Essays*, ed. Colin Gordon (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

and live out our misery until the loving God brings it all to an end. I am ashamed to write to you for help, but the need is just so great.<sup>8</sup>

A cadre of modern historians perceive and present Stalin as nothing worse than an interesting example of a misguided, misunderstood man, who later led his country to victory in the "Great Patriotic War." Stalin's policies led to the deaths of millions of people during the Great Famine 1932-1933, as well as those tortures, deportations, and deaths resulting from his various governmental policies definitive of his extreme paranoid destructiveness. Some may prefer to focus on cold statistics, and to shun the emotional aspects of these events under consideration. In this regard, Vossler's book is a vital contribution to Soviet historiography as, within its pages, the victims of Stalinism speak for themselves about what was happening to them, their families, and their neighbors. *We'll Meet Again in Heaven* is not a heavy tome of dates and places, kings and commoners that sometimes puts the reader to sleep. Instead, it is like reading a book of letters from one's aunt or father or pastor, and, thereby, the reader forms a heartfelt reaction to the material presented. Its forthright prose makes this book appropriate teaching material for students at the advanced high school or undergraduate levels, as well as those with more expertise in Soviet history. Teachers of political science or religious studies will find Vossler's book a rich resource, as, like Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, *We'll Meet Again in Heaven* reveals man's endless capacity for cruelty to his fellow human beings.

Risking severe punishment for writing to foreign relatives as they did, and especially for describing the true conditions in the USSR, these writers persevered, often noting that the particular letter was likely to be their last farewell before death. Some lucky ones received blessed help from family and friends overseas, for which their thankfulness overflowed. However, many, many others received no reply at all. The hurt of these forgotten ones is painful to behold:

Our sister Karolina doesn't write anymore either. When we gather here, one always asks the other, "So you haven't had any letters from America either? I don't know why our friends don't write. They don't want anything more to do with us. They avoid all of us."<sup>9</sup>

Another letter asks, "There are many in America who doubt the satanic power of the Bolsheviks, or are they themselves thoroughly steeped in the

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8. Letter dated December 6, 1931 from the Odessa region, quoted in *We'll Meet Again in Heaven*, ed. Vossler, p. 149.

9. Letter by Katherina Boschee, July 4, 1935, *ibid.*, p. 244.

Bolshevik spirit?"<sup>10</sup> During the 1930's, Walter Duranty wrote his infamous famine-denial articles in *The New York Times*. Malcolm Muggeridge, who independently toured famine-stricken areas of Ukraine, lost his job at the *Manchester Guardian* in England and relocated to work at a newspaper in India because his articles spoke the truth of the disastrous and cruel Soviet realities.<sup>11</sup> A letter written about the lies of the American press, dated April 1932, states, "When a person reads in your newspapers that in Ukraine people are starving to death, that is the complete and full truth. . . . I know, I live here."<sup>12</sup> Propagandistic articles in Soviet newspapers presented to the starving citizenry the "fact," that foreign observers toured the Soviet Union and were favorably impressed with what they saw. A writer from a German village in Ukraine discusses this:

Delegations from other countries stay in the big cities, and in the best hotel, and hear only what the communists want them to hear. If they'd come to the villages, they'd learn the truth. Just today, in our newspaper, we read that Kupper, who sits on the board of directors of a Russian-American chamber of commerce, traveled 55,000 miles through Russia, and nowhere saw any forced labor. It is easy to say that he lied . . . , but another question is where did he go, what did he see, and what did the communists show him? It is another lie, just as people lie that they are shipping out of the country only unnecessary grain, when they are really taking the last piece of bread from the mouths of the hungry."<sup>13</sup>

One of those persons, who painted the pretty picture for the foreigners' benefit, wrote in a letter entitled, "Cry of Despair," the following confession:

There is nobody to speak with, and in front of the mirror I stand ashamed. . . . most of all, we hate the guests, the neat, fat, lucky foreigners. . . . I have a declaration to give the foreigners, for I have, to my great detriment, a knowledge of speech. I lied for them, the Bolsheviks. And now I am ashamed to remember that. . . . How often it pressed upon me, that I should say to the official: "Don't you understand, you polished idiot, that I am lying?" But I held myself back . . . I wanted to shout out: . .

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10. Letter dated July 24, 1931, *ibid.*, p. 134.

11. Malcolm Muggeridge, *My Life in Pictures* (New York: William Morrow, 1987), pp. 28-30.

12. Letter by J.F.K., quoted in *We'll Meet Again in Heaven*, ed. Vossler, p. 160.

13. Letter by Ustja, dated April 24, 1931, *ibid.*, p. 130.



. "Don't take any food away, that is why they die, why they starve, why they die like animals from hunger."<sup>14</sup>

After seeing the desperate situation, some Red Army soldiers refused to follow orders, and gave their rations to the hungry villagers:

No more Red Army units are sent to places of unrest. Now, they send only communists who get their rations from the G.P.U. secret police. One Red Army division, sent out of Samara at the beginning of March, came through a peaceful village and found such a situation there that they divided up their provisions to the people, refusing to go any further.<sup>15</sup>

The Stalinist Era was in many ways a time of evil incarnate, and its political polices affected and starved millions of people in a manner of death that causes unfathomable physical and psychological suffering:

We have three small children and nothing to eat. . . . That is the saddest, when day breaks and the little ones weep and cry for food. Oh loving God, have pity on us, and help us to endure their frightful moaning and this miserable time. The smallest of our children weeps and says, "Oh dear Momma, go and look for something to eat because I have such awful hunger." Where should I look, and to who [sic] should I go when nobody has anything? So that is how we fill ourselves, with weeping. There is nothing else. You can imagine how it makes one's heart bleed, when your own children come to you and you can give them nothing to quiet their hunger.<sup>16</sup>

Some of the letter-writers note that many of the Communist officials were of Jewish heritage, and that in some villages Jews were not as severely affected by the Communist policies.<sup>17</sup> "The Jews now have an upperhand (sic). No Jews have been deported to Siberia."<sup>18</sup> However, it is important to note that a collective farm overseer threatened the German-Russians based on ethnic reasons:

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14. Letter dated August 29, 1930, *ibid.*, p. 106.

15. Letter from the Volga Region, published May 20, 1932, *ibid.*, pp. 160-61.

16. *Ibid.*, p. xxxiii.

17. *Ibid.*, p. xxvii.

18. Letter by E., dated Sept. 1, 1930, *ibid.*, p. 107.

Now you will see that wherever you insects have settled in Russia, we have you in our hands. No God will help you with manna from heaven. No matter how hard you pray, there will be hangings, shootings, starvation, and freezing to death. All if you can't meet the demands of our plan with your work.<sup>19</sup>

From these primary source documents written in the intimate tone of familial correspondence, one learns the details of the daily struggle to survive that took place during some of the most deadly years of the Stalinist Era. In North, and South Dakota, and Minnesota, recipients submitted these letters to German-language newspapers for publication, so other relatives and the community-at-large could learn the true situation of those family members, friends, and neighbors in the Soviet Union. Concurrent with diplomatic recognition of the USSR by the American government of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (Autumn, 1933), these published letters provided information to the reading American public about the ill effects of Soviet agricultural and political policies. An editorial note from the original publisher of the letter, *Dakota Freie Presse* noted:

Jacob Graf of Medina, North Dakota, who received this letter . . . also wrote, "I can't read this letter from Russia without weeping. . . . I will write to our Senator Nye what I know about this situation in Russia."<sup>20</sup>

The fiscal benefits to American industry of the opening of the new Soviet market is obvious, but these profits were perceived quite differently by those German-Russians deported to the north to work in the lumber industry:

The capitalists seek to enrich themselves by buying wood that has through our own blood and sweat cost us dearly to produce for market. . . . To our great misfortune, America sends its machinery to Russia that is the reason why we must work here. [Refers to deportees in northern regions that cut timber under forced labor conditions for the international market. The Soviets traded wood products, as well as confiscated grain and other agricultural products, for Western industrial fixtures and technology].<sup>21</sup>

It was no secret that Stalin deliberately instituted destructive policies that ultimately resulted in the death by starvation and related diseases of millions

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19. *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.

20. Letter dated April 14, 1933, *ibid.*, p. 189.

21. Letter dated March 27, 1931, *ibid.*, p. 124.

of people. Institution of the system of internal passports and travel prohibitions forbade persons traveling to find food that was plentiful elsewhere. "We would like to leave here and look for work, but they won't give us the papers to do that, and without papers a person can't go anywhere."<sup>22</sup> Many letters also refer to typhus, measles, and other more hunger-specific diseases that further ravaged the already starving population, as is often the case in famine situations.

Despite the financial situation in the United States in the Depression, many letters received a positive lifesaving response from members of the German-American community. Money was sent to Torgsin stores on the recipient's behalf. There, they could purchase food and other items not available for sale unless purchased with gold, silver, or foreign currency. The Soviet government used these stores as an additional way to extract money and valuables from the people via the inequitable exchange rate given for the true value of money exchanged. Some money appears to have been stolen:

We still haven't received the money that you sent us. The money arrived in the "Torgsin" store in Tiraspol, along with a receipt, but we still haven't gotten a receipt ourselves, which is necessary, as they tell us before we can receive anything.<sup>23</sup>

Significantly, one of the letters mentions this facet of the collectivization process: "But in the end, I was forced to sign that gladly and with my free will I gave away everything I owned."<sup>24</sup> Eventually, it became too politically dangerous to receive letters from America at all. On February 28, 1935, Christina Flemmer wrote to her brother:

I would have written you earlier but we are not supposed to write for help from out of the country. Dear brother, you write that you sent me 5 dollars. But I don't dare inquire if I have received, or might receive, the money. You shouldn't have sent it because now I am in much anxiety if they find out. . . . We are in constant fear, for from here many more families are being deported, and for that very reason, that they've received help from outside of the country.<sup>25</sup>

The value of *Until We Meet in Heaven* . . . is its ability to re-emotionalize history. Statistical profiles demonstrate the demographic extent of Stalin's

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22. Letter dated May 3, 1933, *ibid.*, p. 193.

23. Letter dated June 3, 1933, *ibid.*, pp. 213-14.

24. Letter dated March 21, 1930, *ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

25. Letter dated March 15, 1935, *ibid.*, pp. 242-43.

vengefulness, but these letters compel the reader to form his own opinions about him. "The Father of the Peoples," more familiarly known in the West as "Uncle Joe," once said: "To choose one's victims, to prepare one's plan minutely, to slake an implacable vengeance, and then to go to bed . . . there is nothing sweeter in the world."<sup>26</sup>

It is important to look history square in the face, whether it is ugly or not. On November 28, 1930, a pastor wrote to his daughter, "If the entire world remains completely silent, without a word from the believers, gazing into this misery with hands in their laps, then it is ripe for a downfall."<sup>27</sup> Specifically addressing Americans, a letter of March 21, 1933, recommends, "Don't spit in strange wells, for the time will come that you may also have to draw water from them. . . ."<sup>28</sup>

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26. Josef Stalin quoted in Robert Conquest, "Lenin's Guffaw," *New Republic* (Washington, DC, Sept. 15, 1986) in *The Columbia World of Quotations*, Robert Andrews, Mary Biggs, et al., eds. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996). Online edition. July 2001. [www.bartleby.com/66/](http://www.bartleby.com/66/) (Aug. 27, 2002).

27. "Letter from an Exiled Pastor," in *We'll Meet Again in Heaven*, ed. Vossler, p. 113

28. Letter dated March 21, 1933, *ibid.*, p. 179.