A Candle in Remembrance

An Oral History of the Ukrainian Genocide of 1932–1933

A translation of *Svicha Pamiaty* by Dr. Valentyna Borysenko

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History can be viewed as a series of cataclysmic events propelled by an insatiable lust for power or wealth (or both) with tragic consequences for some and ephemeral victory for others. It is, in the works of most historians, a litany of the exploits and excesses of kings and kingmakers, despots and demigods, who for good or ill leave an indelible mark on a nation or an empire. All too often, the legacy inherited by their powerless subjects is a legacy of distrust, destruction, and desolation of the spirit, which lingers and festers and shapes the destiny of survivors and their descendants accordingly. It is precisely such a legacy that was callously thrust upon the people of Ukraine in the 1930s, during an undeclared war in which the horrors of all of history's battlefields were eclipsed by a weapon of mass destruction aimed at innocent men, women, and children whose only crime was their Ukrainian ethnicity. That weapon was famine, and its casualties were millions of Ukrainian farmers and peasants whose feeble cries for succor went unheeded and unanswered by a world that saw nothing or, in the name of political expediency, chose to see nothing. In giving heretofore nameless and faceless farmers and peasants who survived this genocide a voice, Valentyna Borysenko's *A Candle in Remembrance* has become a monument to the victims who perished, an indictment of those who designed and implemented acts of barbaric cruelty against the Ukrainian people, and a prayer that the atrocities Ukraine suffered are never again perpetrated. It is hoped that the English translation of Professor Borysenko's work does justice to the author and to those whose lives and deaths she memorialized.

A Candle in Remembrance

AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE UKRAINIAN GENOCIDE OF 1932–1933

Valentyna Borysenko

Ukrainian National Women's League of America, Inc.

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In loving memory of my mother,
OLGA PETRYCIA-PELENSKY

—Martha T. Pelensky

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Preface

The Great Famine of 1932–1933, also known as the Holodomor, was a deliberate, elaborately planned and executed program of extermination by starvation of millions of men, women, and children in Ukraine. Many people, both those who lived in Ukraine and those who lived beyond Ukraine's borders, were not aware of this horrific crime against humanity and knew nothing about its defenseless victims. Some of those who did know preferred to stay silent or even cover up the tragic events taking place in Ukraine.

Among those who spoke out against the manmade famine and came to the support of its victims were members of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA). In 1933, the UNWLA worked tirelessly to inform political leaders, charitable organizations, and the media in the United States and other countries of the free world about the plight of the Ukrainian people, urging these leaders and organizations to come to their aid. Many documents, including letters from and to UNWLA leaders, attest to this work and are part of the UNWLA's extensive archives. Several of these documents were published in the November 2003 issue of the UNWLA's monthly magazine, *Our Life*, which commemorated the 70th anniversary of the Great Famine.

In May 1934, the 73rd Congress of the United States passed Resolution No. 399, dealing entirely with the question of the famine in Ukraine. This resolution was quite probably the first in which Moscow's politics were addressed by the U.S. Congress. On the 50th anniversary of the Great Famine, copies of UNWLA archival documents were sent to the U.S. Congressional Commission on the Ukrainian Famine.

Dr. Valentyna Borysenko's *Svicha Pamiaty* was published in Ukraine in 2007. Shortly thereafter, the First Lady of Ukraine and President of the International Humanitarian Fund 3000, Kateryna Yushchenko requested that the UNWLA undertake the translation of this book into English. In her letter to the UNWLA, the First Lady expressed her hopes that an English-language translation of the eyewitness testimonies of survivors would provide a more complete picture of the suffering of the Ukrainian people during the Holodomor and encourage the world community to recognize the Famine as a genocide.

This translation, initiated during Iryna Kurowyckyj's term as president of the UNWLA, comes to fruition under the presidency of Marianna Zajac and is our organization's tribute to the victims of 1932–1933. It was a great honor and a

privilege for the UNWLA to accept this assignment, and it is our deepest hope that our translation of Dr. Borysenko's book will serve as additional proof of the brutality of a regime determined to annihilate a nation by starvation. May the memory of the millions of victims of the Holodomor live on through this book.

We are grateful to Natalia Danylenko, who brought the book to the UNWLA's attention and served as ex officio liaison between the UNWLA and Ukraine's First Lady. We would also like to thank Martha T. Pelensky for her technical support and for her generous sponsorship of this project; translator Olha Rudakevych; editor Tamara Stadnychenko; Dennis Rozanski for his meticulous review of the working draft; Mark Tarnawsky for his assistance with transliteration and translation; Areta Buk for book design; UNWLA Vice President Ulana Zinych, who served as project manager; and Marie Duplak of Computoprint for printing the work. We are especially grateful to former First Lady Kateryna Yushchenko for entrusting this project to our organization.

Marianna Zajac
UNWLA President

Iryna Kurowyckyj
UNWLA Honorary President

Foreword

In 2006, the Security Service of Ukraine, the former KGB, opened its archives and released hundreds of previously secret directives and documents proving that the program of the Soviet regime to carry out a genocide of the Ukrainian people was premeditated and deliberate. The Holodomor—death by hunger—was intended to eliminate the core of the Ukrainian nation, the Ukrainian villagers and peasants who had created, cultivated, and cherished Ukrainian culture, traditions, language, and faith.

But the Holodomor was not only an economic crime against these people. It was part of a multi-tiered political plan aimed at destroying Ukraine's leaders, its rural middle class, and its intellectuals—writers, teachers, poets, musicians, and others.

The newly released documents substantiate the research and conclusions of scholars around the world who concur that Ukraine suffered a horrific genocide during which the Soviet authorities confiscated anything and everything edible as well as all means and tools used to prepare and consume food. At its height, this campaign against Ukrainian villages was murder by starvation. Some 25,000 people perished daily, and the result was a vast number of unmarked graves and cemeteries where the dead and those still clinging to life were often buried together.

The Holodomor generated so much terror that even today some Ukrainians fear to speak of it. How does one speak of something that is beyond human logic? How does one describe an era during which millions of proud, prosperous, hard-working, and patriotic Ukrainians were turned into a nation of dying people with only one thought left in their minds—where to get food for themselves and their children.

But, before the directives and documents, before the scholarly research, there were the testimonies of the witnesses and survivors. And while the Soviet Union denied that the Holodomor had ever occurred, most Ukrainians, in Ukraine and in its diaspora, had heard the horrifying recollections of its victims. Our grandparents, parents, friends, and neighbors would whisper the truth: the names of people who had died and the names of people who had killed. And we are finally learning the names of those responsible; Ukraine's Security Service recently released a list of officials who executed the criminal orders of Stalin and his henchmen in Ukraine in 1932–1933.

Facts are essential, but statistics can be dry and impersonal. Sometimes people forget that each of the millions that died during those brief months in the early 1930s was a unique human tragedy. Two-thirds of those who died were children, women, and the elderly. The sorrow is multiplied when we realize that the children who perished never had the chance to grow up and never gave birth to their own children. Thus, the real scope of this tragedy has yet to be measured.

The stories told by survivors and witnesses help us understand the human element. I grew up with these memories; they were related to me by my parents, aunts, and friends. They were a significant part of my life, of the formation of my world view.

I also took part in recording some of the testimonies in this book. One of the survivors I spoke with was Hryhorii Harashchenko who contacted the Ukraine 3000 Foundation to share his tragic memories of the famine in his native Chernihiv oblast.[1] A veteran who served as a young Soviet soldier in the terrible Finnish war and then became a true hero on many fronts of the Second World War, he is, without a doubt, one of the most interesting people I have ever had the privilege to meet. His memories of his teenage years, when he personally had to bury many of his schoolmates who perished from hunger, were chilling. We planned to talk for half an hour. Instead, I found it difficult to say good-bye after three.

I wish to thank Valentyna Borysenko, a professor at Taras Shevchenko University, who compiled these testimonies. She is a tireless scholar, a true patriot, and an elegant woman. She also supervised the dissertation of Olesya Stasiuk, Director of Historical Projects at the Ukraine 3000 Foundation.

I also wish to thank the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) for its support in translating this book into English. The Holodomor has always been an important cause for the UNWLA. In 1933, leaders of the organization appealed to the International Red Cross and other institutions to provide assistance to Ukraine's victims of starvation. Today, the UNWLA continues to fight for global recognition of the famine-genocide.

The Ukraine 3000 Foundation that I chair has placed special emphasis on our historical program, Lessons of History: Holodomor 1932–1933, because we strongly believe that a nation that does not understand its past cannot build its future. This is especially important because we see the physical and psychological results of the famine in Ukraine to this day, and because we want to save the memories while there is still time. It is also important that we record the testimonies of all surviving witnesses, so that their children and grandchildren can know the truth, can study and reflect, write and defend dissertations, and

then build research institutes, monuments and museums, write novels, make films, and pass on the truth to their children.

I hope that many more testimonies will be written down before the last witness is gone. This is essential for the victims, for the survivors, for their descendants, for our country, and for the world.

Kateryna Yushchenko, First Lady of Ukraine
Chair of Ukraine 3000 Foundation
Kyiv, Ukraine, 2008

NOTES

1. An administrative-territorial unit roughly equivalent to a province.

Transliteration from Ukrainian

After consulting with numerous experts (in academia and in other professions, including U.S. State Department employees who work with translation and transliteration and who are familiar with the predominant transliteration standards and styles), a decision was made to follow the Library of Congress Modified variant used in the Struk-Kubijovyč *Encyclopedia of Ukraine* (University of Toronto, 1984).
See http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/help.asp#TopPosition.

Although this style diverges from the official LC Modified style on several points, our objective here was to keep the text reader friendly, particularly for those readers who are not familiar with the Ukrainian language. Thus, a widely accepted form of transliteration based on the Library of Congress Modified system has been applied, one which omits diacritical marks and ligatures. The diacritic indicating the soft sign is retained only in the word Rus'. The letters 'є,' 'й,' 'ю,' and 'я' in *initial* positions in proper names is transliterated as 'Ye,' 'Y,' 'Yu,' and 'Ya,' respectively. The '-ий' ending in Ukrainian surnames has been translated as "y". While purists may argue that the "correct" transliteration in this case is "yi", most of the experts we consulted agreed that this transliteration is cumbersome, likely to be more confusing than helpful, distracting, and (as two of our experts pointed out) even unsightly.

Ukrainian	Modified LC
А	A
Б	B
В	V
Г	H
Ґ	G
Д	D
Е	E
Є	Ye/ie
Ж	Zh
З	Z
И	Y
І	I
Ї	Yi
Й	Y/i
К	K
Л	L
М	M

Ukrainian	Modified LC
Н	N
О	O
П	P
Р	R
С	S
Т	T
У	U
Ф	F
Х	Kh
Ц	Ts
Ч	Ch
Ш	Sh
Щ	Shch
Ю	Yu/iu
Я	Ya/ia
ь	[omit]
-ий	-y

Kyiv, Ukraine. St. Michael's Plaza, 2006.

Dedicated to the victims and survivors of the famines and political repressions in Ukraine, on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the genocide against the Ukrainian people.

Destiny, my destiny!
Give back my flowers
Give back my children, my flowers
Give back my stars!
But alas! It is not time to sow!
My grief does not pass.

—Stepan Rudansky, 1859

"Light the Candle," Kyiv, Ukraine. St. Michael's Plaza, 2006.

November 30, 2006
LAW OF UKRAINE No. 376-V
"Concerning the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine."

The Verkhovna Rada[1] of Ukraine resolves that:

in honor of the memory of the millions of our countrymen, the victims of the 1932–1933 Holodomor and its aftermath;

in commemorating all those citizens who lived through this horrific tragedy in the history of the Ukrainian people;

in recognizing our moral obligation to the past and to future generations of Ukrainians, acknowledging the necessity of restoring historical justice, and avowing intolerance toward any expression of any kind of violent coercion in our commonwealth;

in recognizing that the tragedy of the 1932–1933 Holodomor was officially denied by the government of the USSR for many decades;

in condemning the criminal actions perpetrated by the totalitarian regime of the USSR in preparation for the Holodomor, as a consequence of which millions of people were exterminated, and that the social foundation of the Ukrainian people and their ancient traditions, spiritual ethos, and ethnic identity were destroyed;

in empathizing with other peoples of the former USSR victimized by the Holodomor;

in deep appreciation of the solidarity and support of the international community in condemning the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine as reflected in legislative acts in the parliaments of Australia, the Republic of Argentina, the Republic of Georgia, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Italy, Canada, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Poland, the United States of America, the Republic of Hungary, and, in addition, for the dissemination as an official document of the 58th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations a united appeal regarding the seventieth anniversary of the 1932–1933 Holodomor–Great Famine of Ukraine, signed by the Republic of Argentina, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republic

of Byelorussia, the Republic of Benin, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Guatemala, the Republic of Georgia, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Canada, the State of Qatar, the Kyrgyz Republic, the State of Kuwait, the Macedonian Republic, Mongolia, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Nepal, the United Arab Emirates, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Republic of Peru, the South African Republic, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United States of America, the Republic of Sudan, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, the Republic of Uzbekistan, Ukraine, and Jamaica, with the support of Australia, the State of Israel, the Republic of Serbia and Montenegro and twenty-five member states of the European Union;

and following the Recommendations put forth at the parliamentary hearings concerning the commemoration of the victims of the 1932–1933 Holodomor, adopted by the Declaration of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, March 6, 2003, No. 607-IV, and an Address to the People of Ukraine from the members present at the special hearing of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on May 14, 2003 as to perpetuating the memory of the victims of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 and passed with a Resolution by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine May 15, 2003, No. 789-V, in which the Holodomor is recognized as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people, the result of deliberate actions by the totalitarian, repressive Stalinist regime aimed at the mass extermination of segments of the Ukrainian population and other peoples of the former USSR;

in recognizing the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine as a focused and deliberate act of genocide of a people as defined by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, from December 9, 1948, we adopt this law.

Article 1. The 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine is genocide against the Ukrainian people.

Article 2. Public denial of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine constitutes defaming the memory of the millions of victims of the Holodomor, degrades the dignity of the Ukrainian people, and violates the law.

Article 3. Government representatives, both federal and local, are obligated in accordance with their authority to:

participate in formulating and implementing federal policies in matters pertaining to the restoration and preservation of a national heritage of the Ukrainian people;

assist in the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, in educating its citizenry about the history and culture of Ukraine, in spreading awareness about the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine among the citizens of

"Light the Candle," Kyiv, Ukraine. St. Michael's Plaza, 2006.

Ukraine as well as among citizens of the world, and in mandating teaching about the tragic Holodomor as part of the nationwide educational curriculum;

perpetuate the memory of the victims of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine by, among other means, erecting monuments and memorial markers to the victims of the Holodomor in all populated areas;

ensure that academic and community institutions and organizations, as well as individual scholars and citizens conducting research on the issues associated with the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine and its aftermath are provided access, in an established procedure, to archival and other material pertaining to the Holodomor.

Article 4. The government assures suitable and appropriate conditions for conducting research as well as for implementing measures to perpetuate the memory of the victims of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine based on a relevant nationwide program, the funding for which is to be allocated annually from the federal budget of Ukraine.

"Light the Candle," Kyiv, Ukraine. St. Michael's Plaza, 2006.

Article V. Penultimate provisions.

1. This law is effective from the date of its publication.
2. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine is accountable for the following:
   a. defining the status and function of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory as a special representative body of the executive branch in the sphere of restoring and preserving a national memory of the Ukrainian people, and insuring its maintenance and support through allocated funds from the federal budget;
   b. three months from the implementation of this law:
      - proposals must be submitted to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine for review regarding legislative action that corresponds with the law;
      - normative-legal acts must be aligned in accordance with the law;
      - a review and repeal by the executive branch of the government of any existing legislation that does not correspond with the law must be conducted.
   c. relevant issues regarding the construction of a memorial in Kyiv on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine to the victims of the famines in Ukraine must be resolved in the determined order with the participation of the Kyiv City Administration.

Viktor Yushchenko,
President of Ukraine
November 28, 2006

From the official Internet Web site of the President of Ukraine (see www.president.gov.ua/en/*).*

NOTES

1. Ukraine's Parliament.

"The Tree of Life" towel, Poltava Oblast.

The Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933: The Bolshevik Stratagem for the Extermination of the Ukrainian Peasantry

The Ukrainian people have inhabited their native land since ancient times. Learning from the new and unfamiliar while not forgetting or rejecting the ancient wisdom passed down by their ancestors, they lived and farmed across a variegated terrain, from mountains to forests, from plains to forest steppes, finding a variety of natural resources from which they developed numerous trades and crafts throughout the course of their history.

Like all peoples on this earth, Ukrainians have endured many calamities throughout their history, from wars to epidemics, yet they have always managed to renew their strength and advance their traditions and culture, their customs and rituals, their architecture, and their arts. Shaped by diverse environmental conditions and by influences from neighboring cultures, their agricultural tools, folk architecture, clothing, food, kitchen utensils, family and seasonal rituals, folklore, language, and art vary from region to region, but all possess a distinct Ukrainian commonality. The wealth of this cultural structure affirms that the people living on the territory of Ukraine were indigenous to the area; the variety in regional differences, as well as the similarities in basic culture components, attest to a gradual evolution of a distinct civilization of people, a civilization with its own worldview, its own moral and ethical principles, and a distinct conceptual understanding of the world. The Ukrainian people's folkloric-ethnographic treasury, despite plundering and malicious destruction throughout the ages, remains inexhaustible.

The Ukrainian people have long recognized that evil does not foster good and is contrary to human nature. It is for this reason that they created ethical principles of decency indispensable to the moral health of every nation. Perhaps the most vivid account of these norms of behavior is reflected in the famed "*Povchannia*" (Instructions) of Volodymyr Monomakh,[1] which date back to the 11th and 12th centuries and which served as a code of ethics for Ukrainians for centuries to come. Consider this short excerpt:

First of all, never overlook the poor among you . . .
Provide for them and for orphans according to your means.

Protect the widow and do not let a fellow human be destroyed by one in power.
Whoever stands before you, guilty or innocent,
Do not kill or do not will him to be killed;
Even if he is guilty of another's death, do not destroy a Christian soul.

Should it chance that you must kiss the cross[2] *before your brethren*
Or before anyone, ask first of your own heart what it is you will swear and kiss only then.
And upon pledging an oath, do not transgress, for you will lose your soul.

Never let pride rule your heart or mind,
But say: today I am alive, tomorrow I shall die; we are all mortals.
Respect your elders as you would your father; respect the young as brothers.

Remember that the wise Vasyl,[3] *gathering round him youth, instructed:*
In the presence of elders, remain silent, listening to the wise,
Obey elders, with equals and the young seek harmony.
In conversation be sincere; listen and learn.
Express no anger, nor scorn another when you speak, and do not laugh too much.
Keep your eyes downcast and your spirit raised.

Do not be idle in your home, take care of things yourself,
Do not rely upon your thane nor your young servant,
So that your home is not made light of, nor your meal.
Having set out to war, do not be indolent;
Do not depend upon those that you command;
Do not overindulge in food or drink, nor in sweet dreams.
Make ready your guardsmen, and at night, once you have set them on all sides,
Lie down to rest beside your warriors: rise early.
Do not hasten to take off your armor without looking round you warily. Such heedlessness may cause a man to perish unexpectedly.

Beware of lies, drunkenness, and debauchery, for they destroy the body and the soul.
Wherever you travel over your own lands,
Do not allow your servants to do evil or damage villages or farms,
That others may not curse you.
Wherever you go, wherever you should stop, give food and drink to the poor.
And above all, honor your guest, no matter whence he comes:
Whether he be a commoner or nobleman or an ambassador;
If you have no gift with which to honor him, treat him to food and drink,
He, in his further travels, will proclaim you in all lands a good or evil man.

Visit the sick, and follow those who die along their final journey, we are all mortal.
Never pass anyone without a greeting or a kindly word.
And love your wife but do not let her rule you.

Should you forget all this, then look more often at my writings:
You will do well, and I will not be shamed.
Whatever you now know do not forget,
Learn what you do not know—
Just as my father did. Remaining in his home,
He learned five languages and was, for that, esteemed in other lands.

Laziness is the mother of all folly:
The indolent forget what they once knew;
And skills not mastered never will be learned.
While sowing kindness with your hand, do not forget to stand by what it is good.
And may the sun not find you in your bed.
But as my late father and all good men did,
At daybreak, when you see the sun,
Greet the new day joyfully and say
Lord, add years to my years
That I may justify my life with goodness and with honor."[4]

One can only marvel that even in those times moral principles relating to human existence had been formulated into a system of beliefs. This was the bedrock upon which the traditional culture of the Ukrainian people evolved. Worldly and spiritual life provided a broad base for the advancement of learning, literature, and the arts. And it was these principles that shaped the Ukrainian farmer, instilling within him a special love for nature and the soil. And this special relationship is captured in an old proverb that avers, "God's field cannot be left untended," which is to say, the land cannot be left uncultivated.

Throughout the history of the Middle Ages, an epoch of struggles against nomadic marauders, the material and spiritual culture of the Ukrainian people continued to evolve. It was shaped by the ancient culture of Kyivan Rus' Ukraine, by advancements in education and the arts during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise,[5] by the philosophical, moral, and ethical teachings of Volodymyr Monomakh, and by the innate creative genius of the people. The Ukrainian Galician-Volhynian state, which inherited and passed on the traditions of its predecessors, attained notable success in producing chronicles and books. Achievements in architecture and education were particularly significant. In the city of Kholm, magnificent churches were built during the reign of King Danylo Halytsky (1237–1264). "In the cities of Galicia (Peremyshl, Zvenyhorod, Vasylev, Halych), churches were built of white stone [limestone] and ornamental carvings were widely used for building. . . "[6]

In the 14th century, Ukrainian lands gradually fell under the rule of a still young Lithuanian state, which adopted much from Ukrainian culture. It is worth noting that the Ukrainian language continued to be used for conducting official business.

Cultural advancement in Ukraine gradually continued against the backdrop of the national struggle for liberation. After the Union of Lublin (1569),[7] Poland seized Ukrainian lands.

Toward the end of the 15th century, a new force emerged in the history of Ukraine's struggle for freedom. The Cossacks—Ukrainian knights renowned in Europe for their democratic traditions and their feats on the field of battle—arose to defend Ukrainian freedom and faith. While fighting against aggressors, the Cossacks tended to the growth and development of their country. They built churches and schools, established centers for trade and for artisans, and influenced and supported the advancement of education and spiritual culture. Safeguarding ancient traditions and customs, they honored family elders, cared for orphans and widows, and were known for their hospitality.

The Ostrih Academy was founded in 1576 and included among its graduates Petro Konashevych-Sahaidachny, the hetman of the Zaporozhian Cossacks.[8]

The pedagogical methods and standards of the Academy rivaled those of any institution of higher learning in Western Europe and provided the impetus for the founding of the Kyiv Mohyla Academy in 1632.[9]

By the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th century, there was a Cossack army ready to defend the faith and freedom of its homeland. Scholars assert: "Throughout their existence, not only were the Ukrainian Cossacks a formidable military power and the founders of the Ukrainian state system of the late middle ages, they were also an integral part of Ukraine's brilliant cultural complex. Among their many undertakings, it is worth singling out the Cossack's undeniable contributions to the creation of the country's legal system—the emergence and development of Cossack common law and the constitution drafted by Pylyp Orlyk in 1710."[10,11]

In the mid-17th century, when the war of liberation (1648–1654) of the Ukrainian people against the Polish aggressors erupted, Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky led the struggle for national independence. Circumstances forced Ukraine to seek aid from its northern neighbors, and in January 1654, the Pereiaslav Treaty was signed between Ukraine and Russia. According to the terms of the "March Articles" (1654), Moscow pledged to preserve Ukraine's broad autonomy. As events unfolded, however, it was evident that Moscow had no intention of honoring these terms. . . . In the aftermath, Ukraine was divided into two spheres of influence: Right Bank Ukraine and Left Bank Ukraine,[12] with the former falling under the yoke of Poland and the latter under the yoke of Russia.

At the beginning of the 18th Century, during the time of the Great Northern War,[13] attempts were made to cast off the burden of Ukraine's dependence on Russia. Unfortunately, unfavorable circumstances prevented the new Cossack leader, Hetman Ivan Mazepa, from liberating Ukraine, and Russia ruthlessly suppressed Ukraine's aspirations for independence. On orders of Tsar Peter I, the town of Baturyn (which served as the hetman's capital) was destroyed. ". . . Muscovite forces staged a brutal massacre, annihilating not only the Cossacks but the entire civilian population of the town, including infants."[14]

From that point onward, Russia's offensive against Ukraine's autonomy intensified. Under a decree issued by Empress Catherine II in 1764, the hetman state of Ukraine was liquidated and administrative rule over Ukraine was transferred to an entity named the "Little Russian Collegium," with Catherine's appointed viceroy, General Petr Rumiantsov, as its head.

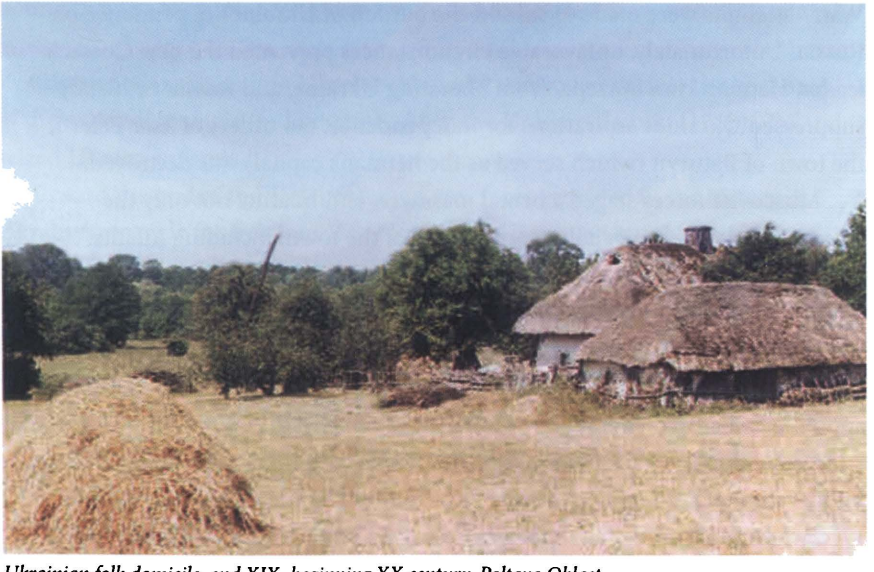
Despite these setbacks, the Ukrainian people continued their struggle for the preservation of autonomy. The final blow to these aspirations was delivered in 1775 when the Zaporizhian Sich was destroyed on the orders of Catherine II. Subsequently, Russia legalized serfdom in Ukraine.

Nonetheless, the cultural achievements and democratic traditions that had emerged during the Cossack era became the foundation for Ukraine's continuing struggles for national liberation, cultural rebirth, and a renewal of national identity.

Many foreign (especially British) travelers and diplomats left written accounts about the Ukraine of the latter half of the 18th century. They described Ukraine as a country with a well-developed and advanced level of agriculture and husbandry.

After his travels to Ukraine in 1769–1770 and in 1772, Joseph Marshall, an Englishman, wrote: "The current generation of Ukrainians is a moral and well-mannered people; the Ukrainian peasants are the finest husbandmen in all of Russia, and Ukraine, because of its natural wealth, is the most important province of Russia . . . " A diplomat, Marshall was clearly impressed with the agricultural culture he witnessed in Ukraine . . . "I have yet to see a country that so much resembles the finest counties of England as I have seen in Ukraine."[15]

The end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century was a rather complex period in the history of Ukraine. The changes occurring in Eastern Europe subjected Ukrainian ethnic territory to three partitions by Poland (1772–1793) and the further division of Ukrainian lands by two neighboring empires. Galicia, part of Volhynia (Volyn), western Podillia, and Bukovyna were ceded to the Austrian Empire. The Russian Empire annexed parts of Right Bank Ukraine, including the Kyiv region and the greater part of Volhynia and Podillia.



Ukrainian folk domicile, end XIX–beginning XX century, Poltava Oblast.

Imperial oppression in Ukraine gave rise to active opposition and strengthened the aspirations of the descendants of the Cossacks for a national rebirth. The Russian Empire countered with renewed repressive tactics, applying social and political pressure. From 1845 to 1848 alone, fifty-five peasant uprisings erupted in Right Bank Ukraine.

The longing for freedom endured, and a legion of giants of the spirit emerged to sustain it during the 19th century: Taras Shevchenko, Panteleimon Kulish, Mykhailo Maksymovych, Mykola Kostomarov, and later—Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Drahomanov and Lesia Ukrainka, all of whom awakened and inspired the people to fight for national and social liberation.[16] Hoping to curtail the influence of these individuals, the tsarist regime of Russia issued the Valuiev Circular (1863) and the Ems Ukase (1876),[17] banning the publication of Ukrainian-language books and prohibiting the use of the Ukrainian language in educational institutions, all of which led to the arrest and imprisonment of Ukrainian civic leaders, poets, and scientists.

The greatest challenge for Ukraine was the First World War. Western Ukraine, in particular, suffered terribly.

While The Russian Empire was embroiled in a revolution, a newly created political entity, the Ukrainian Central Rada[18] issued its Third Universal on November 20, 1917, proclaiming the Ukrainian National Republic (UNR). On 22 January 1918, the Rada proclaimed the Fourth Universal, declaring the UNR a free and sovereign state of the Ukrainian people.

Rye stacks, Ukraine.

Unfortunately, Bolshevik forces commanded by M. Muraviev occupied Kyiv on February 8–9, 1918. Anyone caught speaking Ukrainian in the streets was shot. In 1919, the Bolsheviks instituted a policy of "militant communism," which brought Ukraine's agricultural economy to complete ruin. With the aid of special squads of poor peasants, the authorities confiscated all provisions from helpless villagers.

A drought in southern Ukraine, coupled with excessive taxes, brought on a great famine in 1921. As one scholar noted, "Peasants, exhausted with hunger and persecution at the hands of the squadrons sent to seize their provisions, often sought a way out through insurrection."[19] The same scholar continues: "In its documents, the GPU[20] listed the characteristics of life in Ukraine at the height of the famine in 1921–1923 as total apathy, a complete lack of initiative, a state of readiness among the populace to accept 'counterrevolutionary' propaganda, accompanied by growing distrust and hatred toward the Soviet government and communists in general . . . the famine itself was one of the links in the suppression of any independent thinking and a way of introducing a totalitarian regime in Ukraine."[21]

In studying archival materials, historians have uncovered a number of documented facts attesting to the brutal history of the time. Among these, for example is a telegram (February 1922) from Captain V. Quisling, a representative of the relief organization Nansen.[22] An eyewitness of the famine of 1921–1923, Quisling attested that close to seven million people in Ukraine were starving to death, in the full, horrible meaning of the term. "It is a horrifying realization that in spite of drought, there was grain in Ukraine. It was snatched out of the mouths of the starving peasant, the laborer, and their children, and shipped out beyond the borders of the land."[23]

Bolshevik policies reached levels of unprecedented brutality during the seizure of private property from the wealthier Ukrainian peasants. Possessions acquired with the earnings of hard work, houses and farm buildings, were forcibly confiscated from the most industrious, the brightest, the most diligent. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian families were targeted for destruction in accordance with a Politburo Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) resolution. The document, "Regarding Measures for the Liquidation of Kulak[24] Farms in Regions under Total Collectivization," was dated January 30, 1930 and designated "top secret."[25] How many of these people perished in Siberia, beyond the Urals, in Bolshevik prison camps! Children were separated from their parents, and only later, were some of them placed in orphanages. Most died in the streets, for it was strictly forbidden to save the children of kurkuls. Some survived with the surreptitious help of ordinary

people. Older children were made to renounce their parents as enemies of the state. And those who did so were extolled as heroes.

In response to the Bolshevik terror, the political struggle for the creation of an independent Ukrainian state intensified. It spilled over into armed uprisings, the so called "Women's Riots," as peasant women defended their right to own a cow or other small animals and poultry. "In the Chernihiv and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts regular troops were used to quell armed uprisings."[26]

For Ukrainians, the twentieth century was genocidal both in the physical sense and in the cultural sense. After years of silence about the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine and after the tragedy being written off as the outcome of "provision procurement difficulties," a group of historians from the Institute of Ukrainian History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, after studying copious documented testimonies, concluded that "the tragedy of the famine of 1932–1933 in the Ukrainian SSR [Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic] is the most terrifying page in the history of the Ukrainian people, a horrible consequence of the politics of the totalitarian regime of the Soviet Union. Historians and political scientists, especially those from foreign countries, characterize the famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as 'artificial'—that is, manmade. The term 'artificial,' though a somewhat ambiguous catch-phrase used for the purposes of describing the events of the period, is accurate, inasmuch as it points out the absence of significant natural causes for the famine and underscores that it was a deliberate terrorist action, cynically implemented by the Stalinist regime in Ukraine."[27]

Thresher under the supervision of machinist M. L. Pylay, 1930.

A historic event that reinforced this appraisal occurred in November 2006, when the Ukrainian Parliament, moving beyond assessments of public relations and publicity, accorded the famine legal recognition and adopted a law officially acknowledging the famine of 1932–1933 as genocide. The Symonenkivsky-Tsybenivsky Communist Brotherhood did not vote at the session of the Parliament, a fact that rouses indignation and vigilance against those who are capable of creating a similar crime against the Ukrainian people.

Among those who have studied the world's greatest crime committed by authorities against peace loving citizens and innocent peasants, few would disagree with S. V. Kulchytsky, who asserted in 1993: "From my own experience, I can say that the information connected with the events of the famine, cannot but lead to the reexamination of the whole of history of the 20th century. As painful as this process of reevaluation might be, it would take away the false dogma internalized since childhood..."[28]

Today, the historiography of the study of the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine comprises a great body of published work, including many official documents that reveal the focused, deliberate Bolshevik policies aimed at the destruction of the Ukrainian people. Close to forty thousand oral testimonies have been collected, testimonies of people who lived through the

Harvest. Kamianka village, Chyhyryn Region (now Cherkasy Oblast). Photograph of July 12, 1931. From the Scientific archive of manuscripts and photography of the M. Ryl's'kyi Institute of Art Studies, Folklore and Ethnology.

horrific events and who even today are seized with horror by those memories. The veracity of these recollections has been challenged. But it is impossible to explain away the indisputable fact that thousands of witnesses of the genocide from various regions in Ukraine all confirm this: Everything was confiscated, not only grain, but all other stores of food (beans, peas, vegetables). Household utensils and clothing were taken away to prevent people from trading those items for food. The authorities broke and confiscated millstones and mortars for grinding up tree bark, chaff, cornhusks, seeds from weeds, and the like. Stalks from reeds growing in the marshes were destroyed and burned so that people could not use the edible stem near the root for nourishment. Carbolic acid was poured over animals that had died at the collective farms, dogs and cats were shot, anything that could potentially be a source of food was laid to waste.

Statistical evidence corroborates the eyewitness accounts of the horror of the famine: "On December 28, 1933, the deputy NARKOM[29] of foreign trade in the USSR, M. Frumkin, demanded from the people's commissar of domestic trade of the Ukrainian SSR in the city of Kompel that the plan for impounding and delivering dogs and cats be precisely executed. In 1931, 731,254 dogs and 670,450 cats were caught; in 1932, 726,157 dogs and 696,603 cats; and eleven months later, in 1933, 647,260 dogs and 938,027 cats."[30]

According to eyewitnesses, officials would stand on a hilltop, looking for any smoke rising from chimneys of the houses below. Smoke meant that something was being cooked. They would then go and dump what passed for food into the street, "food" prepared from weeds, wild grasses, and the like. The punishment for collecting wheat ears was beating or imprisonment, and the Bolsheviks prohibited Ukrainians from leaving their starving, ravaged villages. There is, thus, little question that the 1932–1933 famine in Ukraine was an artificial famine. All of the unprecedented brutality was aimed at depriving the Ukrainian peasants of any hope of survival.

One definition of genocide can be found in Article II of The Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which was unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1948. The article defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such." The term "destroy" was interpreted to include the following: a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; e) forcible removal of children from that group

for the purpose of surrendering them to another group.[31] All of these measures were used against Ukrainian peasants in 1932 and 1933. Many of the testimonies confirm that the crimes were directed at a single ethnic group, the Ukrainians: "It was a dreadful famine! The famine was created; there was no reason for anyone to starve. The village of Bondarievo, in Russia, is not far from us, only 7 kilometers from Hannusivka (Luhansk oblast), and that's where mothers took their bedcovers, towels, linens . . . everything that was left was taken there and traded. For this, they were given a small piece of bread. . . . There was no hunger in Russia . . . "[32]

A veteran of World War II, Colonel Hryhorii Harashchenko, originally from Polissia, corroborates, "There was a village near ours—Zhelonia, in Byelorussia. My mother's sister got married there. There was no famine there, and she helped us survive. And just a kilometer away, in the Ukrainian village of Oleksiivka, almost everyone died from starvation." Thousands of similar examples can be cited. There are thousands of accounts describing how grain confiscated from the peasants was dumped in piles in the fields because the granaries were filled to capacity. The grain rotted, but peasants were forbidden to take it. People were shot for trying to do so.

For obvious reasons, research into the causes of the famine in Ukraine was not conducted during Soviet times. During the Holodomor years, the Bolshevik regime carefully concealed information, and anyone caught discussing the famine was punished. Yet even then, in 1932, people in Western Ukraine knew about the horrific events in Eastern Ukraine, and articles about the famine were published in newspapers in Galicia. *Nova Zoria* (New Star), a newspaper in Lviv, reported that people who lived on the other side of the Zbruch River were being annihilated. "Those trying to escape to this side [of the Zbruch River] collapse, dead, at the border. Only in rare instances do people make it across, as living skeletons."[33]

In September 1933, the head of the Ukrainian National Women's League in Lviv, the well-known civic activist Milena Rudnytska, petitioned Ukrainian "women of the civilized world" to take heed and learn about the genocide of Ukrainians:

> *At this very moment Ukrainian people of the so-called Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic are living through indescribable misery, and we, Ukrainian women of Galicia, appeal to you, our Dispersed Sisters, for support and aid! Ukraine is starving to death! This is not a frivolous, exaggerated phrase! Despite all efforts of the Bolshevik government to conceal the truth from the world, this truth is screaming in a terrifying*

voice across every border: the people of the fertile lands of Ukraine, the former breadbasket of Europe, struggle in the convulsions of death by starvation!

Here is a handful of facts from two regions in central Ukraine, from the Kolyniv and Koziatyn districts [Vinnytsia oblast. V. Borysenko]: Last winter, 2,000 of the 3,300 people living in the village of Zalyvanshchyna died of starvation and exhaustion; in the village of Kumanivka, 1,200 out of a population of 3,000 starved; in the village of Hubyntsi, 800 of 1,600 perished; in the village of Saransk, 700 of 1,500; in the town of Samhorodok, 800 of 3,000 died. This information comes from a native of this region—an individual held in high esteem among us can vouch for the accuracy of these figures.

Thousands of letters with prayers for help, for rescue from a death by starvation have been received by many families of the intelligentsia as well as by families of villagers, all clearly demonstrating that it is not merely one segment of society, not only one region, but the entire population over the wide expanse of Soviet Ukraine that is starving.[34]

Researchers corroborate that just prior to the famine years, "the USSR, in its attempt to capture a trade monopoly with cheap products, and with little consideration for the hard work of the peasant, dumped grain onto the world market. Official statistics convincingly support this claim. For example, grain exports from the USSR in 1930 constituted 4,764,323 tons . . . 5,055,688 tons in 1931. The delivery of grain for export continued at an accelerated pace into the beginning of 1932."[35]

In May of 1933, when Ukrainians were dying on a massive scale, Sergio Gradenigo, the Italian Consul posted to the city of Kharkiv, sent a diplomatic dispatch to Rome on the subject of the Bolsheviks' plans for annihilating Ukrainians:

The government in Moscow prepared this in advance with brutal requisitions, creating conditions that made survival in Ukrainian villages, in the Kuban, and in the mid-Volga region impossible . . . It is clear that in areas where a national consciousness is awakening among the Ukrainian people, one with the potential of raising future political complications, strengthening the Soviet empire would be easier if the population were mostly Russian . . .

The objective . . . undoubtedly, was to resolve the Ukrainian problem in the span of several months by sacrificing the lives of ten to fifteen

million people. Do not assume that this number is exaggerated. I thought that it would be surpassed and believe that it has already been reached. It is a great tragedy that is mowing down millions of people and is destroying the children of Ukraine, the Kuban, and the mid-Volga regions. Trustworthy professionals who have had the opportunity to travel to other areas of the region unanimously maintain that these catastrophic events have been exclusively confined to Ukraine, the Kuban, and the mid-Volga region. . . .

I conclude: The current tragedy will lead to the colonization of Ukraine by Russia. As a result, the ethnic make-up of Ukraine will be transformed, and, possibly in the very near future, it will be impossible to speak of Ukraine or of the Ukrainian problem, because Ukraine will truly become a Russian country.[36]

Dmytro Solovei, one of the first Ukrainian immigrants [to the United States] to witness these tragic events, began writing about the Ukrainian genocide of 1932–1933. Born in 1888 in the village of Sribnyi, Prylutsk district, Poltava oblast (today Chernihiv oblast), Solovei wrote *Paths to Golgotha. The Destruction of Millions of People in Ukraine Through Terror and Artificial Famine During the Years 1932–1933,* which was published in the United States in 1952. In this work, Solovei thoroughly documents and describes the horrors of the famine of 1933, providing names of people who died in agony of starvation. It is only recently that these personal recollections about the Famine-Genocide have appeared in print in Ukraine, thanks to the efforts of historians Yurii Shapoval and Oleksander Yurenko.[37]

In 1984, James Mace, a true citizen of the world . . . a great American with Cherokee Indian ancestors, began working on the project "Eyewitness Accounts of the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine: An Oral History." Dr. Mace was well aware that this method of historical research is complicated and not always exact or perfect. But scholars have concluded that "oral history is a valuable source, a kind of an oral memoir of people who customarily do not leave memoirs."[38] Indeed, oral history as a historic methodology acquires particular significance under conditions of totalitarianism, when authentic information is suppressed and falsified.

For his oral history project, James Mace treated each witness as a unique historical source with a wealth of information. In 1986, through the initiative of the Ukrainian diaspora, a commission consisting of members of the U.S. Congress and other representatives of the U.S. government was created in the United States for the purpose of investigating the events of 1932–1933

in Ukraine. James Mace was appointed Executive Director of this commission, and during the course of this work, he compiled three volumes of eyewitness testimonies about the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine. These volumes were published in 1990 in Washington, D.C. Testimonies recorded on cassette [for this project] are now preserved at the National Archives of the United States as well as in the archives of the Vasyl Stus All-Ukrainian Association Memorial.[39] James Mace cried as he listened to those testimonies.

In all, over seventy works written by this great man on the subject of the Famine-Genocide have been published in Ukraine and elsewhere. Reflecting upon the discussions swirling around facts and falsifications pertaining to those horrific times, James Mace proclaimed: "I consider this society to be post-genocidal. It is a deeply traumatized, wounded organism trying with all its might to forget the horrors of the past."[40]

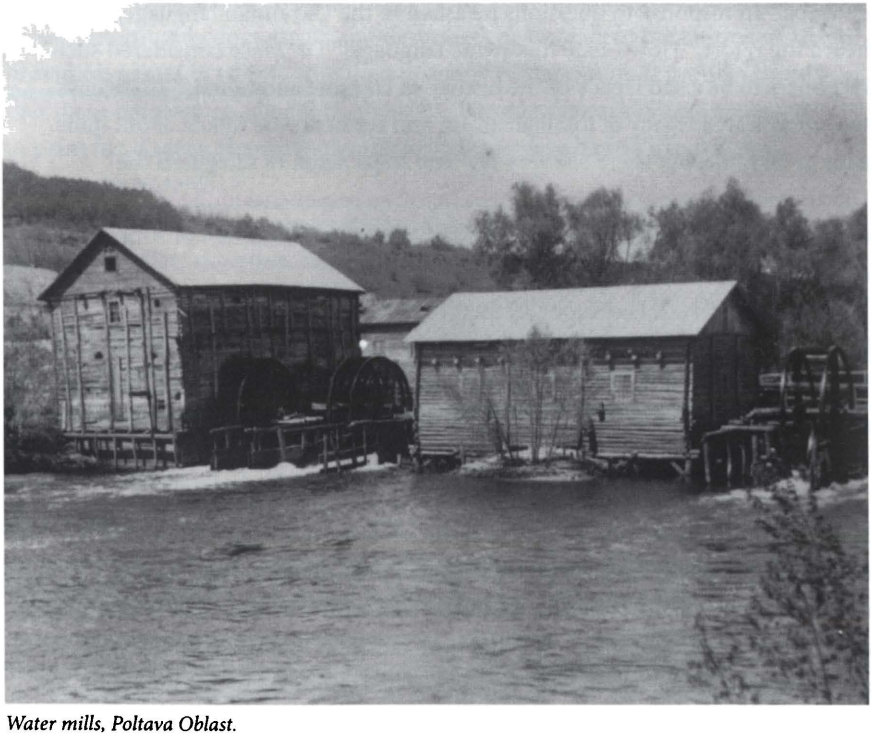
From 1993, while working at various academic institutions in Ukraine and later as a professor at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, James Mace thought at great length about the young Ukrainian state and how it might achieve stability. During this time, he was frequently reproached for speaking in Ukrainian. In stores or at the post office people would say [in Russian]: "Speak like a human being," or "You've been in Kyiv so many years, it's time for you to be civilized." In response to questions he asked in the Ukrainian language, he heard the retort: "How I hate this swine language!" Dr. Mace considered such responses to be a sad legacy of the history of Ukraine and noted, "These days, the complicated legacy of totalitarianism and genocide are talked about quite a bit in Ukraine, but there are very few real steps taken to safeguard the Ukrainian language and culture."[41] His heart, so responsive to the suffering of others, stopped beating on May 3, 2004. The great Ukrainian of American descent is buried in Kyiv.

While at Harvard University in the 1980s, James Mace assisted British historian Robert Conquest with his work on the book *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine,* published at Oxford in 1986. Reputable scholars everywhere were greatly impressed with the book. In 1993, *Harvest of Sorrow* was finally published in Ukrainian by the publishing house Lybid.

Like Dr. Mace, Robert Conquest also attributed great significance to oral history. "The most significant aspect about such recollections," Conquest observed, "especially those from the villagers themselves, is their lack of embellishment, their objectivity, and their conformity to fact. That is why they deserve to be fully trusted. . . . We can now ascertain that these unflinching eyewitness accounts, which were ignored or lied about for such a long time, are true and valid.[42]

The intentional destruction of Ukrainian peasants began in 1931, but the theory that the great famine was created to punish Ukrainians for being unwilling to collectivize their farms is not altogether correct. The peasants understood that they had nowhere to hide. They joined the collective farms in 1930–1931 not of their own free will but because they were forced to join. By August 1932, 70 percent of Ukrainian peasants were working on collective farms compared with 59.3 percent of the peasants in Russia.[43] Why then, was it necessary to starve out the collective farmers? Because the issue was not with collective farms—it was with Ukrainians as an ethnic group. It was for this reason that the intelligentsia was destroyed first, as were Ukrainian communists and even the activists who supported the collective-farm movement and who were often members of the administration.

Holodomor scholars cite the following documented information: "By January 1, 1932, in 146 districts in the Ukrainian SSR (at that time there were only 484 districts) 250 teams of collective farm administrations were dissolved, 355 people were dismissed from their jobs, and 345 were put on trial for disrupting grain procurement. In 1931 and the first half of 1932, 80 percent of the secretaries of district committees in Ukraine who were members of the



Water mills, Poltava Oblast.

communist party"[44] and who resisted the politics of starvation were replaced. Recently uncovered classified archives of the Security Service of Ukraine confirm that as late as 1931 numerous heads of collective farms, village activists, and former supporters of Petliura[45] were arrested.

On November 22, 1932, the head of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, S. Redens, sent a memorandum to the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine, S. Kosior, regarding plans for conducting massive repressive operations in villages. As noted in the document:

> *. . . the main objective of the operation is to expose counterrevolutionary centers that organize sabotage, such as disrupting grain procurement, and engage in other agro-political activities. In connection with this, the initial plan is to target for liquidation, throughout Ukraine, 436 groups of agitators, including 2,117 group leaders, along with 1,308 additional known counterrevolutionaries. This action, directed at these 3,425 individuals who work at all levels, encompasses 243 regions in Ukraine. It is important to note that this is merely the groundwork for actions on a greater scale to be directed at Ukrainian and village counterrevolution.*[46]

Data from different regions in Ukraine are cited in the document. Exact numbers are provided about the liquidation of well-to-do peasants, followers of Petliura, and those considered to be from "socially foreign environments." The documents make it clear that the starving populace tried to resist. Communiqués from the Kharkiv oblast noted that "a 'hunger march' under a black flag moving towards the Raiispolkom [Obolonskyi district.-V.B] was organized by members of an activist group. Six men are to be executed."[47]

Most of those targeted for execution were representatives of village soviets[48] and heads of collective farms. By inflicting the highest degree of punishment on the dissenting leaders, party officials succeeded in sowing an animal-like fear among those who replaced them.

Some of those who had believed almost religiously in the idea of building a better future and had joined the Komsomol[49] and the Communist Party in 1931–1932 began to see the light, and many of them left the party. Their reward for this was capital punishment. By 1931, because of excessive grain requisitioning, Ukrainian peasants were already starving. Numerous statements from collective farm leaders attest to this.

One example of this is from the Nyzhnio-Sirohoz district of Dnipropetrovsk oblast where, at a meeting convened for the adoption of a grain-procurement plan, a secretary of the party center named Yermak stepped forward and

declared: "We will not support the plan for grain procurement because it is so enormous in scope that it cannot be fulfilled, and to attempt it and leave the people hungry again is criminal. I would sooner surrender my party card than condemn collective farmers to starvation through deception." Fifteen members of the party supported the party secretary's assessment.[50]

Such examples are typical for all the oblasts and districts in Ukraine. As early as 1931, the so-called "opportunists" reported that collective farmers were already suffering, many of them coming to work swollen with hunger. The resistance to proposed increases in grain collection quotas by numerous local directors is discussed in the November 20, 1932 summary account of the GPU of the Ukrainian SRR, which notes the mood and opposition of party and Komsomol members toward grain-procurement policies.

Party policy, in fact, was directed at destroying collective farms as well as collective farmers. In 1931, many collective farm directors were already saying that there were no seeds to sow and no draft animals—without forage, livestock and horses were dying on a massive scale. Party documents that tracked conservative leanings contain many recorded declarations along those lines. "By fulfilling grain requisitions in the previous year [1931], we brought the district to such a state that most of the horses died; if we try to fulfill the plan this year, the rest of them will die."[51]

Many party members in the Ukrainian villages turned in their party cards in 1932, because they understood the futility of attempting to fulfill the grain collection quota and realized that fulfilling the plan would doom the collective farmers to death by starvation.

Documents from the Security Service of Ukraine confirm that Ukrainian collective farmers were already starving in 1931. The director of the state farm "Bolshevik" in Novoukrainskyi district informed his workers: "This year the plan for grain procurement is unrealistic, both for the district and for the collective farm. To fulfill the plan we would have to surrender all of the grain, the farmers of the collective will go hungry again, and the horses will once again begin to die. The Soviet government has created conditions in which it is impossible to work."[52] Understandably, those who expressed such opinions were severely punished. It is no accident that the names of these people are recorded in the GPU archives as individuals who resisted grain collection.

In the fall of 1932, the authorities demanded that all grain be handed over. The response from party leaders in Ukrainian villages was almost unanimous: They all spoke of the disintegration of the collective farms, the lack of food, hunger, and dying cattle, and they all proclaimed their readiness to turn in their party cards rather than condemn the peasants to death by starvation. Such

insubordination was rooted out by execution, and this extreme measure had cascading effects and explained to some degree the inhumane cruelty with which the peasants were treated when the last bits of food were taken from them. The grain-collection activists who succeeded those who were executed no longer acted from ideological conviction; they acted from fear that they would suffer a similar fate or starve to death.

Thus, it is impossible to disagree with the assertions of scholar Stanislav Kulchytsky, who observed: "Searches in every village were conducted by members of the committees for poor peasants under the direction of CHEKA agents[53] and the police. The peasants involved in these searches cannot be condemned; they wanted to eat. It is just as impossible to judge those who were subjected to the searches and who later ate their children or their parents.

Windmill (for grinding grain), beginning of the XX century.

Human psychology does not function rationally when human physiology is stretched past its limits.[54]

Oral testimonies attest to the conviction of people who believed that divine justice does not fail to punish those who commit such sins against their neighbors. Witnesses describe the tragic fate that befell the "activists-in-tow" and members of their families: suicide, crippling, sudden death, etc. Those local [collective farm] administrators who lost their senses and were afraid to help even their own parents and who took the last bits of food from their neighbors have already been punished. It is worth noting that there were brave and humane souls among those village activists. Forced to extort grain, they pretended not to see the handful of grain hidden in the stove, and they shared what little they could with their neighbors. It is thanks to them that some of the peasants survived. Indeed, those credited with saving others were in the majority.

Another very important aspect of the eyewitness testimonies that has not been adequately reflected in official documents is that they include descriptions of the merciless exploitation of child labor. In the spring of 1933, when the government realized that there would soon be no one left to work at the collective farms, soup kitchens were set up on the grounds, and those who labored in the field were given a ration of hot food. Thus, mothers brought their eight-year-old children to work with them so that they could receive a ladle of collective farm slop. Some of those who worked alongside their parents for a piece of bread survived, and yesterday's children have become today's eyewitness, relating experiences that are etched in the memories forever.

Children aged eight to twelve or thirteen worked at the collective farm, usually with their parents, weeding and hoeing beets. But from the age of thirteen, they worked independently, often at demanding tasks, as milkmaids, swineherds, herdsmen, and stable hands—performing the same work as adults in the fields for the so-called "labor days" for a piece of bread once a day. The last of the independent farmers joined the collective farms at that time, just to get that daily ladle of soup.

Both the oral histories and the documents confirm that children suffered the most during the Famine-Genocide. They were helpless and could not defend themselves against lawless authorities and perpetrators of all sorts of evil who singled out the weak for abuse. Historians confirm: "In children's institutions, starvation set in during the spring of 1931. That was when the NARKOMOS[55] of the Ukrainian SSR learned that in the 180 districts that did not fulfill the grain-collection plan, children's institutions were removed from the list of centralized food deliveries."[56] Thus, many children's shelters were left without

food. The children ran away in droves, inflating the already sizeable population of homeless people. Feeble and exhausted, bloated with hunger, the children simply wandered about. They died in villages and along roads to towns where they had hoped to find salvation.

In the spring of 1932, D. K. Orlenko, a resident of the city of Nyzhniodniprovsk, wrote to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik): ". . . I have studied Marxism-Leninism, and nowhere in these teachings have I found that children are to be starved. They are, after all, innocent . . ."[57]

Numerous documents and oral accounts note the enormous mortality rate among children. Often, in families with many children, only one survived. Researchers confirm that "Preliminary calculations suggest that the mortality rate among children was 50 percent or higher compared with deaths in the general population of those perishing from starvation in Ukraine. In September 1933, at the start of the school year, the rate of absenteeism was significant: 52 percent in the Oster district of the Chernihiv oblast; 70 percent in Varvinskyi district; 77 percent in Berezansk; 74 percent in Koropsk; and 54 percent in Malo-Divytskyi."[58]

Research from Kharkiv, Poltava, and Sumy has brought to light additional sad statistics: "Unable to withstand the torture of starvation, small children were the first to die. In many families they died one after the other, or all together, at the same time. At the district administrative center in Bohodukhiv, three of Maksym Koval's children died in the span of a single month. In Yevhen Bondarenko's family, merciless death claimed five-year-old Tania in February; ten-year-old Fedir in April. The last two children, six-year-old Kostia and eight-year-old Mariika, perished in May. Panas Koval lost four of his children in April and May (the youngest was six months old and the oldest was eight years old)."[59]

By 1931, the policy of *dekurkulization* (i.e., the planned destruction of the more successful farmers throughout 1929–1930), coupled with grain extortion, the destruction of cattle and draft animals, and the repressions targeting collective farm administrators who resisted, were all aspects of a global objective—the destruction of Ukraine through eradication of the embodiment of Ukraine: the peasants who lived in Ukrainian villages. And even in those days, people not blinded by hypocritical and deceptive propaganda understood the barbaric intentions of those in power.

In 1933, an unidentified writer, who clearly recognized the true intent of Stalin's national politics, wrote in a letter sent from Poltava: "The physical destruction of the Ukrainian nation, the depletion of its material and spiritual resources is one of the key objectives of the unlawful agenda of Bolshevik centralism."[60]

Oral history also corroborates documented evidence on the subject of the seizure of all family valuables, including gold, pots and pans, jewelry, and the like. Witnesses of the Famine-Genocide relate that individual families survived only because they were able to sell or barter gold crosses and women's jewelry for food. In farming villages, few people had gold. But in villages where craftsmanship was a tradition, people were not penniless. In the village of Litky in the Brovary district, for example, peasants owned little land, but nearly every family had a skilled craftsman, and those who made a living as tanners, weavers, coopers, embroiderers, or shoemakers became targets of night searches—not for grain but for gold. At Litky, as well as in neighboring villages, armed agents conducted "golden nights"—thorough night searches to ferret out gold coins. Searching, even in babies' cradles, they beat people if they suspected there was gold. All belongings, including family heirlooms, money, and grain, were forcibly taken.

Researchers have unearthed and made public several documents verifying that the All-Union Association for Trade with Foreigners or *Torgsin* (established in the summer of 1930 as part of the division of foreign trade, with the objective of providing special services to foreign tourists) had opened 50 stores in 36 cities in Ukraine during the course of 1931–1932. These stores were established for the sole purpose of dispossessing the peasants of their gold, which explained why they were of such vital interest to the government. By October 1933, there were 263 similar stores with a network of smaller shops, points of deposit, and affiliated branches . . .

"The entire Torgsin system resembled a ghastly auction, on the scales of which life and death were being weighed. A few grams of gold from a cross or a wedding band was not enough to provide adequate food for a peasant family that had already been starving for twenty months."[61] Witnesses tell of instances when gold was simply taken from a peasant who was then shot to death on the spot.

Journalists were the first to join efforts in collecting eyewitness accounts about the Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933. On July 3, 1988, members of the Ukrainian Writers' Union resolved to compile the documented accounts under the title *1933: The Famine. A National Memorial Book.* Author Volodymyr Maniak and his wife, journalist Lidia Kovalenko, undertook this difficult project. These two individuals accomplished a great feat: They collected 6,000 oral testimonies, a thousand of which were published with the dedication "In memory of the millions of Ukrainian peasants who perished from starvation brought about by Stalin's totalitarianism in 1932–1933; in memory of the thousands of Ukrainian villages and farmsteads that vanished from the face of the earth following the greatest tragedy of the twentieth century."[62]

Today, numerous people are recording the oral accounts of survivors of the Famine-Genocide, and almost every oblast and district in Ukraine has published collections of narratives about the famine. The Association of Researchers of the Famines in Ukraine, members of the Ukrainian State Historical Educational Society Memorial, scholars from the Institute of Ukrainian History National Academy of Sciences (NAS), students from the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, civic organizations such as Meest, and many other institutions of higher learning in Ukraine have taken part in this endeavor. After examining the oral testimonies and archival documents, researchers—especially those from Kharkiv—have confirmed that an act of genocide was committed on the territory of Kharkiv oblast in the years 1932–1933. They note, in particular, that every third resident in villages of this oblast starved to death. Direct losses of population during the years of the Famine-Genocide in just this one oblast reached at least 1.5 million.[63] Most of those who died were collective farmers. It is impossible to read *The Center of Despair*, the book in which the accounts of horrific suffering of adults and children are recorded, without pain and tears.

Other accounts include the observations of one of a number of women-activists from Russia who had been dispatched to Ukraine for the purpose of strengthening collective farms and who later recounted the following:

> *The snow melted. People began to swell up. Their faces became bloated, their legs resembled pillows, and their stomachs were engorged with water. And the peasant children . . . . All alike: their heads like heavy kernels, their necks skinny as a stork's, every bone movement visible beneath the skin on their arms and legs, the skin itself like yellow gauze stretched over their skeletons. And the faces of those children were old, exhausted, as if they had already lived on this earth for seventy years. And their eyes, Lord!*
>
> *A solid wave of deaths swept across the village. First the children died, then the old and then the middle aged. At first they were buried, and then the burials stopped. The dead lay in the streets, in courtyards, and those who died last were left, dead, in their houses. Everything was still, silent. The village was dead. Who died last, I don't know. We—those who worked in the administration—were taken to the city."*[64]

These oral testimonies are substantiated by archival documents. And those who still have doubts about the veracity of the oral history have only to consider a single document, a letter from Z. Katsnelson, the chief of the Kharkiv oblast's department of the GPU. Dated June 5, 1933, and written to V. Balytsky, the head of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, it bears witness to the spread of the famine:

TO THE HEAD OF THE GPU OF THE Ukrainian SSR,
COMRADE BALYTSKY
Personal Letter

The situation with provisions in the districts of Kharkiv oblast, rather difficult before, has recently become critical. As a result , we are seeing a marked increase in the flow of the homeless, the neglected, and the destitute into the City of Kharkiv. During the months of January and February alone, we found the following:

Adult homeless	*257 persons*
Sick and crippled	*15 persons*
Children and adolescents	*373 persons*
TOTAL	*645 persons*

Similarly, from March to April:

Adult homeless	*2,560 persons*
Sick and crippled	*113 persons*
Children and adolescents	*1,806 persons*
TOTAL	*4,476 persons*

And in the month of May:

Adult homeless	*4,439 persons*
Sick and crippled	*585 persons*
Children and adolescents	*6,378 persons*
TOTAL	*11,402 persons*

And during the first three days of June:

Adult homeless	*313 persons*
Sick and crippled	*157 persons*
Children and adolescents	*606 persons*
TOTAL	*1,077 persons*

All of this is in the city alone and does not take into account the train stations, where children are removed by the committee headed by Comrade Bronevoi, not by the police. The number of those picked up is an estimated 10,000 persons.

Along with this there has been a sharp increase in the number of bodies found and picked up in the streets of the City of Kharkiv, peasants who died of starvation. There were 431 bodies picked up during the month of February, 689 bodies through the month of March, and 477 through the month of April. Current numbers for month of May are estimated at:

First ten days	*182 bodies*
Second ten days	*300 bodies*
Third ten days	*510 bodies*
TOTAL	*992 bodies*

During the first three days of June, 196 bodies were found.

Conditions in the villages are no better. The problem with provision procurement grows worse each day, in all populated areas. The following data illustrate this:

As of March 1, of 64 districts in the oblast, 21 have suffered from provision procurement difficulty . . .

As of April 1	*35 districts of 225 population centers*
As of May 1	*42 districts of 532 population centers*
As of June 1	*59 districts of 585 population centers*

The following data shows the extent to which districts have been affected by provision procurement difficulties:

Worst affected districts	*23 of 296 population centers*
Less affected districts	*17 of 78 population centers*
Least affected districts	*18 of 107 population centers*

Those districts most severely affected by provision procurement difficulties are Khorolsk, Chutovsk, Novo-Heorhievsk, Poltava, Kremenchuk, Reshetylov, Krasnohrad, Kobeliak, Hlobyn, Myropol, Chuhuevi and Novo-Sanzharsk, where disease and death from exhaustion are currently reaching dangerous levels. There are villages where a considerable segment of the adult population has moved to cities in search of work and bread, abandoning their children to fate.

In the villages in the districts listed here, an overwhelming majority of those suffering from the effects of hunger are the collective farmers and their families. Many of them are sick and swollen from malnutrition, and there is no help available for them because of the lack of any kind of food supplies. In connection with this, a number of people die every day. The main sources of food in the districts affected by provision procurement difficulties are potatoes gathered in the field, assorted garbage, cornhusks, seeds, weeds, etc. . .

In some districts, the flesh of dead animals (pigs and horses) serves as food, while in Novo-Sanzharsk, Kobeliak, and Krasnohrad districts and a number of others, cases of consumption of the flesh of dogs and cats have been confirmed.

Furthermore, cannibalism and the consumption of corpses is increasing. Not infrequently, parents consume the bodies of children who have died from exhaustion. There is also evidence that, because of malnutrition, family members have killed the weaker ones, mostly children, and have consumed their flesh. The following data is typical and illustrates the rising rate of cannibalism and consumption of corpses in provincial districts:

As of March 1	*9 cases*
As of April 1	*58 cases*
As of May 1	*132 cases*
As of June 1	*221 cases*

An overwhelming majority of the personal letters I have received from administrators of our district offices point out the gravity of the situation in these districts. I consider it important to cite some excerpts here:

Of the 48 village soviets in Balkalevsk district, 26 with 39 collective farms are most affected by provision procurement difficulties. The situation with provision procurement is relatively better in 15 villages with 24 collective farms.

The village Chepyshky, for example, which consisted of 500 households, has become a wasteland. Only one of every three or four houses is inhabited. No human sound can be heard from dawn to dusk. There is no smoke rising from the chimneys in the morning. From March to the end of May, more than 300 people died in the village; 95% of these were collective farmers.

In the village of Lyman, one-quarter of the adult population has gone in search of bread, abandoning the children. All the dogs and cats of the village have been eaten.

Though the bodies of those who have died are usually buried, the minute the village soviet representatives leave the site of burial, the body is dug out and taken away to be consumed. The number of swollen and weak in the village has risen to 100 persons.

In the village of Vovchyi Yar, which numbers some 800 households, eight to twelve collective farmers die every day. In the last month and a half more than 2,500 people have died. Two cases of cannibalism have been discovered in the village.

In Novyi Sanzharsk district, 18 of 25 village soviets have been affected by provision procurement difficulties. In most of those villages, up to 45% of collective farmers and individual peasant farmers have absolutely no provisions. In each of those villages, there are 60 families with no fewer than 200 people swollen from malnutrition.

During the last three months, up to 3,000 deaths attributed to exhaustion have been registered. The rate of mortality is increasing daily. Every day, in village after village, several people die.

The district numbers more than 2,000 households that do not participate in the work of sowing due to malnutrition and physical exhaustion.

Many villagers have abandoned their children, who are lying in the mud in ditches.

Seven cases of cannibalism and consumption of corpses have been reported.

In the Krasnohrad district, 14 of 49 village soviets have been severely affected by provision procurement difficulties; 18 are less affected.

Severe food shortages, malnutrition, and exhaustion have been noted in 103 collective farms in the district. During the months of April and May, 14 cases of cannibalism were reported.

The situation in isolated villages presents the following picture:

Petrivka village: At the collective farm "Hammer and Sickle," more than 600 people have died during the last two months. Of 295 once able-bodied people, only 35 show up for work, and many of these are hungry, sick, and swollen. Some of the farmers have left the village in search of bread.

Berestovenka village: Each day the mortality rate increases. In the Kyrykoloksk sector alone, more than one hundred people have died. At the Voroshilov collective farm, two or three people die every day. A similar situation exists in the rest of the collective farms. Many parents throw their children out into the street or take them to the closest railway station [and leave them there].

Ulianivka village: Twenty people have died at the Kotovsk collective farm, and 50 have died at Lenin's Way collective farm. Some 50% of the collective farmers are laid up, swollen from malnutrition. In the above-mentioned villages as well as in other villages severely affected by provision procurement difficulties, human flesh, as well as the flesh of dogs and cats, is being consumed.

In Novo-Vodolazhsk district there are five village soviets especially affected with provision procurement difficulties. In the last two months, some 800 people have died in these villages. Many collective farmers and independent farmers are laid up, sick and swollen.

At the same time, more than 700 people from Znaminka, Manuiliv, Troian, Fedorivka, and other villages have recently left the area and gone in search of bread. One result of this is a marked increase in the number of homeless children. A great number of the children abandoned by their parents are wandering about the villages, begging for food. Some of the collective farmers and others, having no other way to survive, are also wandering about aimlessly and have become parasites.

Cases of thievery have recently increased in the villages. Collective farmers are stealing cows, horses, and food from one another. The stolen cows and horses are slaughtered for meat.

In the Hadiach district, severe provision procurement difficulties have affected 10 village soviets. In the past few months, over 2,000 deaths attributed to exhaustion have been registered.

It is important to note that the mortality rate has increased to such proportions that a number of village soviets have stopped registering the deaths.

Child homelessness is growing daily. Children roam the villages, begging. Children's shelters are filled to capacity but are not supplied with food. When the children are hungry, they are fed with whatever is available. As a result, there have been growing reports of severe illness and death among children.

In a number of village soviets, entire families have left villages, going to nearby towns or cities where some of them have found work. Others beg.

Because of provision procurement difficulties in the region, instances of theft are occurring at an alarming rate.

From March through May, 228 cases of theft and armed robbery have been recorded.

At Krasnoznamen, Kharkovets, and other village soviets, cases of suicide prompted by severe exhaustion have been recorded.

Some collective farmers nourish themselves with the flesh of dead horses and other animals.

In the Izium district, provision procurement difficulties have affected 14 village soviets so severely that 15,000 people are starving, mostly collective farmers. In the last five months, as a result of severe exhaustion in the indicated villages, 2,502 deaths have been recorded.

At a number of collective farms, the administration doles out horsemeat to collective farm workers (at Neskorodkovsk, Bryhadyrsk, Horokhovatsk, Malo-Kamyshovakhsk, and others).

Along with this, cases of parents leaving their children near schools, at district centers, or in the street have become more frequent. In the past month alone, 657 homeless children were picked up and taken to children's shelters.

Similar situations exist in other regional districts, especially in those affected with provision procurement difficulties.

There is no doubt that district and regional organizations have attempted to find provisions and render assistance to collective farm

workers and others. However, in view of the ineffectiveness of such measures and increasing difficulties with provision procurement, there has been no real improvement. The growing difficulties with provision procurement now appear to be a direct threat to the successful fulfillment of subsequent agro-political campaigns in the villages—harvesting, weeding, and clean-up are affected. It is therefore necessary to adopt urgent measures to increase the food supply to those regions that are suffering, with the aim of easing their provision procurement difficulties.

CHIEF OF THE KHARKIV
REGIONAL DEPARTMENT GPU UKR SSR,
KATSNELSON
June 5, 1933[65]

Oral testimonies from Zaporizhzhia, Poltava, and Sumy oblasts confirm that people did try to save themselves and that some succeeded in escaping to the Donbas region, but even there it was necessary to hide from the authorities to avoid arrest. Those who received help from relatives were also arrested.[66] While people here [in Ukraine] were punished for speaking about the famine, people in the West, Ukrainians who had saved themselves by escaping, wrote about the Famine-Genocide, commemorated anniversaries of the famine years with memorial services, and conducted solemn requiems for the dead in churches. On October 9, 1983, a requiem service for the repose of the souls of the victims of starvation in 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide was held in Canada. It should also be noted, however, that not everyone believed that those horrors had occurred; not everyone could comprehend how something like this could have happened, how people could deliberately have been starved to death. Such unheard of ruthless barbarity toward innocent old people and children surpasses human imagination. Humanity had never seen such brutality. This was the Ukrainian genocide. But why did those in power specifically choose such means to destroy the Ukrainian peasantry? Clearly, because the barbarians understood that getting rid of the *khakhly*[67] for good was impossible without first breaking the spine of their *ethnos* . . . to make certain that the nation would never rise again. It was for this reason that Dr. J. Mace considered Ukrainians to be a post-genocidal, sick society. Even today, the consequences of the genocide are evident. And not just quantitatively, but also in terms of destroyed generations, in unborn

children. The fear has not abated. Segments of the population are still ruled by a desire to conform and comply and survive rather than to exert the will to live a meaningful life.

The separation of children from their parents, the creation of children's shelters and orphanages, the merciless exploitation of child labor, and the sheer helplessness engendered fundamental changes in the mentality of the people—an indifference to the fate of those close to them, an attitude that shrugged off evil acts, cruelty, and envy.

Scholars are arriving at the conclusion that the 1921–1923 famine in Ukraine was the first of the Bolshevik terrors, a kind of dress rehearsal for the large-scale destruction of all things Ukrainian. Historians correctly observe that ". . . the campaign of the Bolshevik regime against the so-called kurkul can be seen as the groundwork for the destruction of the Ukrainian peasant farmer, which succeeded not only in tearing apart the Ukrainian village, but ultimately, opened the door for a new, even more terrible famine in 1932–1933."[68]

Indisputably, newly accessible archival documents will permit scholars to establish more precise terminology to define the genocide against the Ukrainian people. There is much evidence that the Stalinist regime had been planning the Famine-Genocide as early as 1931 and that it was intended as a four-year plan (1931–1934). The plan anticipated repressions against the noncompliant and a progressive exhaustion of the people that had to begin with lowering the resistance of the peasants. It is impossible to disagree with the idea that "regardless of the large number of scholarly and documentary publications, the Bolshevik policies of repression in Ukrainian villages prior to as well as during the time of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine, is one of the least studied pages in the history of Ukraine."[69]

It is known that the lands of western Ukraine were under Polish rule in 1921–1923; the border of this territory with the USSR extended along the Zbruch River. One of the preparatory operations preceding the Famine-Genocide was the forcible removal of people from this border region in 1930–1931. The astonishing number of arrests also bears out the precisely planned genocide against Ukrainians. According to Soviet Special Services documents, "In 1928, 1929, 1930, and from January through May of 1931, the GPU arrested 49,754 kurkuls. Exact data as to how many of them were executed or had perished in camps do not exist, but it is known that in 1930, following . . . 'special deliberations,' 1,033 individuals were executed by firing squad, 4,858 were deported to camps, and 8,430 were exiled. From January through May 1931 alone, 328 were shot, 1,083 were thrown into camps, and 3,320 were exiled."[70]

Thus, the secret archival documents and oral testimonies of survivors of the Famine-Genocide reveal a very real and detailed set of preparatory steps taken by Stalinist satraps with respect to the genocide of Ukrainians in 1930–1931. The expulsion of the smartest, most industrious, and dynamic peasants, those who were skilled farmers and understandably did not want to give up their property and possessions and have them absorbed into communal farming, constituted the first phase of repressions.

And these were not kurkuls, who for the most part, did not make use of hired labor but worked from daybreak to dusk with their families. Not all of them were well off. But the plan to dekurkulize was put into place, and from November 1929 onward, repressive policies against well-off peasants to quell any and all resistance to the creation of collective farms were set in motion by the regime. Dekurkulization was not only an accessory to the liquidation of kurkuls as a class, it was also a manifestation of animal cruelty toward compliant, innocent people. Everything the peasants had acquired with their own hard work was forcibly confiscated. In the middle of winter they were driven from their homes, their houses and farm buildings were destroyed, and all building materials were hauled away. And worst of all, young children were separated from their parents while older children were forced to denounce their parents in public and disown them in writing. Scholars have often noted that "the tragedy of collectivization was measured in millions of human destinies. The number of kurkul deportations rose dramatically."[71]

How can the Stalinist regime be tied to such measures of collectivization and industrialization? Not surprisingly, written and oral accounts concur that Stalinist agents confiscated, destroyed, or ruined any kind of prepared food while looking past the faces of the suffering children before them. Dmytro Trokhymovych Lykholit, a peasant born in 1923, describes what went on in the village of Khotski in Kyiv oblast in 1932: "I went to a friend's house once, just as a brigade of 'activists' was poking around. One of them found a small cup of cooked millet. He took it out of the oven, smashed the cup on the floor, and began to grind the millet into the floor with his huge boot. The children (there were five of them) fell to the floor and began licking the cereal from under his boots."[72] Of course, we will not find written orders to commit such acts, but we do have plenty of documentary and oral evidence that confirms such things occurred and additional evidence of lengthy discussions, held behind closed doors, between representatives of district divisions of the NKVD[73] and the collective farm leadership. It is not difficult to guess that this was where such decisions were made: "Leave no hope of survival."

Even today, a great number of people argue that it is not worth arousing memories about the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide, particularly because some Ukrainians still live below the poverty level. Perhaps the best response to this came from historian, political scientist, and great Ukrainian of American Indian ancestry, James Mace, who wrote in 2003:

> *And today . . . old grandmothers collect bottles and rummage in trash heaps. It is difficult and painful to see this. They worked their entire lives for the Soviet system; they fought for it, believing that they would be assured a peaceful, secure old age. Perhaps today, when money for bread has to be eked out from a miserly pension, they remember with fondness the prices under the Soviets. But those who died hallucinating—not even about bread but about a small biscuit of ground-up straw, chaff, or sawdust—cannot be forgotten. That sweet and accessible Soviet-DP bread was grown over the millions of bones that don't even have graves and over which not a single prayer has been recited and whose voices to this day have not been heard. I despair as a human being when I go through the recollections of the eyewitnesses. I dread looking into that well of horror."*[74]

But Mace, by taking upon himself that burning pain, believed that Ukrainian society must gradually rid itself of the post-genocidal syndrome. And it is only by knowing the truth that people can achieve this. Knowledge is the assurance that nothing similar will happen to the long-suffering Ukrainian people ever again. But to move forward into the future, the past cannot be forgotten.

In conclusion, indisputable facts can be established and confirmed through the examination of archival documents, oral history, and numerous accounts of those who lived through the great famine of 1932–1933. The Bolsheviks, responding to the struggle for freedom and an independent Ukraine, designed a terror of unprecedented cruelty: the death by starvation of millions of Ukrainian peasants. In the beginning, in 1930–1931, there was the forcible seizure ("socialization") of tools for working the soil, of draft animals, of farm inventory, of means of transportation, and of livestock. Excessive taxes were imposed, and all grain supplies, including seeds, were confiscated. The result of all those measures was the destruction of the peasants. Swollen, famished peasants were forced to work on the collective farms, and livestock under communal management died en masse.

A major assault against the exhausted and starving people was planned in 1932–1933 and resulted in the destruction of the Ukrainian peasantry. During those years, Stalin's henchmen forcibly confiscated not only all the grain, but

also all potential sources of food, whether animal or vegetable in nature. Leaving villages to search for bread was strictly forbidden. All kinds of items were seized from the peasants: clothing, footwear, linens, tablecloths—all to prevent the peasants from trading those items for food. Famine, isolating the peasants from any possible means of sustenance, violence, demoralization arising from false accusations, deception, and denunciations all contributed to the ruin of millions of Ukrainians. And the sociopolitical consequences of the Famine-Genocide contributed to the perversion of national traditions, husbandry, customs, rituals, as well as to the devaluation of family values and culture. The negative impact on moral-ethical behavior fostered a culture of apathy, conformity, and compliance.

In marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Famine-Genocide and in honoring its martyrs, the Ukrainian people feel the pain of immense loss. But this has engendered in them a yearning to restore strength through valor and dignity and never allow such evil into their native land again.

NOTES

1. Grand prince of Kyiv (1113–1125), Volodymyr Monomakh was a legal and economic reformer, the last Kyivan prince to rule over a unified Kyivan Rus'. The precursor of the modern Ukrainian state, Kyivan Rus' was founded and evolved as a confederation of semi-autonomous principalities, much like those that comprised Greek, Italian, and German duchies, principalities, and city-states before Greece, Italy, and Germany evolved as unified nation-states. Volodymyr Monomakh was married to Gytha, the daughter of King Harold II of England. (Ed.)
2. Generally as a symbolic gesture that what has been promised shall be done, the oath would have been made to God as well as to men. (Ed.)
3. St. Basil the Great (ca. 329–379 in Turkey), Archbishop of Caesarea and church father. An influential preacher and writer, whose ascetic writings influenced Ukrainian monasticism and inspired the formation of the Basilian monastic order, named in his honor. (Ed.)
4. *Povist mynulykh lit* (Kyiv, 1989), pp. 177–178.
5. Grand prince of Kyivan Rus' from 1015 to 1054, Yaroslav promulgated the first code of laws on the territory of Ukraine. During his long reign, Kyivan Rus' reached the zenith of its cultural flowering and military power. In 1037 he initiated the construction of the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv, where he was buried and his marble sarcophagus has been preserved to this day. A notable patron of book culture and learning, he founded a primary school and library at the St. Sophia Cathedral and sponsored the translation of Greek and other texts in Church Slavonic, the copying of many books, and the compilation of a chronicle. He strengthened the international role of Kyivan Rus' through dynastic unions and was dubbed "the father-in-law" of Europe. (Ed.)
6. Yu. Zaitsev, ed., *Istoriia Ukrainy* (Lviv, 1998), p. 83.
7. An agreement between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Kingdom of Poland. Under the terms of the agreement, Ukrainian territory was divided between its two powerful neighbors. (Ed.)

8. The Cossack Host was headquartered on an island fortress (the *Sich* or citadel) on the Dnipro River, located near the modern-day Ukrainian city of Zaporizhia. "Hetman" was the official title of the commander of the Cossack Host. (Ed.)
9. Both institutions have experienced a renaissance during the last few decades and are recognized as eminent centers of higher education in contemporary Ukraine. (Ed.)
10. Yurii Fihurny, *Istorychni vytoky ukrainskoho lytsarstva* (Kyiv, 2004), p. 213.
11. Pylyp Orlyk became hetman-in-exile of the Cossack host, serving from 1710 after the death of Hetman Ivan Mazepa who had been forced to flee from Ukraine after his forces were defeated by Russia's Peter I at the Battle of Poltava in 1709. (Ed.)
12. Ukraine's largest river, the Dnipro, bisects the country. The reference to the Right Bank and Left Bank here identifies lands lying to the west or east of the river, respectively. (Ed.)
13. A 21-year conflict between Russia and Sweden for control of Baltic Sea coasts, its most notable antagonists were Russia's Peter I and Charles XII of Sweden, an ally of Hetman Ivan Mazepa. (Ed.)
14. Zaitsev, *Istoriia Ukrainy*, p. 138.
15. V. Sichynsky, *Chuzhyntsi pro Ukrainu* (Kyiv, 1992), p. 161.
16. The individuals named here were part of the literary and cultural elite of the period, whose works frequently focused on Ukraine's desire for independence, love of country, and universal humanistic and humanitarian ideals. (Ed.)
17. A decree issued by Tsar Alexander II, the Ems Ukase prohibited publication or distribution of Ukrainian-language books, newspapers, and documents anywhere on the territory of the Russian Empire. (Ed.)
18. Initially an all-Ukrainian center that united political, community, cultural, and professional organizations, the Central Rada later became the revolutionary parliament of Ukraine that directed the Ukrainian national movement and through its four proclamations (or universals) led Ukraine from autonomy to independence. (Ed.)
19. Vasyl Danylenko, "Dokumenty radianskykh spetssluzhb pro holodomory 1921–1923, 1932–1933, 1946–1947 rokiv v Ukraini," in *Try holodomory v Ukraini XX st.: pohliad iz siohodennia: Materialy mizhnarodnoi naukovoi konferentsii* (Kyiv, 2003), p. 67.
20. Soviet security police. Established in 1922, the GPU's most notorious functions were espionage and suppression of counterrevolutionary activities and activists. One of several predecessors of the KGB. (Ed.)
21. Danylenko, "Dokumenty radianskykh spetssluzhb," pp. 72–73.
22. Named after Fridtjof Nansen, a Norwegian explorer, statesman, and philanthropist who served as high commissioner of the International Committee of the Red Cross, which provided aid to famine victims in Ukraine and Russia in the early 1920s. The Captain V. Quisling mentioned here is Vidkun Quisling who later founded the Norwegian nationalist party and was appointed by German authorities to serve as Minister-President of Norway during WWII. After the war, Quisling was tried for high treason and executed. The word "quisling" has become synonymous with "traitor." (Ed.)
23. Volodymyr Serhiichuk, *Yak nas moryly holodom* (Kyiv, 1996), p. 7.
24. During the Famine-Genocide, kulaks (kurkuls in Ukrainian) became targets of a policy called dekurkulization, i.e., a policy aimed at destroying the most productive and industrious members of the peasantry. Unless the term appears in passages specifically referring to Russian-language document, the term "kurkul" has been used throughout. (Ed.)
25. *Istoriia ukrainskoho selianstava*, vol. 2 (Kyiv, 2006), p. 130.
26. *Istoriia ukrainskoho selianstava*, vol. 2 (Kyiv, 2006), p. 142.
27. *Holod 1932-1933 rokiv v Ukraini: prychyny ta naslidky* (Kyiv, 2003), p. 5.

28. Dzheims Meis [James Mace], "Politychni prychyny holodomur v Ukraini 1932–1933 rr.," in *Vidlunnia holodomoru—henotsydu 1932–1933: Etnokulturni naslidky holodomoru v Ukraini* (Lviv, 2005), p. 11.
29. NARKOM is short for "narodny komisar" or people's commissar. (Ed.)
30. *Istoriia ukrainskoho selianstva*, vol. 2, p. 198.
31. S. V. Kulchytsky, Holod 1932–1933 rr. v Ukraini yak henotsyd (Kyiv, 2005), p. 6.
32. Iryna Mahrytska, "Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv na Skhodi Ukrainy: svidchennia z Luhanskoi oblasti," in *Vidlunnia holodomoru*, p. 181.
33. Valentyna Piskun, "Ukrainska politychna emihratsiia i holodomory," in *Try holodomory v Ukraini v XX st.*, p. 258.
34. Milena Rudnytska, "Visti z Soiuzu Ukrainok," *Nashe zhyttia* (New York).
35. Volodymyr Serhiichuk, "Ukrainskyi khlibnyi eksport iak odyn z holovnykh chynnykiv holodomoru—henotsydu v 1932-1933 rokakh," in *Ukrainskyi khlib na eksport: 1932–1933* (Kyiv, 2006), p. 9.
36. "Plany likvidatsii ukrainskoho etnosu," in *Vidlunnia holodomoru—henotsydu 1932–1933*, p. 8.
37. Dmytro Solovei, *Skazaty pravdu. Try pratsi pro holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv* (Kyiv and Poltava, 2005), p. 299.
38. L. Ivshyna, ed., *Den i vichnist Dzheimsa Meisa* (Kyiv, 2005), p. 18.
39. Vasyl Stus, a poet and political dissident during the 1960s, was one of the victims of the political repression in Ukraine three decades after the Great Famine. He perished in the Gulag Archipelago. (Ed.)
40. Dzheims Meis [James Mace], "Ya nazyvaiu tse suspilstvo posthenosydnym," *Literaturna Ukraina*, 15 May 2003.
41. Ivshyna, *Den i vichnist Dzheimsa Meisa*, p. 35.
42. Robert Konkvest [Robert Conquest], *Zhnyva skorboty. Radianska kolektyvizatsiia i holodomor* (Kyiv, 1993), p. 12.
43. Ibid., p. 247.
44. V. Vasyliev and Yu. Shapoval, eds. *Komandyry velykoho holodu. Poizdky V. Molotova i L. Kahanovycha v Ukrainu ta na pivnichnyi Kavkaz. 1932–1933 rr.* (Kyiv, 2001), p. 160.
45. Symon Petliura, commander in chief of the Ukrainian National Army and president of the short-lived Ukrainian National Republic established in 1917. (Ed.)
46. Haluzevyi derzhavnyi arkhiv Sluzhby Bezpeky Ukrainy (State Branch Archive of the Security Service of Ukraine) (hereinafter: HDA SB Ukrainy), f. 16, op. 25 (1951 r.), spr. 3, ark. 1.
47. Ibid., ark. 3.
48. The term "village soviet" refers to the local council consisting of Communist Party members. (Ed.)
49. The Young Communist League. (Ed.)
50. *Rozsekrechena pamiat: Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraini v dokumentakh GPU-NKVD* (Kyiv, 2007), p. 196.
51. HDA SB Ukrainy, f. 16, op. 25 (1951 r.), spr. 3, ark. 22.
52. Ibid., ark. 23.
53. The CHEKA (All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Fighting Counterrevolution and Sabotage) was founded by Felix Dzerzhinsky following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and was the precursor of subsequent Soviet secret police organizations (i.e., the NKVD and the KBG). (Ed.)
54. Kulchytsky, *Holod 1932–1933 rr.*, p. 98.
55. People's Commissar of Education. (Ed.)
56. V. I. Marochko, "Dity—naichyslennishi zhertvy holodomoru," in *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraini* (Kyiv, 2003), p. 563.

57. Ibid., p. 564.
58. Ibid., p. 566.
59. Tamara Polishchuk, comp., *Stolytsia vidchaiu. Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. na Kharkivshchyni vustamy ochevydtsiv: Svidchennia, komentari* (Kharkiv, New York, Lviv, 2006), p. 269.
60. Quoted from Kulchytsky, *Holod 1932–1933 rr.*, p. 7.
61. V. I. Marochko, "'Torgsin: zolota tsina zhyttia ukrainskykh selian u roky holodu (1932–1933)," *Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal* (Kyiv), No. 3 (2003), p. 95.
62. V. Maniak and L. Kovalenko, *33-yi: holod. Narodna knyha-memoriial* (Kyiv, 1991), 583 pp.
63. Polishchuk, *Stolytsia vidchaiu*, p. 445.
64. Vasyl Hryshko, *Moskva sliozam ne viryt. Narodovbyvstvo po-kremlivsky* (Kyiv, 2003), pp. 135–136.
65. *Ukrainskyi khlib na eksport: 1932–1933* (Kyiv, 2006), pp. 303–310.
66. Nadiia Diuk, comp., *Holod v Ukraini 1932–1933: Vybrani statti* (Lutsk, 2006), pp. 117–118.
67. A derogatory term for Ukrainians used by Russians. (Ed.)
68. Serhiichuk, *Yak nas moryly holodom. 1921–1923, 1932–1933, 1946–1947*, p. 45.
69. Danylenko, "Dokumenty radianskykh spetssluzhb," p. 73.
70. Ibid., pp. 76–77.
71. Nadia Shcherbak, "Istoryko-politychni ta pravovi askpekty doslidzhen triokh holodomoriv v Ukraini," in *Try holodomory v Ukraini v XX st.*, p. 14.
72. Holod 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraini: prychyny ta naslidky, pp. 191–192.
73. Acronym for People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. A successor of the infamous CHEKA, the NKVD evolved as the secret police of the Communist Party; its members were notorious for their heavy-handed and inhumane activities against those who resisted the party, collectivization, and other Soviet policies.
74. Dzeims Meis [James Mace], "Ya nazyvaiu tse suspilstvo posthenotsydnym."

Mother and daughter from the town of Zinkov, Poltava Oblast, beginning of XX century.

Examining the Oral History of 1932–1933: Ethnographic Aspects

The three known famine-genocides in the history of Ukraine are the famines of 1921–1923, 1932–1933, and 1946–1947, and all of these were caused by Communist Russia as planned criminal actions against the Ukrainian nation. Numerous archival documents and oral testimonies confirm this.

But even now, there are those who are attempting to revise history and explain the famines of 1921–1923 and 1946–1947 as natural phenomena stemming from droughts in the southern regions of Ukraine. This explanation, however, does not correspond to any real facts. Ukraine's geographical features vary widely from region to region; while there may be a drought in one region of the country, there is likely to be measurable precipitation in other regions. Thus, climatic conditions in the country are unlikely to cause a total harvest failure. Moreover, documented evidence proves that grain was exported from Ukraine on a massive scale during those years of hunger, belying the existence of a countrywide drought.

For several decades, everything about the most terrible and cruelest famine, the Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933, was kept secret. This famine was a massive political repression of the Ukrainian people; it was genocide, the horrible nature of which the world cannot view with indifference. There was grain in Ukraine at the time; it was being exported and even destroyed to ensure that the Ukrainian people starved to death.

In his book *National Identity* (Kyiv 1992, pp. 39–40), Anthony D. Smith, a professor of sociology at the University of London, distinguishes between two kinds of ethnic destruction: genocide and ethnocide.

Under genocide, the author lists those instances in which deaths on a massive scale of a particular cultural or ethnic group had been planned in advance, with the target of the planned action being the extinction of that group. "Cultural conquest and ethnic assimilation," Smith notes, are acts of ethnocide. In the twentieth century, the Bolshevik regime of Russia applied both forms of ethnic destruction against the Ukrainians, and there have been no events anywhere in the world analogous to this brutal crime perpetrated against the Ukrainian people.

Today, the most important task for historians is to record the eyewitness accounts of those people who themselves lived through the famine and who witnessed the deaths of their loved ones and of other villagers. The most important aspect of these testimonies is that they provide students and future

historians a way to separate truth from falsehood and to study in depth, from primary sources, the tragic history of their land. Every day, however, there are fewer and fewer of these witnesses who, at that time, were ten to fifteen years old and who can never forget those days. If their stories are not recorded, the very valuable information that oral history provides will be lost.

During the summer months 2002 to 2006, students from the history department of the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv, following a specially designed syllabus and questionnaire, recorded testimonies about the Famine-Genocide in the villages of Kyiv, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Poltava, Sumy, and Kirovohrad oblasts. Students were assigned to pre-selected regions and villages on the basis of their connection to parents and/or relatives who lived in those locations or originally came from those locations, a selection process that facilitated direct communication with the subjects in particular regions. Survivors of the famine are still fearful, and most of those interviewed were hesitant to provide their full names to strangers when they saw that the information was being written on paper or recorded on tape.

In one year alone, 150 third-year students and 15 second-year university students each interviewed, on average, between five and ten individuals. In the span of five years, over 2,000 testimonies of people who lived through the Famine-Genocide were collected. Two types of information were gathered. The first includes testimonies from elderly people who had personally lived through the famine and remembered all its horrors. The second type of information consists of accounts based on stories the witnesses had heard from parents, relatives, and neighbors, accounts from people who were born after the Famine-Genocide but whose parents had perished during the famine years. Information of the first kind predominates. People who at the time were ten to fifteen years old and who are now over eighty years old comprise the majority of witnesses.

The first overviews of the material collected support publication and dissemination of hitherto unknown facts, experiences, and impressions regarding the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine; at the same time, the testimonies serve as uncensored and unedited proof of the greatest crime in the history of humanity: torture and death by starvation.

Regarding the causes of the famine, the oral accounts given by peasants unanimously confirm that the harvest in Ukraine in 1932 was good: "The harvest wasn't bad then, we shouldn't have been starving to death. But whatever reserves of food we had, the authorities took from us. They swept everything out, to the last bean, the cereals; they poked around in the corners . . . " or, as another survivor states, "They say the famine was planned, because the harvests were fine then." (Bokhonyky village, Vinnytsia oblast.) Among the oral testimonies,

two opinions prevail as to the causes of the famine. The more widely held view is that "the famine was created specifically so that all of Ukraine would die ." Other survivors confirm that "Stalin did this specifically so that people would die off, so that, famished people would join the collective farms more quickly" and "It was Stalin, the damned torturer, who created the Last Judgment." But interviewers also spoke with people whose accounts differ and cast the blame on a more local scale: "The famine was created mainly by the locals, the higher-ups didn't know anything about it." A similar statement can be found in an account from a village in the Kirovohrad oblast: "There were these towboats who went from house to house and took everything: beans, cereals, corn. They looked in ovens and took everything, everything. Clothing, too. It was an organized gang. We knew them well, they lived on our street. They were lazy and stupid and they didn't do anything, they just stole." Such versions, however, are in the minority.

It is important to note that an extensive new terminology was created at that time. Representatives of the government who abused the people were given labels. In various villages among the regions that have been researched, local folk terms reflected the essence of what was going on at the time. The wretches who took the last bits of food and other things from people were *obkhodchyky* ("comebackers" who returned to the same houses several times a month), *the komsomoltsi* (members of the Komsomol), *pohani liudy* (bad people), *vidbyrachi* (confiscators), *buksiry* (raiders), *aktyvisty* (activists), *bryhady* (brigades), *partiitsi* (party members), *dushohuby* (murderers), *komisiia* (commission), *banda* (gang), *chervona mitla* (red broom), *komizany* (members of the committees of poor peasants), *shtyrkhachi* ("pokers" who walked around with iron rods and poked everywhere to find unauthorized provisions), *kolektyvisory* (those who actively supported collectivization), *chervoni valky* (red caravans), and the like. "They made the rounds—what the hell are they called, those partiitsi—and they were our own guys. They swept the crumbs off tables" (Krasnosillia village, Chyhyryn district, Cherkasy oblast).

According to survivors of those events, the brigades started coming around in the fall of 1932 and continued making the rounds into the winter. Seeing that people had not swelled up from hunger, they returned again and again—always searching for more. As a rule, the group consisted of seven to ten activists so that resistance was impossible, all the more because many of the peasant men had been arrested earlier, and the "brave ones" were free to victimize mostly women and children. Petro Luchko, born in 1924 and residing in the village of Zapruddia, Rokytnian district, Kyiv oblast attests: "There was an artificial famine in Ukraine in 1932–1933. There were special brigades, the "red caravans," that searched for grain. The head of the collective farm made the rounds with them.

Poltava Oblast, photograph from 1919.

People were beaten, they were made to stand on hot frying pans, they were interrogated about where the grain was hidden. Cows and horses were taken away; they were herded up and starved to death."

From an account of a witness from the village of Mala Vyska in the Kirovohrad oblast we learn: "They conducted searches for grain and when they didn't find any, they took whatever was at hand—clothing, embroidered linens . . . we called them bandits because, often, to get information about where the grain was hidden, they beat people. They were ruthless."

As witnesses from the Kirovohrad oblast related, "Mother had money hidden in her braided hair, and they found it and took it away." In another account, from Halyna Pavlui, born in 1912 in Kyselivka village, Nosiv district in the Chernihiv oblast testified: "Father was put in prison because we hadn't paid all the taxes. Mother was left alone with four children. She begged. She cried. She put some grain under a piece of cloth in little Havrylo's cradle. They found it and took it. . . . They knocked on all the walls and floors with their sticks."

There are numerous examples of similar cruelty. No mercy was shown to old people, to children. It defied the people's traditional sense of morality and way of thinking. A state of numbness permeated everything, intensified by indifference, hatred, and fear.

Nonetheless, some of the eyewitnesses saw the exploiters themselves as victims under control of the party. People understood that it was "that damned Stalin [who] imposed punishment on us poor folks because some of us didn't want to join the collective farms" (Makiivka village, Chernihiv oblast). Albeit infrequently, some witnesses seemed to excuse the acts of the Komsomol. From an account from Kirovohrad oblast we learn: "The Komsomol members were making the rounds to take anything edible away. And if they had smart parents, those parents would order them, the Komsomol members, to pretend they didn't see anything in the house: 'Look and leave,' they instructed them. They couldn't refuse to go on the searches, otherwise they would be branded as enemies of the people. And they were still in school."

The authorities used other tactics as well, bribing individual peasants or pitting them against one another. "In winter, when folks began swelling up from hunger, it was announced that anyone who informed on those who had hidden grain would get a portion of that grain." (Chernihiv oblast, Nosiv district. Hanchenko, born in 1915).

By 1929–1930, and especially in 1931, people were already experiencing food shortages, although the real famine set in during the cold autumn of 1932. The search for food to survive became the primary pursuit of the peasants, initially through honest means. Taking their clothing, scarves, and embroidered linens,

they traveled to Russia and Byelorussia, where there was no famine, in the hopes of trading these items for food. This theme surfaces in many of the eyewitness accounts. A resident of Popravka village, Bilotserkivskyi district, Kyiv oblast, born in 1905 reported: "My husband would go to Russia to trade clothing for bread. He took all the clothing from the house. He would return with a *pud* [16.36 kilograms] of everything: potatoes, flour. Quite a few people from the village did that. After Semen's third trip, none of those who went returned. The three of us were left: Vasyl, Sonka (the children), and I. My godmother and I worked in the pantry all winter long. We would stuff our boots with things we had foraged . . . my Vasylko died. He was the younger one. How Sonka cried."

Many people maintained that those who traveled to trade clothing for food often did not return. . . . And those who did succeed in coming back with provisions often lost everything anyway because of the authorities. Natalia Tutyk (born in 1923 in the village of Zapruddia, Rokytian district, Kyiv oblast) testified: "After we were dekurkulized, Father would go to trade scarves for a *pud* of flour. He would bring the flour and our local "collectivists" would take it away."

The activists even interrogated children. As N. Tutyk recollected: "On my way home from school the "nudgers" (those who recruited people into the collective farms) asked me where Father had hidden the buckwheat. I told them I didn't know. But it was hidden up in the attic mixed in with the chaff. They found it, sifted out the chaff, and carried the rest away, to the last grain."

People soon realized that surviving by trading items for food was becoming impossible. But to deprive the peasants of any hope of survival, the authorities seized everything that might be traded, everyday items that included woven belts, cloaks, embroidered linens, scarves. All were confiscated and deposited in the collective farm storehouse, where it was all "whistled away" on vodka. Sofia Zdoryk, born in 1925 (Popravka village, Bilotserkivskyi district, Kyiv oblast) bears witness to this: "During the famine, folks were shaken down, stripped of their clothing, and their belongings were taken from them and deposited in a storehouse by those *komenzams* [committees of poor peasants] or whatever they were called. And there were some, like Onyska Andronykha and a few others, who would trade clothing for vodka with those *komenzams*. Mother would tell Father that he should also trade with them for something—he was working in the storehouse at the time. But Father replied, "I don't want to, because those are people's tears . . ."

Flight to the cities was another road to survival in the autumn of 1932. That road, however, was closed off by the authorities. As one witness explained, "A lot of people tried to move to other places, but at the train station they were fined and turned back" (Nosivka, Chernihiv oblast). "It was impossible to leave the

village without a passport." People, in fact, were forbidden to leave the village, but this did not prevent many from trying with their last breath to do so. Numerous accounts confirm that most of those who died in the spring of 1933 were found near train stations. They perished because they lacked the physical strength to achieve their dream—to escape from a starving village. The iron ring of starvation was impenetrable.

The peasants, especially those villagers from the central and eastern regions in Ukraine, were fated to die. There was no honest way to survive. People resorted to stealing grain from collective farm storage sheds. But that was almost impossible because, as people testified, "threshing areas, storage sheds, and fields were patrolled by NKVD agents." For taking three kilograms of grain, the punishment was imprisonment or expulsion from the village, usually with no hope of returning.

The "law of five wheat ears" is often mentioned by the witnesses.[1] A resident of the village of Makiivka in the Nosiv district of the Chernihiv oblast, born in 1915, relates: "There was a law about five wheat ears. My father was imprisoned for stealing that much. And he never came back."

But in many instances, instead of imprisoning people, Stalin's henchmen killed them on the spot, without any trial or investigation. There are many accounts to that effect: "They killed our son. He was carrying one watermelon and one cantaloupe from the collective farm's melon field. The guards killed him on the spot" (Kirovohrad oblast). Another witness, from the village of Bokhonyky in Vinnytsia oblast, relates: "Uncle was so very, very hungry. He was gathering some beet greens and putting them into his sack, and those komenzams caught him and killed him. They dragged him into a ditch by the river. Nobody ever buried him." The authorities made the laws, and mob law made such punishment commonplace.

Certain generalizations can be drawn from numerous testimonies about who was likely to survive and who was not starving in 1932–1933. Chief among these were the administrators of the collective farms: the director, the brigade members, the storehouse keepers, the families of Red Army commanders. According to Fedosii Herasymenko (born in 1926) from the village of Baibuzy, Shpolizenske district, Cherkasy oblast: "I wasn't aware of a famine as such. My father was the head of the collective farm. We had food. I was still young then. I had heard about the famine, but I wasn't starving. . . . We had a cow, a pig, and we had bread. We didn't wear linen (i.e., the kind of clothing made of homespun linen that most of the peasants wore). The local authorities stood out because they wore clothing that was commercially made. A resident of Didovychi village, Novohrad-Volyn district, Zhytomyr oblast, born in 1927, described her

life: "Mother took me and my two little sisters to our grandmother's home in a neighboring village. One of her sons was a commander in the Red Army, and the authorities didn't touch her homestead. That's how we stayed alive." From another account from the same village we learn: "Our entire family survived those times because my older brother Mykola worked at the collective farm storehouse. He'd bring us cereal, flour."

If a village was located near a city or town with a sugar refinery, a distillery, a brick factory, or some other factory, people were able to collect potato peels or kitchen scraps at night. And if someone in the family worked at the factory, survival was even more likely. People testify that those families lived better because rations were doled out at the factory.

Those who were not starving comprised approximately a quarter of the village population. Three-quarters of the villagers were destined to a slow, torturous death. Because the authorities were confiscating all provisions, people were left to eat what was normally not considered food. From countless testimonies, we learn that cats, dogs, pigeons, sparrow, crows, and mice were consumed; animals that had died at the collective farm were also eaten. With the arrival of spring, people began eating frogs, reptiles, and hedgehogs. Those who lived near the Southern Buh River (in Podillia) caught and ate turtles and fish. Fish were caught in secret at the reservoirs and were eaten immediately, raw, for fear that someone would see and take them away. Hedgehogs were roasted alive in the hearth to burn off their quills. A resident of the village of Rozdolne, Nosiv district, Chernihiv oblast related, "We backed a large hedgehog into the hearth and it turned out she was pregnant with six little ones, so we ate them, too . . . what could we do?"

People ate bark, the leaves and blossoms of linden trees (flat-cakes were made from the flowers), rotten potatoes collected from the field in the spring, pigweed, nettles, nightshade, poppy seed mush, chaff (which was steamed and shredded), the roots of wheatgrass, beet greens, white acacia blossoms, acorns, and beet pulp. A resident from the Kirovohrad oblast tells us: "Children would go to the mash pit [at a sugar refinery] and scrape up the dried-up pulp. At home, the pulp was mixed with bran or steamed with chaff and baked as a kind of flat-cake."

Nina Slozka, a resident of the village of Yerky, Katerynopil district, Cherkasy oblast, born in 1923, tells us: "Mother went off somewhere, looking for food, and died. There were three of us, me and my two little brothers. We ate acorns, ragweed . . . we were bloated and some smelly fluid oozed out of our feet. I always see my aunt before my eyes, the one who wouldn't give us any bread. And they had things."

Villagers of the Perederij Family, Poltava Oblast, beginning of XX century.

A resident of the village of Stepivka in Kirovohrad oblast recalls: "When green rye appeared from under the melting snow, and if we were able to steal some from the collective farm, we made flat-cakes out of it. We baked them for my sister. She was very sick. . . . A lot of people were deported to Siberia for stealing that green rye. Someone informed on us and when our mother was summoned to the collective farm office, my sister was so frightened that she died. We gave those flat-cakes to the gravediggers when she was buried."

In the middle of winter when people began to die in great numbers, traditional funeral rites were not conducted. At first, people died in their homes, entire families died, and there was no one left to bury them in accordance with Christian rites. The toll on human life has been recorded in various ethnographic sources and documents, as are popular beliefs about death and dying. For example, some believed that vegetables should not be pickled in the presence of a dead person in the village, because the vegetables will have an unpleasant smell and flavor and be inedible. Hlakeriia Prysiazhenko, born in 1928 in the Cherkasy oblast tells us: "Once Father got some beets for pickling. But we had to boil them and eat them instead, because the minute Mother left our yard she'd hear about someone who had died, and once you'd heard about it, you couldn't preserve food."

Ravines and common graves at the cemetery, beet and potato mounds—all became burial sites, for burials without any ceremony. Vasyl Tyshchenko, born in 1926, tells us: "In 1933, my grandfather, grandmother, and aunt died. It was impossible to step away from the burial pit because the moment you stepped away, some other corpse would be thrown in."

There are quite a few accounts about the spring of 1933 when people were dying on a massive scale and those still breathing but unable to move were thrown into pits along with the dead.

Liubov Kurinna, born in 1919 in the Cherkasy oblast, relates: "The dead were carted away to the state farm. They were dumped into a pit just the way they were. Some were still moving. Motria Bakalyna somehow clawed her way out. When we saw each other later, I said to her, 'Motria, you've survived . . . I saw you being thrown into the pit.' She told me how she had managed to claw her way out and how someone had given her bits of bread and nursed her. In those days they carted the dead and dying away in wagons. . . . There was a torgsin here on the corner, and they said that often after burials the earth moved there."

Petro Luchko, born in 1924 in the village of Zahruddia, Kyiv oblast, recounted: "There was a specially assigned cart and two men who collected the dead. For every corpse they picked up, they were given one kilogram of bread. Ten to twenty bodies were laid in a pit. They were simply unloaded, without

a casket. Sometimes, in one night, three families would die. My aunt's entire family gave their souls to God on the same night."

Andrii Hanchenko, born in 1924, from the village of Sofiivka in Chernihiv oblast remembers: "More than a third of the people in our village died. The dead lay in houses, in the streets, and nobody picked them up. When people began starving to death in great numbers, the dead were carted outside the village and buried there. Those who buried them were given rations. Once I was grazing cattle there. Two men brought bodies in a wagon and unloaded them into a pit. Some were still alive."

Another account from the Kirovohrad oblast attests: "A large pit was dug our past the ravine and all the bodies were unloaded there, live ones among them. The man covering up the bodies said, 'Close your eyes, because I'm going to shovel dirt over you.'" A villager from Pryiutivka in Kirovohrad oblast, born in 1924, tells the following: "In my family, five of my brothers and sisters starved to death. Practically the whole village starved to death. Bodies were being carted to the cemetery every day."

Mykhailo Prokopenko, born in 1920 in the village of Krasnosillia, Cherkasy oblast, is certain that "Stalin ordered that Ukraine be robbed, that the grain be seized and shipped out of the country. And children starved to death by the thousands. What is most painful is that those barges, loaded with the grain, were sunk at sea. There were no buyers for it, but Ukraine was left bare." When questioned how he knew about the barges, he replied, "I served in the navy in the 1940s and there were sailors on my ship who sank those barges. We were sitting around once after a lousy meal, dreaming of flat-cakes, and one of them told me the story. But realizing what he had done, he begged us not to say a word about it or he would be put in prison."

These accounts are supported by archival data, which confirm that people were starving to death while grain rotted in the fields and threshing sheds of the collective farms: "This winter, 350 puds of harvested peas, buckwheat, and other produce rotted in a heap at the state farm." (Village of Khyzhyntsi, Vinnytsia oblast.)[2]

Understandably, people suffered all kinds of mental breakdowns, and there were instances of cannibalism and of people murdering their own children—"to stop their suffering."

Records of deaths were not kept, and the government destroyed any accounting books from those years. So many people disappeared without a trace! Some peasants made it to city train stations where they left their children, hoping they would be saved. No one knows what became of them. People were afraid to leave their houses; children were forbidden to go outside.

A couple from the Kyiv Oblast, beginning of XX century.

During Soviet times the famine was never mentioned, the dead were never commemorated, and neither memorial plaques nor crosses were erected. Most villages in Ukraine still have none; in others, crosses and monuments began appearing in the 1990s. But do we have the right to forget such a horrific, deliberate crime perpetrated by the Stalinist regime against Ukrainian peasants? The world should know about it, the world should pray for those millions of innocent, destroyed souls.

Documents and oral testimonies confirm the planned mass murder of Ukrainian peasants by the Russian Bolshevik regime: murder by blockade, violence, and an artificial famine. But even today, the human mind refuses to accept such unspeakable brutality.

Ukrainian culture suffered physical, psychological, and moral-ethical devastation in 1932–1933. To prevent such crimes against humanity from ever occurring in Ukraine again, the young people of this planet must be made aware of what occurred. The educational programs of many countries already include lessons about the Holocaust, and lessons about the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine must also become part of the educational programs of the world.

An integral part of our native tradition is a deeply rooted cult of reverence for ancestors, and the absence of memorial sites in most of the villages in Ukraine is a sign of irreverence for the dead. It is incumbent on us to construct a monument in Kyiv to all those who perished in the three manmade famines in Ukraine, to provide a place where not only the political and civic leaders of our country, but also the leaders of other countries, can pay tribute to the innocent victims.

It is impossible for a tragedy such as the 1932–1933 genocide against the Ukrainian people not to have left its mark on national creativity. The reality of those days is reflected in folklore, the arts, and literature. This is additional proof of the extent of the crimes against humanity that were perpetrated in those cruel times, of the magnitude of the terror-famine.

Bolshevik leaders had anticipated that the starvation of millions of peasants would provoke resistance from the intelligentsia. Thus, a decision was made to destroy those who were likely to speak out against the Bolshevik plan in cities and in villages. As Ivan Dziuba[3] so poignantly observed, "The goal of the SVU[4] trial and of further mass arrests and provocations was to liquidate some [of the intelligentsia], to silence others, and to force still others to accept and glorify all that was happening."[5] The frightened (and sometimes bought off) corps of socialist journalists and writers supported this mission by shaping the stereotypes of the kurkul as an enemy, an agent, a saboteur, a follower of Petliura,

and a counterrevolutionary. Writing the truth about the Famine-Genocide, or even hinting of it, was severely punished by the agents of the NKVD while glorification of the regime was encouraged. As a result, a literature of socialist absurdity emerged. In contrast, the folk writings of the time show that the policies of collectivization and dekurkulization were perceived negatively by the people. The dissemination of such works was prohibited.

Villagers from the Kyiv Oblast, before the famine of 1932–1933, beginning of XX century.

Nostalgic words about "happy" life at the collective farm can occasionally be heard, especially from older people who now live a difficult, lonely life. It is impossible for them to comprehend that it is not the independence of Ukraine that brought them to this state of affairs; it is, instead, the end result of the Soviet legacy of ruination of the human spirit, the destruction of Ukrainian agriculture traditions, the embezzlement of common wealth, and the decline in industry. All of these factors have inevitably converged to create even greater desolation. Thus, today's standard of life in Ukraine is not the result of the failure of independence but the consequence of Soviet imperial policies. Ukrainians channeled their views on the sovietization of the villages in populist folk writings, which, in Soviet times, were either destroyed or kept in inaccessible files under the label "folklore of the de-classed element."

A few samples of this folk creativity, recorded by collectors from the Ethnography Commission of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (1921–1931) and preserved at the Scientific Manuscript Archives Division at the Maksym Rylsky Institute of National Arts and Sciences of Ukraine, are worth including here. These songs, collected from various regions in Ukraine, attest to extensive resistance of the peasants against collective ownership of property. Filled with irony and sarcasm, they poke fun at the new, Soviet methods of farming.

Where are you going, where are you off to,
Where are you dragging your feet?
To the Soz[6] *to be fixed,*
Don't you know?

Father's at Soz, Mother's at Soz,
The children cry along the way.
There's no bread and there's no bacon,
The Soviets took it away.

I'll go out to the garden,
To look at the plants.
Oh, I'd go to the Soz—
But there's naught there but chaos.

Gave up my horses, gave up my wagon,
And now I'm sitting by the Soz;
Life at Soz is good—
One works while nine lay sleeping.[7]

Village folk also responded with wit and humor to the hefty taxes levied on the peasants and to the compulsory surrender of grain, milk, and meat. One example "recommends" breeding rabbits and pigeons to avoid paying the taxes:

We'll not plough and we'll not plant,
A new farming we'll invent—
Chasing rabbits into holes.
Rabbits thriving underground, pigeons winging in the air,
Thus no tax-plan—nothing to declare.

I'm sitting on a wagon,
Rolling slowly down the road.
I'm sick of the commune,
And hungry as hell.

Oh, where are you going,
Where are you hobbling to?
To the district station for rations,
Don't you know?[8]

These songs were sung in public gathering places by minstrels and *kobzars* [Ukraine's wandering folk bards]. But such songs were prohibited, and the authors and performers were arrested and beaten, their musical instruments destroyed. The recorder of the song below noted, "This song was sung by an old blind man at an open marketplace. And when the police arrested him and began marching him to the police station, the man continued to sing":

Wind asks Frost:
Are there warm boots at the Soz?
No boots, only bark sandals—
Soon Soz will fall to pieces.

Oh, look, good people,
What the world has come to now,
The police for this blind beggar
Have become an escort.[9]

Wind asks Frost:
Are there warm boots at the Soz?
No boots, only bark sandals—
Soon Soz will fall to pieces.

Life for us will be just grand,
When Soz meets its end,
Then we'll start to live in splendor,
Once Sverdlov[10] *is gone forever.*[11]

Oh paradise, our paradise,
You have plundered our land,
You have taken our pigs, our cows,
Even the last shirt that we owned.
Many years I've spun, embroidered
Working late into the night.
I sewed with silk, adorning all,
But the commune robbed me bare.

And the scoundrels at the raikom[12]
Take our chickens and our eggs.
Take our oxen,
Sheep, and ponies.[13]
And Lenin asked Trotsky:
Where'd you harvest all that barley?
I sent the communists
To sweep it from the grain bins everywhere.[14]

As a countermeasure to the spontaneous and sardonically critical creations of the peasants, communist authorities encouraged the composition of new Soviet songs. Researchers note that "many journals and newspapers of those days were filled with appeals for new songs about workers, peasants, and Red Army soldiers."[15] They solicited not only the most gifted improvisational artists from the working class, but also many professionals artists (poets, composers, singers, performers, etc.).[16] The "masterpieces" created on command were widely promoted on club stages, in the press, during holiday celebrations and at concerts. A few examples serve to illustrate how clearly they spelled out the ideology behind Soviet rule:

The rich will not deceive us,
We see the enemy from afar
We've settled our accounts with the masters,
And now we'll liquidate the kurkuls.

And to insure that we don't lose our cause
We always will remember:
The liquidation of kurkuls as a class—
That is our obligation.[17]

Not surprisingly, the main theme of the "state-ordered" songs was the glorification of the "leader of the world proletariat." For example:

Hey, singers-minstrels,
Let us sing praises to the Red sky,
The Red Army's mighty force
The people's future joy,
And our beloved Lenin's glory![18]

Newspapers and magazines in those days were also filled with popular songs variously reworked to fit Soviet themes. At the same time, millions of people were dying of starvation. New folkloric compositions were proliferating in the villages, songs full of grief and melancholy and lamentation for loved ones. In 1976, in the village of Luchkyi, Lypovodolyn district, Sumy oblast, well-known folklorist Valentyn Dubravin recorded the lament of Polina Yakivna Ponomar, born in 1914. The performer called her work "A lament for my brothers who died of starvation."

My dear brothers, my young brothers,
Oh my dearest kin,
I meant to bring you up
When our dear mother died.
And then came thirty-three.
So many weeds we ate,
So many kittens we devoured.
My brothers, my young brothers,
My brothers, and my dearest little ones,
I meant to bring you up
When our dear mother died.

But, oh, no matter where I went, no matter how I tried,
To give you up for care, to be raised properly,
No one took you in, and no one gave you anything to eat.
And you ate weeds, and I along with you,
And I survived and I still grieve for you.
And you, dear little children, little brothers,
You suffered greatly as you starved to death.
And when I looked at you,
I wondered where I might get food for you to eat.
But I could not, for there was nothing to be had.
And everything we had they took away.
And why had they no pity for
Such little ones, such frail ones?
My brothers, my dear brothers,
When I imagine now how you would be today,
How handsome you'd have grown,
My brothers, my dear falcons
How hard it was for you, how hard it was for me.
Then spring came and the rye began to ripen,
And you would walk about and say:
"Oh, our dear sister, bring us at least a wheat ear from the field."
And I would gather some and bring some
And crush and pound and cook them too.
And then you'd say, "That is too little for us.
Give us more food."
And though I fed you, you still died.
You died, and then our dearest father died.
And I remained, my brothers, oh my dear ones.
And now when I remember you, how hard it is upon my soul,
How bitter is my heart,
That you died not of some disease,
But that you choked from hunger.
Nobody gave you anything, anywhere.
And so many died walking at that time.
And in our village in a single day
Some thirty souls were taken to the cemetery.
When I think back, how hard it was,
How hard it was for me.
But it was hard for everyone as well.

Village of Zyatkivski, Haysinski region, Poltava District. This woman survived the Holodomor of 1932–1933. Photograph by author.

And what was it about,
That people weren't allowed to live?
Why did they suffer?
For what did they die?
And when you looked about—
The old, the young,
And those of middle age,
All kinds, all died.
How bitter it was, and how hard.
And now, those who are left from thirty-three,
When we may chance to meet, we recollect.
How bitter it was then.
Oh, God, my God.
Oh, God, my God,
Oh, God.[19]

V. Dubrovin collected folklore in various regions of Ukraine, and his collections contain over sixty samples of laments from the time of the Famine-Genocide. The folklorist noted that the most expressive and emotion-laden forms in such folk songs was the lament. "A Lament for My Brothers," a potent account of the horrors endured, becomes the living testimony of the tragedy.[20] Dubrovin also observed that in the 1960s it was possible (though not encouraged) to record laments for those who had died during the Famine-Genocide, but that interest in this genre had noticeably declined by the 1980s. The nightmarish horrors the witnesses had lived through gradually faded with the passage of time. Moreover, folk tradition held that such laments should be restricted to funerals.

The works of writers such as Dokia Humenna, Ulas Samchuk, and Vasyl Barka[21] depict the crimes and the evil that were committed at that time. As émigrés, these writers were able to tell the truth about the tragedy of the Ukrainian people. Scholars divide literary depictions of the tragedy of 1932–1933 into several distinct periods: "1) the time of the famine, when life was reflected in literature in stark realism; 2) under Soviet censorship, when reality was described only symbolically or obscurely; 3) in diaspora post-censorship environments, where the events could (depending on the author's conviction, origins, and the passage of time) be depicted most truthfully and with the maximum effect; and 4) the post-Soviet era [in Ukraine], once the taboo against addressing historical truth had been removed."[22]

Naturally, many of the works that had been written about the famine by eyewitnesses themselves never reached the eyes of the public, because many

writers of that time were crushed under the machinery of Stalinist repressions. It is no wonder that the snow around the writers' union building was blackened by the soot escaping from so many chimneys in those winter days: "The works for which imprisonment was likely were being burned."[23]

Images of the horrible death suffered by the Ukrainian peasants in the years of the Famine-Genocide have been preserved both in literature and in folklore. Since independence, a reevaluation of the past is slowly beginning to take hold, and the stark truth is emerging in post-Soviet Ukrainian literature, a shift exemplified in the poetry of Lina Kostenko, Borys Oliinyk, Vasyl Holoborodko, Petro Kononenko, Volodymyr Bazylevsky, Valerii Illia, and many others.

The causes and consequences of the Ukrainian genocide, for example, are exposed in Petro Kononenko's tragic "Maria at Golgotha," which unmasks the mechanism put into motion by the Bolshevik regime to debase human morality and the human spirit.

Maria
No, it's worse. It is the crucifixion of the spirit!
The world is unaware: USSR
Means terror everywhere, suspicion, ears . . .
Like in a chamber of distorted mirrors,
It's all about denunciations: brother against brother.
Children against mother, against father.
Against the dead, as well, not just the living.[24]

The emergence of the Famine-Genocide theme in art, the mass media, and in historical and literary works, created a resurgence of eyewitness recollections being written down and submitted to those researching that horrific period in our country's history.

In 1993, on the sixtieth anniversary of those grievous times, artists and composers were the first to address the theme of the Famine-Genocide in an independent Ukraine. Symphonic, vocal-symphonic, instrumental chamber, and vocal chamber works stirred audiences to feel the pain of the loss of millions of brothers and sisters. Inspired by a poem by Kateryna Motrych, composer Ivan Karabitsa, composed a vocal-symphonic work he titled "Kateryna's Prayer." The synchronized rendition by a children's choir and an orchestra was striking, and the powerful composition exposed the depth of the tragedy through poetic imagery and expressive music. And when the pleas of starving children resounded in the hall, "Mama, dear Mama, give me some bread!" audiences wept.[25]

In all, 29 musical works marking the tragic events of the Famine-Genocide were performed in the course of commemorative events. Among them were the symphonic poem "1933" by Myroslav Skoryk, "Requiem Mass" by Evhen Stankovych, "Ballad of Thirty-Three" by Hennadii Sasko, "A Parable About Bread," by Viktor Kamensky, "A Prayer to the Mother of God" by Volodymyr Zubytsky, and "Symphony No. 5," which was composed by Levko Kolodub, whose father perished in the 1930s.[26]

This author [i.e., V. Borysenko] heartily concurs with those scholars who believe that the theme of famine in 20th century Ukraine will become an integral part of Ukrainian art and literature. Besides serving artists as an aesthetic and tragic inspiration, it has assumed another role—a powerful educational and nation-building role that underscores the need for an independent [Ukrainian] state.[27]

As the 75th anniversary of the 1932–1933 Famine Genocide drew near, this tragic theme resounded on an ever more prominent scale in the works of native artists. Through the combined efforts of the President of Ukraine [Viktor Yushchenko] and Ukrainian art associations, a competition aimed at selecting the design for a memorial to the victims of the Famine-Genocide to be constructed in the capital of Ukraine was held. The winning entry was "Girl with a Wheat Ear " by sculptors Mykola Obeziuk and Petro Drozdovsky and architect Anatolii Haidamaka.

A powerful exhibit entitled "Declassified Memory," which featured archival documents from the collections of the Department of National Archives of the Security Service of Ukraine, was organized by the Security Service of Ukraine, Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory.

In 2006 and 2007, a traveling exhibit entitled "The Swaying Bells of Memory" was shown in a number of Ukrainian cities. The exhibit consisted of archival documents collected by artist Mykola Siadrysty, documented testimonies of eyewitnesses of the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide, historical objects, period photographs, posters, and fabric wall hangings from the collection of the renowned American civic activist Morgan Williams, and a series of Holodomor-related artistic works by Valerii Franchuk.

To commemorate the victims of the Famine-Genocide, The International Charitable Fund "Ukraine 3000" announced a poster contest. The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, in cooperation with Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Sciences, decided to promote an all-Ukrainian competition for works of scholarly research on the subject "The 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide: Ukraine Remembers."

By decree of the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers (together with a specially formed committee in charge of planning and executing all activities related to the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Famine-Genocide) announced an international competition for the best design of a monument to the victims of 1932–1933, which is to be erected in Washington, D.C.

In addition, competitions for the production of artistic and documentary films, literary works, visual arts, and musical composition in memory of the victims of the genocide against the Ukrainian people were announced.

NOTES

1. One of the most pernicious laws associated with the Famine-Genocide, it allowed the authorities to exile or imprison anyone caught taking five or more ears of wheat from the fields, storage areas, or transport vehicles. Thousands of starving and desperate peasants, including children and old people, violated the law and were arrested or killed on the spot. (Ed.)
2. "Statement to the Vinnytsia Prosecutor's Office from Mykhailo Melnyk, instructor of the Vinnytsia City Office of the Chief Administration for the Distribution of the Press (Zaiava do Vinnytskoi prokuratury vid instruktora Vinnytskoho miskbiuro 'Soiuzpechat' Melnyka Mykhaila)," in Derzhavnyi arkhiv Vinnytskoi obl. Vinnytskyi miskyi viddil roselinspektsii [State Archive of Vinnytsia oblast. Vinnytsia City Department of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection], f. r-994, op. 1, spr. 528, ark. 21.
3. Dziuba, a prominent member of the Ukrainian dissident movement during the 1960s, was briefly imprisoned and expelled from the government sanctioned Writers Union for protesting against the russification of Ukraine. (Ed.)
4. Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, a fictitious political organization invented by the GPU for the purpose of staging a show trial to intimidate the Ukrainian intelligentsia in 1930. (Ed.)
5. Ivan Dziuba, "Literatura sotsialistychnoho absurdu (Kolektyvisatsiia i holodomor u tvorakh 30-tykh rokiv," in *Try holodomory v Ukraini v XX st.*, p. 163.
6. Land Cultivation Collective.
7. Fondy IMFE (Naukovi arkhivni fondy rukopysiv ta fonozapysiv Instytutu mystetstvoznavstva, folklorystyky ta etnolohii im. Maksyma Rylskoho NAN Ukrainy—Scientific Archival Collections of Manuscripts and Audio Recordings of the Maksym Rylsky Institute of Art History, Folklore, and Ethnology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine), f. 1, od. zb. 866, ark. 23, 69. Recorded by S.T. Kukhar, village of Tytkiv, Polonskyi district, Berdychiv region, 1930.
8. Ibid., f. 1, od. zb. 866, ark. 23, 69, ark. 69. Recorded by M. P. Tkach in 1930.
9. Ibid., ark. 22. Recorded by I.Ya. Ilchenko in the village of Ivankivtsi, Hlynskyi district, Kremenchuk region.
10. Yakov Sverdlov. One of Lenin's staunchest supporters, he strenuously objected to the concept of a Ukrainian Communist Party, believing that it was a threat to Russian supremacy and might incite aspirations of Ukrainian autonomy. (Ed.)
11. Fondy IMFE, f. 1, od. zb. 866, ark. 23, 69, ark. 107.
12. District committee. (Ed.)

13. Fondy IMFE, ark. 68. Recorded by D.A. Umanets in the village of Tutyrivtsi, Reshetylivskyi district, Poltava oblast, in 1930 with a note from the recorder: This song has been around for seven years under the title "Grandfather has gone to deliver eggs at the raikom."
14. Ibid., ark. 75.
15. I. P. Berezovskyi, Ukrainska narodna tvorchist (20–30-ti roky XX st.) (Kyiv, 1973), p. 8.
16. Ibid., p.8.
17. Ibid., p. 75.
18. Ibid., p. 68.
19. Valentyn Dobrovin, "Narodna pamiat pro holodomor," *Narodna tvorchist ta etnohrafiia*, 5–6 (1993), pp. 35–37.
20. Ibid., p. 36.
21. Three émigré writers who authored books or articles on the Holodomor. Humenna, who began writing in Ukraine in the 1920s, incurred Soviet censure for several of her works. Escaping from Ukraine during the German occupation, she lived in displaced persons camps in Austria and Germany where she penned a collection of stories in an anthology titled *The Kurkul's Christmas Eve*. She later settled in the United States. Samchuk, whose work includes a book about the Holodomor and another about the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (an army that fought a losing battle against German and Soviet oppressors), emigrated to Canada and served as head of an organization of Ukrainian writers in exile. Barka, who recently passed away in the United States, is best known for his book *The Yellow Prince*, a harrowing account of the Holodomor, which has been translated into French and served as an inspiration for one of the first motion pictures about the Holodomor to be produced in Ukraine (*Famine 33*, directed by Oles Yanchuk). (Ed.)
22. Tetiana Kononchuk, "Do pravdy pro traheiiu holodomoru 1932–1933 rokiv," in *Try holodomory v Ukraini v XX st.*, p. 201.
23. Ibid.
24. Petro Kononenko, *Holosy v pusteli* (Kyiv, 2006), p. 126.
25. Halyna Stepanchenko, "Trahichni akordy rekviiemu," *Narodna tvorchist ta etnohrafiia*, 5–6 (1993), p. 38.
26. Ibid., p. 39.
27. Kononchuk, "Do pravdy pro traheiiu holodomoru 1932–1933 rokiv," p. 216.















The 1932–1933 Ukrainian Genocide: An Oral History




Vinnytsia Oblast

Eyewitness account of Maria Terenivna Havrysh,
born in 1925. Village of Diakivtsi, Lityn district.

Babusiu,[1] *do you remember the famine of 1932–1933?*
I remember a lot. I know a lot. It's a long story. It was 1932, or maybe 1933, I can't tell you for certain. I was eight years old. I was born in 1925. Oh, I can't describe it as it should be described; it's difficult for me. It's hard to look back. I don't want to think about it . . . . I was eight years old, but I remember it all. My father was a farmer. He owned twelve *desiatyn*[2] of land. They came and took everything: the horses, the oxen, the land, the orchards and the woods, and the two barns. They tore down the barns and moved them to the collective farm. They took shirts and boots and old clothes. They took all the grain . . . they even took what was on the stove, on the shelves, in jugs or in pots. Mama was pouring millet into a container—they cleaned everything out.

Who was it that took everything from you?
Lasaveta's father, Lidka Karmanova's father . . . they came back and arrested my father. He got two years. He was jailed here, in Stryzhavka. I've already forgotten how long he stayed in jail. He escaped after a while. Once they tried to drive us from our house. They took all the windows out. There were eight of us children, we were sitting, naked, sitting on the *pich*[3] because they had taken all our shirts, all our clothes. They harassed Mother, they asked her where her bandit-husband had disappeared to, they shouted at her. The cold blew in through the windows. There was a policeman from Litvyn with them who gave us a small piece of bread and a bit of sugar. He told the others to let us stay in the house over the winter. They left us alone after that and didn't try to evict us any more. I can't describe it all . . .

Babusiu, tell us, was it possible to hide anything?
Where could you possibly hide anything? Father had buried a sack of potatoes and a sack of fodder in the ground. But there was a fellow named Oktav who lived in the village. He told the village soviet about it. So they came, dug it up, took it all away, and then beat Father. That Oktav had something on everyone in the village; he denounced your great-grandfather Todor. But God punished him! His whole family fell to pieces: One was murdered—his daughter was stabbed to death—and his son is a pauper, even though he lacks neither arms nor legs. His children and his grandchildren are paying for his sins, for his bloodsucking ways. . . . Everybody knew that Oktav was being paid for it all.

Babusiu, what became of those who joined the collective right away?
In the beginning, when everyone was being told about collectivization, the more clever ones sold their farmsteads, their lands, and moved out to Vinnytsia or to Kyiv, running off wherever they could. Those who joined the collective at the very beginning had it a little easier. They were allowed to keep some things, and during the famine they were given food rations. But those who resisted were cleaned out. All our pots[4] where mother kept buckwheat or millet were emptied.

And in the field, Babusiu, was it possible to find anything, fruit or wheat?
Field? What field, child? There was nothing to pick. That's how it was.

Did you know about "The Five Wheat Ears Law"?
I don't know. Maybe there was something like that, I don't remember. I've remembered other things: how they came at night, removed a window pane, and stole into the house. Our friends were among them, my godfather, too. They lit matches over us and looked at us. Everybody was asleep and didn't hear a thing. But I saw them, going up the ladder to the loft, wrapping an icon in cloth. Father was already working at the sugar refinery in Zheshky then. So they yelled at him, "Get up, you *kurkul* ugly mug, we're conducting a search!!!" That's when they took [my brother] Kyrylo away. He was sleeping on the bench. We were a large family. Everyone slept where they could.

How old was Kyrylo?
Do I know? I don't remember. Old enough to be taken into the army. They pulled him off the bench, beat him, and said that it was his bandit-father who had hidden the icon in the house—just look at what he owns. Then they took him away to Lityn for one night. Mama said they beat him badly. They broke his ribs and stuck his fingers into the crack of the door, injuring him horribly. Mama came home crying. She ran into Semen. Rumors were already floating around the village about what had happened. So Semen said to her, "I know about the icon. It was me. I was flushing the well, and I found it there and took it to the village soviet." It was those local agents. They had been to our house hundreds of times, searching, and in the end, they had set it all up. Semen told my mother to go and tell the investigator that there was a witness. Mama went to Lityn to see the investigator. Then Semen testified that he was the one who had found the icon and had given it to the village soviet. Kyrylo was released and mother took him to the hospital. When he came back, he said that if he lived long enough, he would take revenge on all of them. That's how it was. May God have mercy. They didn't even want to take my brothers into the army. At first they were assigned

to labor brigades—Kyrylo, that is—they didn't want to bother with the younger ones. "The sons of a *kurkul,* ugly *kurkul* mugs," they'd say. And then in 1941 all my brothers were mobilized to serve, no more "sons of a *kurkul.*" All four of my brothers perished in the war. Not one of them came back.

Babusiu, how did you survive? What did you eat?
I remember, oh, it was dreadful! How hard it is to endure hunger. Not a stem of pigweed could be found, not a leaf of sorrel. I just wandered about, weak and exhausted. Others had already combed through everything. With the older ones we'd go pick some *leverda,*[5] if we could find it. Mama would chop it up, pour boiling water over it, add a few grains of salt, and we would eat it. It stunk terribly—it smelled of garlic. What could you do? We ate it. We dug up horseradish and ate that too. You've never eaten horseradish? Roasted, it is so very sweet. In the spring, linden trees began to bud, and the boys would go into the woods to break off a few branches. Mama dried the leaves and buds in the oven and ground them into a kind of powder, using a millstone. I remember, I remember so well . . . she stood right here at the stove stirring boiling hot water into the powder and it rose, so very green, and smelled so wonderful. Also in the spring, I'm not sure when . . . was it in 1934? . . . she sowed some beets. Then she dug up the weeds around the sprouts, brought them here and steamed them. That's the kind of scraps we ate.

Hunger made us swell up. We lay unmoving, dying. Mama stayed in bed; she had no strength even to fire up the stove, her legs were so swollen. A Jewish woman stopped in; she looked us over and went home. She returned later and gave each of us some brandy, half a shot for Mama, then a bit of bread. She cooked some cornmeal and fed us, not much, because, she said if we ate too much we would die. That's how she saved us. At that time, there were a lot of Jews[6] in our village. Half the village, to be sure. They were spared because they had no land. Maybe it's because of them that we survived. Folks were able to get some cereal or some bread from them. Our bodies were hungry, empty shells. I had a younger brother, Mishka. He was dying. A neighbor came over with an egg. She spread his lips apart and poured the egg into his mouth. He came to very quickly. Later on, Omelko took him in—my older sister Holianka was married to him, and he worked at the village soviet at that time. They were better off than we were, but they couldn't help much because we were a large family. Holianka had a daughter, Antoshka. Omelko picked Mishka up into his arms and took him into his home. He lived with them until 1941. That was the help we got. It's hard to look back at those days. I could tell you more, but it's hard for me.

Babusiu, who else among the villagers wasn't starving?
The Jews weren't and the NKVD agents, those that robbed us. Everyone else suffered horribly. My father knew how to make windows, doors, build houses, and so people said to Kyrylo, "Let's make an oil press, let's press oil. Otherwise, we'll never make it through alive." So they did. Folks in neighboring villages heard about it and came over to press oil. They pressed oil out of poppy seeds and out of rape seeds. Nobody in our village had ever done that. We got the leftover poppy mush. We couldn't wait for it; we ate raw mush, we ate steamed mush and boiled mush; we ate any kind of poppy mush.

One evening they were pressing oil. We were sitting on the stove, I remember, waiting for the mush. Kyrylo was pressing oil using a wedge. The oil was flowing . . . we didn't even hear the head of the village soviet and his assistant come into the house. The assistant started yelling, "What's going on? Hands up!!!" Kyrylo hit him over the head with the wedge he had in his hands. Mother began crying, scolding Kyrylo, for that would be the end of him, but Kyrylo just said, "I don't care any more." The head of the village soviet winked at Kyrylo, egging him on to hit him too, but then he said "Do with him what you will," and left. We were frightened. Father and Kyrylo threw the assistant out into the cold, saying whatever will happen will happen. Later, Mama told them to go out and check on the assistant, and Father stepped out. The assistant stood up and walked away, holding his head. He never came back after that.

In the spring of 1934 we planted potatoes at the edge of the woods. We didn't have anything to plant, but the Jews had given us potato peels. The peels sprouted and we had wonderful potatoes. Mama planted some corn, too.

Babusiu, was it possible to barter for something or to buy anything in town?
What do I know about the town? I was very young then. The older ones would go to Vinnytsia. My sister Hustia did. They would work the whole week for the Jews. Hustia and the others fetched water and cleaned; they did whatever they were told to do. To tell the truth, the Jews paid well. Also, the Jews would help them buy bread. Hustia and the others had to bring it all back home to the village before lunch and then go back again. In 1941, the Germans came to Vinnytsia and began digging up the pits.

What pits, Babusiu?
For those who were repressed. They had been executed and buried in pits. Antoshka, she's one of the Baziuks, that's our family too, she came and told us about it. She had recognized her husband by his jacket. In those days you wore a jacket if you didn't have a shirt. Her husband hung his jacket over the fence

once, and a pig ripped one of the sleeves. Antoska sewed a patch on it. And when people were trying to find their loved ones in the pit, she spotted a body wearing that jacket. The corpses hadn't rotted. They just turned black. She came and told us all about it. People in the village heard about it, and then the officials from the village soviet came to her house. They demanded that she confess everything, but she said that none of it was true, that she had seen nothing and she knew nothing. They ordered her to keep her mouth shut. But she's family, and she'd come over and tell me everything.

What became of the orphans?
Hanishcha's father had been evicted from his house, and a shelter was set up in that house. A woman looked after them. I went to school with one of them.

Babusiu, was there any cannibalism in your village?
In our village I don't know, though I had heard of things like that. The neighboring villages suffered a horrible famine: Maidan Litynetskyi and Bahrynivtsi. It was even worse there than it was in Diakivtsi. They ate children's flesh there.

Babusiu, who do you think was responsible for the deaths of so many people?
Stalin, of course.

Recorded by Svitlana Balynska, a student at the Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Halyna Pavlivna Tymoshchuk,
born in 1925. Village of Tretivka, Komsomol district.

Do you remember a famine in 1932–1933?
I remember one hundred percent. I was eight years old. I know all about it. First, there was collectivization; everything was confiscated from everybody, including from us. They took my father's horses. We had everything: cattle, pigs, sheep—they took it all. And the collective farm had already been set up. They came, and whatever people had, whatever there was—wheat, rye, potatoes—they took it all. All the livestock. Everything. Father didn't want any part of the collective farm, so they took our cow. We were left without a cow. In 1932 we still had a little to eat; we had hidden some things. That was in September, and things held up like that until January; we still had something to eat. And then came 1933, and in 1933 we had nothing. January, February, March—we began to starve. All we had

was water. My grandfather died. My mother's father. As for my father, my mother, and my sister and me—our bodies began to swell. Good folks lay dying along the river bank. The famine had come. 1933. It rained heavily. People were weeding beets. There was nothing to eat, and many people died. My mother went to the head of the collective (his last name was Koliada) and said to him, "At least take my two girls. And we'll die, if that's how it has to be." He was kind and I know he liked Mother. And so he said, "Bring your two children." And he took us in. His wife was in charge of the nursery, and my sister became her helper. Later, my mother worked at the nursery canteen as a dishwasher. I was still young at the time, only eight. The head of the collective took me into his home.

So we survived while others died, all of them, it seems—many, many. I don't know how many thousands. We lasted until the harvest. And at harvest time we had potatoes to pick . . . we had planted some before. We had gone to Berdychiv and had sold our clothes there. We sold them, and Mama bought potatoes and some seeds; we planted a garden. After the harvest it got easier. We had a bit of rye. We milled flour with our old millstones and baked things to eat. By now we were involved with the collective farm. Instead of paying workers with money, they started *trudodni*[7]; it was a collective farm, after all. And we had no cow. It had been taken away. They took everything. The officials took it all because Father didn't want to join the collective . . . because he refused to submit to them.

Party agents arrived from surrounding towns or villages and began robbing people. They took everything. They used sticks to poke around where things might be hidden. The representative of the village soviet was in charge. Some regional representatives were there, too. They made their rounds in gangs.

How did people protect themselves, so as not to give anything up? They screamed. They cried. They protested. They swore that they wouldn't hand anything over, but nothing helped. The agents took everything. They shoved people aside and took their cows and people couldn't say a word.

A party member came with them. He's not around any more. He drove himself too hard and he died. His name was Stepanets.

Nineteen thirty-three arrived. In the spring, they built a canteen and cooked meals for people. The new man, Koliada, was sent here. This Koliada started the children's shelter and the canteen. People went to work at the collective farm; those who joined were taken care of.

Under Stalin people were punished for gathering any wheat for themselves. Some people were sentenced to five years, three years, depending on how many ears of wheat they found and kept. That was in 1935 already, after 1933 and 1934 had passed.

By April, by March of 1933 people already had nothing to eat. In 1932 they still had things stashed away. But by 1933 it was all over—people began dying, falling over, there was absolutely nothing.

They died, leaving children behind. Relatives took them in. People helped one another. Those with a cow shared the milk to help nourish others a little.

Pigweed was a staple, wild geraniums, nettles. What else? Rotten potatoes were dug up. We made potato flat-cakes out of those old rotten potatoes. Mama would make a sort of a mash; she would go to Berdychiv to buy some kind of flour, she would mix up a mash, throw it into a pot of boiling water, and that's what we ate.

How many people died in the village? Are there any statistics?
I can't say. But many, many people. Where were they buried? At the cemetery. A huge pit was dug out and they threw them in, even live ones. The live ones would say, "I'm not dead yet," and they were told, "Am I supposed to come back for you another time?" Those who buried the dead were given bigger rations. There wasn't any cannibalism in our village.

Well, those pits have grown over with weeds, but some people know of them—they were big pits. Relatives of those who starved to death are still around, and they know and commemorate their dead. They place flower wreaths there. But those whose relatives have all died, nobody commemorates them. In Soviet times nobody commemorated anyone. There's no cross at the site.

Who's to be blamed for it all? Do I know? They've all died off. Lots of their relatives have, too. What's the use of blaming them if they're no longer alive?

Recorded by Vitali Skrypnyk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Nadia Dmytrivna Lutsyshyn, born in 1920. Village of Kryshchyntsi, Tulchyn district.

There were the two of us: my younger brother, born in 1932, and me. The harvest wasn't very good. It had been dry, but it was still possible to get by. But then everything was seized to fill a quota, and then some; all the grain was cleaned out.

Brigades of eight to ten men from the region arrived and went to all the houses. Some people had stashed away some grain. My father had. We

had a stove with a niche underneath, so my father shoved a sack of barley there. Mama sealed it up, and camouflaged it by putting firewood on top of it. But when Father went into the village (we lived at the very edge of the village), he heard that the men in the brigades had metal poles that they used to poke everywhere, even in the ground, looking for grain. So that night, he and Mother took it all apart. They pulled that sack of barley out and hid it away to use for sowing. But those men came and seized it all. Mama had poured some of it into huge pots, pots that were used for cooking for weddings or for funerals. Those pots were kept up in the attic, and Mama poured grain into them and into some jugs. But they searched everywhere. They emptied the pots, the jugs, and took it all. All we had left for the winter months were some beets in the cellar and maybe ten or fifteen pumpkins.

Everything was taken away. We were pressured into joining the collective. Our neighbor joined: He had six children. Those who resisted were undone . . . everything to the last grain was seized.

After everything was confiscated, spring arrived and there was nothing to eat. Mama gathered up all the useful items from our house and went to barter them south of the Dnister River. We were all starving. She took all kinds of odds and ends—carpets, homespun linen sheets, her clothing . . . she bartered for two kilos of whatever was available . . . she bartered away everything she could.

My brother was a year and a half old. He was born in 1932. His legs were like sticks. Father's legs swelled up.

I was still able to walk. It was late spring, and when the cherries ripened, I sneaked over to Grandfather's (my father's father) and picked cherries until I could no longer hold the basket. Whatever was in the garden was picked, dug up, even last year's potatoes, which had been frozen and had rotted in the soil. . . . We scrubbed them; we baked flat-cakes out of corn mush. We scraped the corn stalks—they were so thick up on top—we scooped out the cores. Mama pounded them in the mixing bowl and then baked the mush.

We ate everything we saw. All kinds of weeds: nettles, pigweed. And when the beets ripened at the collective farm, we ate those. That was when Mama worked at the collective farm. But it was impossible to pull the nicer beets from the ground because the quality control brigadier followed the workers and watched what they were doing. Nevertheless, we learned to get by. Working at the head of the line, Mama took the best beet she could find and brought it home. I washed it and then Mama sliced it up and stashed it in a clay pot. Out of nettles and other weeds we cooked a kind of gruel.

There was nothing. It was all confiscated. We had a cow, but we couldn't slaughter it. The cow had no milk, but we felt sorry for it.

There were those who had joined the collective early on. They worked at the collective farm and were in power. They had things. Those who didn't have anything died.

Many died. Two or three bodies were buried together in a pit. There was no time to dig individual graves.

There's a clearing at the cemetery where people were buried with no markers. Since then, a cross has been erected, and services are now conducted. Before, no one really knew where people were buried.

The young ones and the elderly died the most, those who couldn't provide for themselves. The strongest carted the dead away.

Everybody was afraid. Afraid to hide anything. If anything was found, it was taken. Those who hid things were arrested and sentenced.

Some returned. My father was sentenced for having served with the Whites,[8] but he returned two months later. Meanwhile, all our grain had been taken, as were our horses and our cow. We were evicted from our house. I went to Grandfather's.

People who sheltered those that had been evicted were condemned, too. . . . Folks who had picked a few ears of wheat were taken away and never returned. They just disappeared.

There was not a homestead where someone didn't die. So many, many people died. Our neighbors' father died at the beginning of the famine, and a little boy, he was about five, was left all alone. His uncle still had some food so the little boy stole into his uncle's house and ate something. As punishment, he was thrown into the cellar. He died there.

People traveled to barter for grain. They traveled south of the Dnister River, and that's how they survived.

Who knows who organized it. A brigade would appear . . . eight to ten men with spikes . . . it was impossible to do anything about it. Everything was confiscated. Nobody defended themselves . . .

Two brothers, our relatives, died.

Those who had any gold or silver or money took it over to Tulchyn and traded it for flour and grain. Things were better in Tulchyn.

Frogs didn't last long. People caught them all. All the cats were eaten, the pigeons, the frogs; people ate everything. I imagined the scent of delicious food as we ate weeds and beets.

Maybe if we had joined the collective sooner, things would have been different. Those who didn't join were cleaned out, to the last grain.

The more prosperous ones, the *kurkuls*, were cleaned out, too, and their possessions were sold at the market.

In our village, there were six families of Jews. They all ran off to Tulchyn. But we were people of the soil; we didn't go anywhere. There were women here who had never seen a train in their lives.

I was eleven or twelve years old at the time of the famine.

Some stole from others. One man stole a horse from a neighbor. He chopped it up, putting the meat in pots and burying it underground. The man was found out though; he was taken away and sentenced. Chickens and pigs were stolen.

People disappeared. Everyone was afraid. They say committing suicide is a great sin. So people suffered. They lingered and eked out their last days as best they could.

The Feast of the Holy Trinity is now a day for us to commemorate the famine victims. All those who perished in the famine are now memorialized.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko (2005).

Account of Oleksandra Mykoliuk, born in 1915. Village of Selyshche, Lityn district.

There was a famine. Why was there a famine? Because grain was seized . . . a brigade made the rounds and seized everything. They went searching everywhere. People tried to hide things. They buried grain underground, but the brigade poked everywhere with spikes and confiscated everything. Taxes were imposed; if people had no money, they even took pillows as taxes.

And we had nothing. We had one piglet. When it came time to satisfy the collective's meat quota, they turned up and said, "Hand over your meat!" Where were we supposed to get it? We had no meat, so they took our piglet.

Brigades were formed—groups of eight to ten men. They beat people, frightened them, and they searched.

So many people perished. They ate everything they had, even clothing. Then they died. Starving, they would be walking along and suddenly just drop dead.

Who picked them up? The stronger ones did. They were buried in pits, not in graves. That's how it was.

Stealing in the field? How was that possible? They beat anyone they caught, fiercely. People were tried and sentenced for taking an ear of wheat.

People ate whatever they could get their hands on. Dogs, cats, even children. It was terrible. Nobody cared about anyone. You're dying? Die!

Who organized it? Most likely the government: taking grain, property, possessions, starving the people.

In the spring, we ate linden buds, rotten potatoes, fried potato pancakes. Did folks survive? They died! Can any human live on that?

Gold was bartered. What did they get for it? Not something to eat but cloth. They did whatever they wanted. You survived only if you had some flour or some grain. It was a black death. Lord have mercy.

Opportunists who worked at the collective farm were given bread. There they would be, walking along with the bread, and there was my grandmother, begging. They'd give her a piece. She was old and she survived . . .

You're walking along and there's someone lying on the ground, begging for food, dying. Things were so terrible.

I wasn't so young at the time, so my mother joined and went to work at the collective farm. It was forbidden to take even an ear of wheat from the farm. People were put on trial for that! It was very difficult.

Everyone was fleeced and wrung out. Cleaned out.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko (2005).

Hanna Fedorivna Mazuryk remembers.

Born in 1911, village of Selyshche, Lityn district.

What could you do? We grated beets, ate cabbage, whatever we could. Many people of my age died. I worked at the hospital at that time. I worked for a while in the kitchen. The poor peasants would come begging for a few grains of salt, a drink of water. The next day we would find them beside the hospital, dead. A pit was dug at the cemetery. The dead were buried there, and that was that. That's the kind of misfortune we lived through. It was difficult for people, but where could they go? What could we do?

Any money we had was taken for taxes. It was easier for those who had a cow . . .

Brigades were organized, and they took everything, probably for themselves. They took everything for the government, for the city—the city needed it. That's how we lived. There was nothing to cook any gruel with, and they didn't care. . . . They knew where our grain was stored, where to look. Even if it was buried in the ground, they would find it.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko (2005).

Account of Hanna Oleksandrivna Maslianchuk, born in 1922. Village of Selyshche, Lityn district.

We had a cow, so it wasn't as bad for us, but all the other people starved. In 1933, in the spring, when the acacia bloomed, we picked the leaves and the flowers, dried them, and made flat-cakes out of them. We picked nettles and cooked nettle soup.

Our neighbors didn't have a cow. They all swelled up. There were four of them, and they all died. There were a lot of dead people in the streets.

People had everything, then they came and took the grain away. There were orders from the government, from the village soviet, to seize everything.

Where could you hide anything? We had an underground storage bin for potatoes. Our neighbors came over, and we dug out the potatoes. They were big potatoes, and they hadn't rotted; they had just shriveled. We took those potatoes, grated them, saved the juice, and made potato pancakes.

We ate whatever there was. There was nothing to be had anywhere. The stores were bare. There was no place to work for money. Those who had a cow were better off. They gave people nothing at the collective farms. Nothing at all.

We ate all kinds of weeds. In the fall, with the harvest, it was a little easier. But some people . . . there was one family . . . they grew weak, swelled up, all starved to death.

Burial was simple: They would go up and down streets, pick up the corpses, take them out to the cemetery, and bury them there.

They found headcheese[9] in one house in the neighborhood; it had children's feet in it. Children were caught and killed; their flesh was sold and eaten. This happened in our village. Nobody was arrested though—there was no law and no order in those times. People survived however they could.

In the spring they chased people away from the wheat, with big sticks. Some people were tried and sentenced for taking wheat ears.

There was a good harvest that year, but everything from the collective farm was seized and taken away. The collective farms were to have nothing. People were to have nothing.

There was a dog; they killed it and ate it.

Some twenty people died in the street; 1933 was a terrible year.

People didn't defend themselves because they were afraid. Those who protested were arrested and taken away.

Our neighbors were starving, and we gave them milk. We helped them.

There was the Artemchuk family, the whole family—the husband, the wife, a girl, and a boy, all starved to death.

By order of the village soviet, a wagon made the rounds and picked up the dead and transported them to the cemetery.

Toward autumn, those who had planted potatoes had it easier. In 1934 we already had a small crop.

We kept nuts in a cup, but they took them all. Everything in the pantry was seized. They cleaned us out.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko (2005).

Account of Nadia Zakharivna Ovcharuk, born in 1920. Village of Selyshche, Lityn district.

We kept the grain in jugs, but still they took it all. They poured what was in the jugs into sacks and took it away. I never saw any compassion for children.

I remember how my aunt made biscuits out of the dried leaves of linden trees: She dried the leaves in the oven, pulled out the veins, and baked biscuits. Wherever there were potatoes in the field, last year's rotted potatoes, people quickly picked them.

I was in fourth grade. My friend, a girl who sat next to me in class, died. People swelled up from hunger and died. Some were buried properly; others lay along the road, all swollen.

I didn't swell up. I was an only child and we had a cow, we had milk; that made a difference.

On the way home from town I saw a corpse under a fence. We recognized who it was, though it was almost impossible to tell. Somehow, slowly, people were buried. Without any service. At the cemetery.

There were those who helped one another.

And just imagine, in the middle of the night, for no reason, a truck would stop (they were called "black ravens") in front of a house. They would go in and say, "Get dressed. Where to? You'll find out when you get there." That's how people vanished.

Poorer folk starved more, and more of them died. Three of my classmates died. Old people died, too. Our neighbors—the parents survived, but their only daughter, a young woman of eighteen or twenty, died.

They took absolutely everything from people's homes.

Because there were no stalls available at the market, anything to be sold was laid out on the ground. The poor boys and girls would run past and steal rolls. Nobody said anything, nobody scolded them. That's how it was.

Once, on my way to school, I saw a wagon going by. On it sat a policeman, a driver, some other man, and a pair of shoes. Afterwards, I heard women talking; they said that that man had murdered two children and that he had been taken to the police station.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko (2005).

Volodymyr Semenovych Verkhivsky,
born in 1917. Village of Nakazne.

During the famine everything was very expensive at our little market. A woman was selling meat and headcheese. The police realized that the meat was child's flesh, and they took the woman away. The village soviet had its office in the center of the village. Chaiun, from the village of Puhachivka, was the director. Such a communist he was. He threw the woman into the cellar. She was brought in by the police and Chaiun threw her into the cellar and forgot about her. She died there the next day.

I can tell you how people were forced into the collective farm. In Zhashkiv, they assembled all the people for a meeting. At the time, Zhashkiv was divided into two sections. The director of the school, Kalinovsky, presided over the meeting. There was no electricity then, only kerosene lamps. Right where the theater is, in the village center, where the newspaper offices are now, a crowd gathered across the street. The police stood in the doorway holding candles and kerosene lamps. "Let's organize collective farms, and we'll name them Petrovskoho and Kalinina," they said and called for a vote. All of the people there were well off . . . they called them *kurkuls*. They thumped the ground with their sticks. Then they raised them and shouted, "We don't need those *kolhosps*! Providing for all the good-for-nothings, for scoundrels? We're told we have to hand over our horses, our harrows, and our sowers, but we won't join the *kolhosp*." There was a lot of shouting, but nonetheless, names and managers were chosen for both collective farms.

Mykyta Polishchuk stepped forward and said: "To hell with this *kolhosp*." He lived in Horodyshche village. His house had a zinc-plated roof. He had an orchard, bee hives, a farm. They took him away. His wife was left with the children. He returned from the Solovky[10] in 1937. His mother said to him, "Mykyta, so you'll join the collective," and he started cursing and replied, "What did I tell you? I haven't and I won't." He didn't live long. His wife died and he found himself another woman but died soon after. I went to his funeral. I asked his son, "Was your father right in not joining the collective?" And the son replied, "He was a fool, a fool, for not joining. He should have joined." So I said, "And would you have joined?" How his father worked, always in a straw hat, in bast shoes, in coarse linen pants. Every morning, he got up early, he toiled every day, working his land with his horses. "He was a fool. And what can you do?" he told me. "I'm a party member; I'm a communist, a public education inspector." A father and a son and yet such different views.

Recorded by Oleksandr Piddubny, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Oleksandra Nikolivna Kolesnik remembers.

Born in 1917, village of Riv, Zhmeryn district.

In 1932–1933 there was a famine. The authorities had *dekurkulized* us even earlier, taking everything. My mother lost her mind. She took our trash and dumped it at the militia station. We had nothing. There were seven children in our family.

Everything was confiscated. All the pots were emptied.

Strangers arrived from Zhmerynka. One, the chief, came from our village, a Komsomol member; he was the one who had confiscated all our wheat. Father said to him, "Throw the sheaves this way, horizontally, to knock at least a few ears out for the children," but he held them up-and-down, not to lose a single ear. He's no longer here, he died.

They forced people to work at the collective farm. Those who joined voluntarily, their farmsteads were left to them, and those who didn't want to join were cleaned out—their grain, their livestock, everything was taken away. They started their rounds early in the morning, around eight.

Recorded by Snizhana Tarnavska, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Petro Serhiovych Voitiuk, born in 1921. Village of Riv, Zhmeryn district.

All those heads of committees enlisted all kinds of ruffians who didn't know anything about working the soil and as a result had nothing.

We hid flour in laundry troughs. We dug a trough where water flowed. We brought the flour out at night and threw it in. At the top, the flour got wet and gluey; inside a hard crust formed, making it easy to get at the flour.

And the penalty for picking wheat ears, it was horrible. From three to five years. If they caught someone in the wheat field, and how much could a person take, a handful or two to mill and bake something for a child. If caught, that was it. Immediate deportation without a trial. One man, he had maybe three children, was a blacksmith. He went out to the field and stole, I don't know how much; he was brought before the village committee. "So you went and stole?" They beat him horribly, they tortured him, they twisted his head completely from back to front, twisted his head and threw him down the steps.

Two-thirds of the people in our village starved to death, about 800.

Recorded by Snizhana Tarnavska, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Dnipropetrovsk Oblast

Account of Mykola Petrovych Khmelnyk, born in 1923. Village of Olenivka, Mahdalyniv district.

It's not hunger I remember, but The Famine. People were starved to death. I was 10 years old at the time. It was terrible how many people starved to death.

What drought? It was all Stalin's orders, Stalin, who hated Ukrainians and wanted to kill off all of them. Those robbers came and seized everything they could. They were Stalin's lapdogs. Heartless degenerates who stole all the food from the people. Sometimes they'd show a piece of paper, but who knows what was scribbled on it. Those agents of Stalin allowed themselves everything and anything. If they felt like it, they beat you; if they felt like it, they spat on you. . . . They had pistols—otherwise people refused to give up their grain. When they see weapons, people are afraid.

They even looked in chimneys. There was a case where one man, Yakym Samiilo, had shoved a sack of flour into the well. And when he pulled it out, most of the flour was perfectly good.

Those lackeys had sharp sticks and poked the ground, searching. They searched all around the yard that way. They ripped the floorboards up. They searched in the attic.

Those who joined the collective didn't starve. But then later, at the end of 1933, even those who had joined didn't get any help. The head of the collective farm and those near and dear to him lived well while the rest suffered.

They didn't take clothing and footwear. But if you didn't keep your livestock out of sight in the woods somewhere, you would lose it. I hid my horse in a nearby grove, but soon after, when we had nothing at all to eat, my neighbor and I slaughtered the horse and we ate horsemeat with our families for a month.

For stealing the so-called "five ears," they put you in prison for 15 years or deported you to Siberia. Soldiers or ordinary wretched people who had been bought patrolled the fields, guarding the wheat. If they caught anyone taking anything, they beat the person and then passed him on to the party officials. The patrols were ordinary people serving in the name of the party or soldiers who served so they wouldn't starve.

Most of the peasants didn't join the collective, and that's why they starved to death. Nobody wanted to hand their grain over to the collective farm, or their cow or their goat. It was impossible to keep animals openly in the yard because they would take them without saying anything. They came around two, three times. They didn't believe people who said that they already had nothing. They would stand up on top of the hill looking to see if smoke was rising from any

chimney. If it was, that meant there was something cooking. They'd go to that house to seize the food.

People ate tree bark and tree buds. Almost all the dogs and cats had been eaten over the winter months. Every day new corpses lay in the street. How terrible that was. How they tried to wipe out the poor people. May they all drown.

Those who lived close to town bartered everything for bread. Some tried to stand in bread lines in town for a piece of bread. But they checked passports in town. Peasants had no papers, so they were taken back to the village.

About 400 people starved to death in Olenivka. I remember that all our neighbors died. My mother also died in the famine.

It's perfectly clear that the blame lies with Stalin the Satan and the party. They wanted to annihilate Ukrainians. They are responsible for all the deaths.

Recorded by a student attending Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Zhytomyr Oblast

Account of Lida Oleksandrivna Kolomiets,
born in 1924. Village of Pishchanka, Zhytomyr district.

By 1933 the famine was raging. The harvest was seized! They took whatever we had: our beans, millet, grass, everything! A man came and he took all of it, all of it. We were left barefoot and naked . . .

I don't know where it came from, I don't know. Our cow was taken, they dug up 60 potatoes. They took them to a shed and locked them inside . . . they gave us a basket of potatoes. My grandmother, they gave my grandmother a bucket of potatoes, locked the shed, and posted a guard in front of it . . . the woman who did this, she was from our village. She is dead now—Halia Tarasyshyn.

And clothing, too. Not just the cow and the potatoes, they took clothing, too. My mother had a wooden chest, and she kept everything in that chest: linen cloth, skirts, old things not new ones. They seized it all! Only Grandmother got to keep her bundle of clothes that she had put away for her burial.

My father was exiled. My mother remained. When they took our cow and potatoes from us, I went to my mother's brother. I was older, I was nine years old.

Was it possible to hide some grain, some potatoes?
They confiscated everything they found. And they found all of it. They found it up above and below ground, they cleaned everything out and seized it all. These are the ones who took everything: Pavlo Vyporokhniuk. He was a distant relative. A woman, Hania Todoska, came too. Three of them came.

What was the "Five Wheat Ear Law?" Do you recall anything about that?
About the wheat? Well, picking any was prohibited, going to the field during the harvest to pick wheat wasn't allowed. Neither children nor adults were allowed. And if old folks were to pick some wheat, they were taken away to prison. They were imprisoned. We had a neighbor, a woman named Tamara, she went to the field and picked one or two beets, and for those beets she was put in prison.

My father joined the collective voluntarily. After he returned from prison, he joined. Our village already had a collective farm, so that's where he went. There was no place else to work. My father was a literate man, but he went and handed everything over to the collective: the horses, the horse stall, the barn,

the harrows, the plow, absolutely everything. They came at night and they came during the day, to confiscate things.

You mean they might come several times in 24 hours?
Yes! In 1933 people began dying because in 1932 the famine started, and by 1933 the famine had become everything. I had a small copper kettle. I would go to the neighbors with the kettle, begging for peels. They had a house up on the hill. He was a blacksmith, so they lived well. I would go there and they would give me some peels, so I'd come home and cook them in that kettle. I had a sister, younger than me, she starved to death. . . . So I'd come home and I would cook. I threw nettles into the pot, and peels and hops, pigweed and sorrel; we would gather it all and throw it in. That's how we ate, and she . . . but she died . . . she died in 1933.

We lived across the road from here. We bought an old house because they took the other one from us. Father was imprisoned, and Mother sold everything we had.

Not many survived then. Here's who survived: Marta Talominchuk survived because she was in prison and was released after the famine was over. There were others, but they've died since; they're no longer here. Nadia Vyporkhniuk survived and is still here. Many, very many died.

I picked sorrel, you may not know what this is. That's what I picked: nettles, pigweed, hops. But not berries—I didn't go to the woods. I couldn't. I thought I would die there.

I would go and beg for peels, and I would cook the peels with the pigweed and nettles. That was it. I didn't use anything else in cooking. Some used, what do you call it when buckwheat is hulled—those buckwheat husks, and they would get constipated and die.

Do you recall how many people died? Are there any statistics on this?
Oh, I don't know about that, dear. I know how many died in our family. My own grandmother died, my younger sister died, my grandfather died, he was my mother's father. Our grandfather died, our grandmother, our great-grandmother, a cousin died, another cousin died, two brothers died. This is what I know. We had a nice orchard here; they died under the apple tree. This is what I know.

Was there cannibalism in your village?
Not in our village! In Horbash, I know there were. A woman ate her child. The child had died and she ate her.

How and where were the victims of the famine buried?
Those that I know of were buried at the cemetery. Dressed and shod, the way they were at the time of death, they were thrown into pits. Without caskets. That's what I know, but my sister was buried in a box. There was an old man, he came here and knocked rails out of our fence and made a box. She was four years old, and we laid her in that box. We carried her to the cemetery ourselves and we buried her ourselves. We accompanied my little sister to the cemetery. Yes! This is what I know.

An old man was being loaded onto the wagon, the poor man. It turned out Mama's father was on that wagon. They just threw him there. They threw him there with his feet hanging off the wagon. I can still see it in front of my eyes . . . his feet dangling . . . and he was taken to the cemetery and a pit was dug and he was unloaded into that pit. And that was it. No casket, nothing . . .

Yes, they're remembered! Here we are, recording their stories, for example. . . . I'm recording about my family, I'm commemorating them, while others . . .

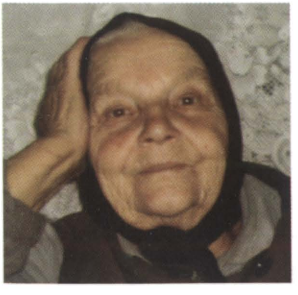
During Soviet times the victims weren't mentioned at church services. They didn't let anyone into the churches, and the churches were being torn down. In our village, the church was turned into a club.

There aren't any monuments. Some crosses were put up, but they've rotted through; they were wooden crosses, almost nothing is left of them . . .

Recorded by Valentyna Vlasenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Liubov Stepanivna Lysoho remembers.

Born in 1923, village of Buky, Zhytomyr district.



I remember the famine of 1932–1933. It was a terrible time. There wasn't a famine here in 1946–1947. If people didn't have enough food, they went to Zakarpattia with their scarves and other things and bartered them for food. Some were able to get food here. We didn't go anywhere. People didn't die then, nobody in the village died. It wasn't as terrible then.

In your opinion, what were some of the causes for the famine in 1932–1933? Was it a bad harvest, a drought, taxes, or did the authorities confiscate the harvest?
The authorities confiscated it. What do you mean, a bad harvest? People had grain, they had potatoes, beans. Everything was taken.

There were those, we called them "the red command" (or something like that). They were all government agents. They were members of the village soviet. They came into homes and seized everything to the last grain. They searched all around, everywhere. They even took food that was being cooked out of the oven and dumped it outdoors. Beans buried in the ground in a pot would be dug up and taken.

Of course they beat people. People were unwilling to give up their last bits of food, so they were beaten, like animals. There was nobody left to be deported; people starved to death in droves.

Some tried not to let the authorities into the house. One farmer, when they came to take the last bits of food out of his house, ran out brandishing a pitchfork at the "red command." He injured one of them. He was beaten so badly, I don't believe he lived to the next morning. He had four children.

Was it possible to hide at least some grain, fruits, produce?
That was extremely rare. Though in our family nobody died—we were three girls. My father, the late Dido[11] Rudy, buried food somewhere behind the storage shed, I don't even know where, exactly. The officials never found it, and we survived.

In our village, if people had nothing to eat, they would go into the field to gather some wheat or grain, whatever was left. If they were caught, they were put on trial.

The authorities came several times. They crawled into every corner: into the oven, under the stove. They cleaned everything out. Most of the deaths occurred in the winter and spring of 1933.

What happened to the young orphans? Did the state provide care for them?
Nobody cared for them. The state? It was because of the state that so many people starved to death.

There was no one who didn't go hungry. But at that time, like at any other time, there were richer folk and poorer folk. Those who had a cow that hadn't been taken away, for them it was easier; the cow nourished them. We also suffered less, you see, because we had hidden some produce.

People ate whatever they could find that was edible: leaves from the trees, roots, frogs, snails. They ground up bark. They survived however they could . . . they ate dogs, they caught and ate frogs . . .

How many people starved to death in the village? Are there any statistics?
Nobody kept track. Nobody registered the deaths. Nobody documented anything. More than half of the village died. All the poorer folk. But I can't tell you exactly.

Do you know of any instances of cannibalism in your village?
Yes. A woman was starving. Her child had died, and she hacked it to pieces, cooked it, and ate it. The victims were buried at the edge of the cemetery; they were taken there, though at times they were buried wherever. Those who had relatives who were alive and were strong enough were buried in caskets, but those who had nobody left in the family were removed from houses before they rotted and began to smell. Nobody bothered with any graves for them.

Were those who buried the dead paid?
How could they be paid? Paid with what? No, here in the village nobody paid anybody.

Do you know where the burial places in your village are?
Everyone was buried at the cemetery.

Are the victims commemorated at designated times?
Perhaps, if any relatives are left. Perhaps the relatives commemorate them. Otherwise, who would? Maybe the great-grandchildren.

Have the victims of the famine ever been memorialized in church? Now and during Soviet times?
In Soviet times, nobody memorialized them. They do it, now. And they will be remembered hereafter.

Is there a church in your village?
There isn't any church. In Tryhiria there's a monastery for men.

Whom do you blame for the deaths of so many people?
The government. I don't know who is individually to blame. Orders from Moscow.

Recorded by Liudmyla Verbylo, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Hanna Kuzmivna Rybalka, born in 1923. Town of Malyn.

I was nine and a half years old at that time, and I remember the famine of 1932–1933 very well. The harvest was good, but it was confiscated. Everything went into storage. A committee had been appointed to execute state plans: a regional representative and a group of locals.

Of course, several farmers were driven out from our village, I don't remember how many. Nobody understood what was happening—there was only one thing people were thinking about, getting something to eat. I know for a fact though that there were people who were expelled from our village.

Maybe the agents weren't all armed, but I do recall one with a revolver. The peasants didn't defend themselves. How could they defend themselves? Everybody was terrified.

People hid the grain, but it was usually found. After all, they searched in the pots in the oven and found it, though they mostly searched for what had been buried. With those spikes.

I remember a classmate. His father was among those who searched. What was his name? Aha, his last name was Tarasenko.

Here's an example. Three agents came to our house, but elsewhere in the village groups of four or five of them might be conducting searches. Two stood around and the third felt with his hands for hollow spaces underneath the floor planks. Of course, they found nothing.

People hid food wherever they could think of: in the oven, buried in the barn or in the shed. They found grain in one farmer's shed. He had buried it and then put a bale of hay over it, but you could tell that the hay had been stacked recently. They removed the hay and found the pit where the sacks of grain were buried.

I don't know if they confiscated livestock, but they took whatever they liked.

Yes, for the "five wheat ears" people were put on trial. I don't know how many years they were sentenced for, but they were put on trial and sent to prison for those "five ears."

Same with potatoes, which were already frozen, and beets too. If any were left anywhere, folks would find them, but it was forbidden to take even frozen potatoes and beets. Well, most likely it was political, a deliberate policy to kill off a lot of the peasants. Not too many starved to death in our village, but people did starve to death.

Someone was appointed to patrol. He was given a horse and he would ride on this horse with a whip. If he came across children (of course, not all of them

could get away), he would chase them on his horse and lash them with his whip. I didn't get lashed, but some of my friends got it.

Those who had nothing joined the collective. But those villagers who owned a horse or a cow, they didn't want to join. I know that our grandfather had a pair of horses and he was considered to be better off. My father joined the collective. We didn't have a horse, we used our grandfather's horse. Then my father started saying, "I'm a communist, but my father is not in the collective," and so our grandfather joined. Even so, they forced Grandfather to give the horses up. Grandfather wept when he saw what condition the horses were kept in, how abused they were.

What I've described happened in the spring of 1933. People in our village mostly died in the spring. There was absolutely nothing anywhere. In 1933, I saw dead people, saw them with my own eyes.

The activists didn't go hungry; the authorities didn't confiscate anything from them because they were part of the system. Also, those like the head of the collective farm or those in the brigades, those in power—they didn't go hungry, nothing was confiscated from them.

Our family survived because we had a dairy cow and a steer. They were grey and strong. The cow turned out to be a young heifer, and Father was forced to sell the steer and bought a mangy cow. At least it gave milk. Like I said, there were four of us, children, and our grandfather's and our uncle's legs swelled up. I remember that Mother traded the heifer for the cow and we survived thanks to its milk. That's how we survived. We were saved by the cow.

People shared. I remember we had no provisions. Mama would cook a borshch out of weeds, and there were a few potatoes in it, tiny as peas. The potatoes were kept in a small barrel. We didn't peel them. My sister was about five years old, and she'd say, "Mama, Mama, I want to eat, eat," and there was nothing to eat so she would stand in the doorway and whine. A woman was walking by, a beggar, worse off than we were, perhaps she had nothing at home. And I remember Mama gave her some borshch, and the woman sat down and right there, outside, and she ate it. People shared whatever they had.

Our grandfather's legs swelled up. He lived with father's sister and brother, and they had more food because they had no children. So they gave his portion of food to us so that we, the children, wouldn't die, until all of their legs swelled up. And then when Mama traded the cow, we shared our milk with them.

Those weeds, pigweed, millet, nettles . . . I remember picking and eating all of it, potato peels, bare corn cobs . . . it all got eaten. People ate birds, dogs, cats.

Not too many people lived at the Pidhora *khutir*[12] in our village. Fedia Barchenko died, then the grandmother (I've forgotten her name) died, too. They

starved to death. Several people died (I don't remember who); nobody talked about those things with children.

Do any documents about this exist?
I don't know. I don't believe any archives from our village were saved. If anyone needed anything in writing, a document was produced or a witness was found, but they said that none of the archives were saved.

I had heard of dogs and cats being eaten, but I hadn't heard about people eating people.

The village soviet provided a wagon. So if someone died, the village soviet was notified. The village soviet would get the wagon from the collective farm, harness a horse, and haul away the people who had died that day. Nobody made any caskets for anybody. They were stacked and buried in a pit. And this was repeated again the next day.

Well, everybody knows that the government was responsible.

Recorded by Artur Balynets, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Nina Oksentiivna Halchenko, born in 1924. Village of Kotivka, Radomyshl district.

Only those in power didn't go hungry in 1933. People helped each other, shared what they had. In our village, for example, the authorities tried to stir people up and encourage them to move to those regions where entire villages were dying off. Places like Poltava oblast. I still remember how about fifteen families moved to Poltava oblast. They wrote us letters describing how they arrived at a village and there was no sign of human life, just bare, empty houses; even dogs and cats had vanished. They settled there: The soil needed tilling. In the end, some stayed and some returned home to their village. Things were more difficult there than they were here in the Zhytomyr region.

We ate wild strawberries (they were just ripening) and plants: pigweed, sorrel, leaves of linden trees. We ate mushrooms. The Zhytomyr region has many forests; there were lots of mushrooms.

We had no money to buy something in town; we could only barter. Valuable things could be brought to town and traded for some grain, some salt, sugar.

Forty people died in our village. About twenty old people, a few children. The middle-aged people managed to survive.

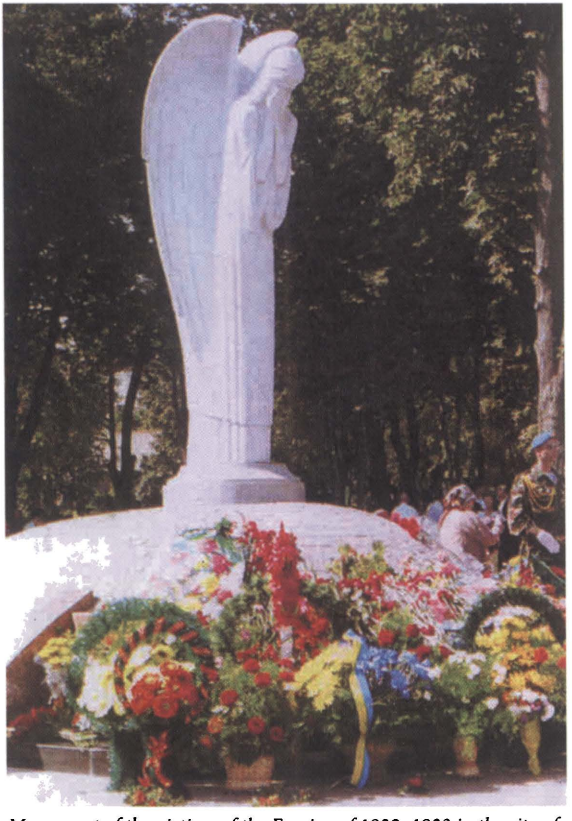
There was no cannibalism in our village.

Victims of the famine were buried mainly in the village cemetery. Crosses were erected. I don't know of any mass graves, I don't remember. Those people who died in our village were buried by their relatives. Relatives took care of the graves and still commemorate them.

Of course, all of this is on the conscience of those who were in power. They forced people to give everything up: Food was confiscated; nothing was to be left. Of course the government is to blame.

Torgsins were stores in the cities where people took their gold: earrings, wedding bands, brooches, silver spoons, silver glass holders, any valuable items. In exchange, they were usually given some kind of cereal.

Recorded by Kateryna Dzhupina, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.



Monument of the victims of the Famine of 1932–1933 in the city of Zhytomyr, August 23, 2006.

Zaporizhia Oblast

Account of Ivan Mykhailovych Karpenko,

born in 1923. Village of Avhustynivka (Kahanets). Later resided in Leninske, and, at the time of this recording, in the city of Nemishaiev, Kyiv oblast.

I remember the famine very well, because I was 10 years old at the time. We'd go with Father and Mother to the field to dig up the potatoes that had frozen; obviously, there had been no time to store them. The famine happened, I think, because of politics. There was a famine, and it was a manmade famine.

. . . I remember one incident. An old woman stopped in. My younger brother and I were on the stove. The woman said to Mother: "Honey, give me something to eat." Mama had just cooked a soup out of weeds and she had just made some flat-cakes out of rotten potatoes. The woman ate it all. I was most impressed when I saw how she pressed her finger into her leg and the finger left a dent, it was so swollen. Father and Mother hid young corn plants in the attic. The authorities came but didn't find them. But how much can you hide? Our neighbor, Danylo Kamenevych (we lived here and he lived right next door)—through the window I saw them go into his house and take everything live and edible out. Everybody talked about it.

And there was Vladimir Penia. He was lame, but he lived well. Somebody informed on him to the authorities. One night, a "black raven" as they were called, arrived at his house; they took him away and to this day nobody knows where he disappeared to. Most likely someone who wanted something of his informed on him.

I didn't see any beatings, but they had rifles and they cleaned people out.

We didn't know the people who came around. Nobody knew who they were or where they were from. They came in groups . . . three to five people.

We didn't have clothes and linens, because we had sold everything in Zaporizhia, so they didn't take anything like that away from us. But they took such things from others.

Those who took wheat ears were put on trial. I heard talk that for five wheat ears you would be sentenced. Picking them was forbidden; anything you picked had to be handed over to the collective farm.

Not everybody wanted to join the collective. We had a meeting at our house about this. This is how it is, they said, you must join. I was lying on the clay stove and heard everything. They said that everything was to be shared. There were lots

of people at the meeting in our house. There I was with my brother on the stove, and our house was crowded with people.

It was difficult to hide the livestock. But I know that it was done. Folks would stack bales of straw all around the barn, cattails and all kinds of sticks, too, but once a cow mooed, that was it. They would take it away. They came day and night, searching, without end.

People kept dying.

What care? People survived on their own, however they could, or because of the kindness of others who helped them.

I would say there was no one who didn't go hungry.

Weeds saved us. And rotten potatoes. I remember mowing with Father. In winter we pounded weeds in a mortar, then we sifted and we'd have some flour. And Mama made flat-cakes out of rotten potatoes. We had a large family: There was a sister, a brother, another brother, Andrusha and Tamara. So they didn't take our cow. Father handed over the horse and the cattle right from the start. Later on Father got another small cow. Sometimes we sold the milk. We would all go together, so it wouldn't be stolen.

There was nothing to help others with. All we had was flat-cakes made from rotten potatoes. Our relatives were on the other side of the Dnipro [River], and people were starving there too.

I ate what I could. I pounded weeds in the mortar. Father did, too. I gave the chaff from the weeds to the cow. It was thanks to the weeds that we survived. People ate sparrows, crows. They hunted them in the haystacks, with nets. They were mostly fluff.

In the city, it was possible to sell milk or to trade it for clothing, shoes, and salt. It was a bit easier in the cities. City folk had money.

A lot of people were buried in our village. Every day two or three people were taken to the cemetery . . . Crosses were erected, but they were unmarked.

We commemorated them like decent people. Mama was Orthodox, but there was no church in the village. It was a small village.

People said at the time that the famine was created by those who ruled, and the ruler's name was Stalin.

Recorded by Tetiana Nykolenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Kyiv Oblast

Account of Mykola Ivanovych Patrynchuk,
born in 1922. Village of Mytnytsia, Vasylkiv district.

Well now, turn off that microphone. I was seven years old at the time, but I remember everything. Well, that was actually when Father was being *dekurkulized*. That was before the famine. It was in 1927. And the famine was in 1933! So in 1927, Father owned sheep, cattle, and a pair of horses. And he had a cloak, made of homespun cloth, and it was full of lice. Farmers like him were labeled *kurkuls* at that time. And he was hungry. An order was issued that well-to-do farmers were to be *dekurkulized*. Out of every ten houses, the richest farmer was to be chosen for *dekurkulization*. And so my father was chosen. He was *dekurkulized* and evicted from his house, his livestock was taken, his house was cleaned out, including grain. Three times they came to search the house. Komsomol members, party members. . . . But one of them secretly let Father know when more searches would be conducted. He told Father to watch out for them, because they had a plan to leave a pistol in the house and then to return later, for yet another search, to find that pistol and hang it on Father that it was his weapon. That way they could exile him to Solovky. And then they searched and searched, and they found 150 eggs and decided to stop the search.

That's when they drove us from our home. We lived with Grandfather. Father worked at "Pershomu Vasylkovi"[13] as a thresher; there were no machines, there was nothing. He went to work there because they were looking for him. They were after him.

One day, some Komsomol members came there. They saw Father and sent him to the village soviet. He was interrogated. Then he went to the toilet and escaped from there. They never found him, so he wasn't sent away.

During the famine, all food was confiscated. They took everything, even our dog—they killed our dog and laid it in a wagon.

Once they came to harass my mother. There were four of us children. They came to give her a paper saying she was getting a loan. They said: "Sign here for a loan, you fool." Mother replied, "How can I sign for a loan with four children? Look, one is all swollen already." They tried everything, but Mother refused to sign the paper for the loan. "I won't sign," she said. "If I do, you'll be tormenting me every night." People have forgotten all that . . .

How were the victims buried? A pit was dug and they were thrown in, that's how. I saw the neighbors dig a grave for their father when he died. Then people brought five other bodies. My neighbors cried, "Don't, don't, there's not enough room." A child was brought, thrown in, too. Five bodies in one pit. They put five bodies in one pit. Such was life . . . and people have forgotten it all.

Recorded by Mykola Makhortykh, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Ivan Stepanovych Buhaienko, born in 1912. Village of Mytnytsia, Vasylkiv district.

Our village already had an agricultural commune in 1924. It was called "Hope." By 1933, the commune had somehow fallen apart. And in 1933 people were starving to death. Still alive, their legs shaking, people were carted away to the cemetery, to a large pit, a common grave, and thrown in. Two men dug the pit. The village soviet gave them a kilo of bread for this work.

The authorities made the rounds, confiscating things. They took the cabbages out of cellars; whatever was found in pots was cleaned out. It was done to starve people by order of Stalin—that was the only reason.

People buried the grain, but they would find it and confiscate it. Komsomol members went to all the houses in their villages searching. What papers? They simply took everything and that was that.

Once, they chased a little boy under a stove and then shoved him in deeper with a stoker. This was in winter. They filled their wagon with sacks of grain and hauled it away. The boy ran after them. One of the sacks slipped off and fell to the ground, and the boy said, "Let me help you get that," and as he bent down to lift it, he was hit with a metal spike and dropped dead.

Gathering any wheat was prohibited. It was plowed under to make it impossible to do so. This was stupid. Children would try to get some stalks and the brigadiers would chase them away. A lot of potatoes were harvested at the collective farm. A lot lay scattered about the field and people came running to the field trying to get a few but they were chased away. They plowed the potatoes under too, so people wouldn't see them.

We had a poor harvest in 1947. At that time, Stalin decided to let people travel to the markets in western Ukraine. So people did this and it saved them, but in 1933, that wasn't allowed. In 1933 folks would go to Russia and on their way back they would be robbed of whatever they had gotten for bartering. My brother went and came back with empty hands. One man was able to bring back some ground corn for flat-cakes, in the pockets of his jacket.

The members of the *Komsomol* were assigned to make the rounds and search people's cellars.

How are the victims commemorated now? The priest mentions those who died at the front and those who died in the famine, and on St. Thomas Sunday, all the villagers come to the service to remember them. About three years ago, a cross was erected next to the club.

A wagon arrives from the village soviet. A man, still alive, his legs still moving, is loaded on . . . We were starving, so we ate everything: weeds, wild geraniums, everything.

Recorded by Artem Yovenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Olena Fedorivna Biriuk,

former teacher and now, pensioner; born in 1924 in the village of Palianychyntsi, Fastiv district of Kyiv oblast. At the time of this interview, she resided in Stara Vyzhivka, Starovyzhin district, Volyn oblast.

Do you recall the famine of 1932–1933 or the famine of 1946–1947?
Although I was quite young, I remember those days very well. When I think back, I remember everything. All the emotions resurface again and again. All that I've lived through has been recorded in history for all time. The years 1932–1933, the famine, I recall better than the years 1946–1947, because by 1946–1947 I was already in Volyn, and people weren't starving in Volyn.

I remember the summer. It had been a good harvest. We had a large family. There were grown children in our family; I was the youngest. I remember reaping and threshing—there were no machines then. How happy we all were, so full of high hopes, how we counted on the harvest. The grain would be driven [to market] and sold, and we could purchase clothing and everything we need for the farm and the household. But then, toward autumn, strangers began appearing in the village. They walked around in groups. Five, six, seven men went from house to house and seized what had been harvested. Before that, they took what was due

as a tax, but this was above and beyond any tax. A group of people came to our house; the regional party representative leading them. I remembered his name—Lazebnyk. And there were people from our village, too . . . there was a woman, Khomykha. They said she was one of the poorer peasants. Later, she starved to death, too. They just said, "Hand over your grain!" Father tried to reason with them, saying that we had already paid our due, we had delivered it already. "No, hand it all over, everything you've buried and hoarded, hand it over!" And then they started to search. I can still see it all. They searched under the bed, even under the stove, in the pantry, in the cellar, in all the outbuildings, and they searched by poking the ground with a spike. Maybe something's buried in the ground. Can you imagine? Father said, "We didn't bury anything," but they just answered, "Hand it over!" I remember something else: a smooth, earthenware pot; we kept shelled beans in it. They took the beans and poured them out. Imagine. It was so horrible, so unbelievable. Well, I don't recall what else they took from us.

I didn't see beatings, but I know that people were deported. My neighbor, for example, he was *dekurkulized.* They seized everything he had—his livestock and his property—and his entire family was taken away. They were taken to Solovky together as a family. Only one of them returned; the rest of the family stayed there. The older ones died, and the younger ones eventually went somewhere else.

It was already spring, yes, definitely, 1933, and the famine was raging. What a terrible thing to see, but that's a separate story. Some kind of mush, some kind of soup was given to the people who worked at the collective farm.

In the summer of 1933 there was nothing to eat; people dropped dead—it was horrible. Some people couldn't wait for the harvest to ripen and would go to the field to pick the still-unripe wheat kernels and cooked them. But if you were caught with wheat kernels on you, you got six years. That I remember.

Did people want to join the collective voluntarily?

Some did, some didn't. What I remember, I'll share. I was about nine then, and people, neighbors, would gather at our house. And I recall my father, he was a simple man but a curious man and he liked books, and I remember the excitement of the peasants: "We'll have communal farming, it sounds promising!" It was described like some sort of Eden. Some believed it and joined. But most didn't believe that there would be any profit or benefit from it. And there were those who refused to hand their possessions over to the collective farm. Many were deported.

When did people start dying of hunger?

On a massive scale, people began dying of starvation some time around the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933. Some people managed to survive until

Christmas.[14] Others died earlier, even before the New Year. Some time after Christmas, the cold was intense, and that's when people began dying in droves. They perished, they simply perished. It was just terrible. How hungry they were, how swollen. Their legs were like buckets; they were so thick that when you touched a leg with a finger, it was bloated with fluid. It was horrendous. One minute a man is walking, and the next minute he just falls down, dies, and freezes. That's the way it was. Even more died in the spring, when it got warmer, and there was nothing to eat. Cannibalism, thievery, it was all there. People ate whatever they could, grass or weeds. We had pigweed. I remember it well, that weed.

What became of the young orphans? Did the state provide care for them?
Hot meals were prepared at school once a day. What it was we got to eat I don't remember. Then, later on, on November 7, they started celebrating October Revolution Day. And we were served a special holiday meal in the school dining hall. But that didn't last; we had that only once. After that it was hunger and more hunger. And when 1933 arrived, when we went to school in September at the start of the school year, there were already five orphans in my class. Their parents had died by this time.

My auntie, Mama's sister, was from another village. She was a widow with four children. They came to our house and we shared whatever we had with them. One time she never made it to our house. She died on the way there, in the meadow. They found her while mowing down the grass for hay. They recognized her by her coat. She was on her way to our house; she had four children at home. That was our family tragedy.

How many people starved to death in your village?
The famine passed and nothing was mentioned anywhere, not in the press, nowhere. Even in school it was forbidden to say anything. When it was alright to talk about it, in our village they calculated that 676 people—remember this, 676 people starved to death. It was a large village. We had three collective farms.

Were there known cases of cannibalism in your village?
There were. I remember how at recess someone came to our school and said, "Pavlyk has been stabbed to death!" Pavlyk was such a nice boy; he was eighteen years old.

Who buried the victims of the famine?
The village was given a wagon. It was used to transport wheat from the field. There were two men, men who still had strength enough to walk. What I saw

with my own eyes and remember: They arrived at our neighbor's. The two men got off the wagon and went into the house. They carried out the dead. They took them by the legs, and they carried them to the wagon and laid them there. Then they went to the next house. Everything repeated. They picked up as many dead people as there were at that time and hauled them to the cemetery. There was a large pit dug out by the cemetery, a communal grave. They laid the dead in rows, one on top of another, in the ground. No coffin, no nothing. They buried them and that was that. That's how it was. Did they make rounds every day? Probably, because people just kept dying. It was incredible, horrible, the things that went on. People died in masses, entire households, whole families died. Children died most often. Parents died too; they died trying to leave something for the children. I'm telling you, it was horrible, horrible. . . .

Were those who buried the dead paid?
People said they were given 100 grams of bread.

I remember, taking the cow to pasture when I was a child. There was a house close by. A large family lived there. They all starved to death during the famine of 1933. The house was abandoned, and people made a point of avoiding it. They said spirits of the dead wept and wailed in the house at night. You know, it was dreadful, but it happened.

Recorded by Iryna Pavlova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Daria Onufriivna Druz,

born in 1915. Originally from the village of Kopachiv, Obukhiv district, Kyiv oblast; at the time of this interview, resided in Kyiv.

Tell me please, do you remember the famine of 1932–1933?
I do. I was quite young then, but I remember. It was deliberately organized, the famine, because people had everything, as we did. Our pantries were well-stocked, we had what we needed in our home. But they came and took it all away. People were forced to join the collective. Mama didn't want to join, and Father was already in

Kyiv at the time, and I joined him there (I lived there from 1929), but by the time of the famine I had returned home to the village. In Kyiv I worked as a housekeeper. I worked for a Jewish family. The sister of the people I worked for taught me their language. The head of the household didn't know that I knew their language.

One day he came home and was sitting down to tea. He called me over and said, "Dasha!"

"What?" I replied.

And he said, "*Typi meren tukhest*!" "Kiss my ____!"

I was angry and went home to the village, and that was right at the time of the famine. At home I had a younger brother and a sister. Mother had taken the youngest and had gone to Kyiv to be with Father. Father worked at Kyiv-Fuel.

When I came back home from Kyiv, there were the three of us, and we had 1½ *puds* [about 25 kilograms] of grain from Kyiv. Mama's sister had brought it, and we started talking amongst ourselves about where we should hide it, and I said, "Let's put it away in the pantry. It has three locks." We put the grain away in the pantry and went to bed. When we woke up the next morning (we had boarded up the door), the grain was gone. They took it. Mama had buried potatoes in five pits, but they poked at the ground with spikes and found them and hauled them all away. All the pits were dug up and they left guards there, so we couldn't dig anything else up.

Five men came. They took our embroidery, linens, everything. We had a house, a barn and some outbuildings. They dismantled everything and hauled it away. Our garden was surrounded by willow trees. They cut all the trees down, every single one, and hauled the wood away. That was when Mama decided to escape to Kyiv. Before, she was scared to go. She took the little one (she was seven years old, my little sister) into her arms and carried her all the way to Kyiv.

More than once they tried to talk us into joining the collective. But Father didn't want to join. That's why he fled to Kyiv. When he got there, he had nowhere to go. Later, he was a watchman at a lumber yard. When Mama joined him in Kyiv with little Halia, she stayed with him in the watchman's booth. After the famine I worked at a kindergarten and from there I got married. I've lived a life and in all my life I haven't had a single joyful day.

On my way from Kyiv to the village, I passed through the Holosiev forest; I saw bloated men and women lying along the road.

Did the state provide care for young orphans?

Who cared for them! They died! They all died! Our neighbors had nine children and only one survived. The father died, the mother died, the children all died—

only one girl survived. And by the time I returned to Kyiv after the famine, I knew that in the Podil region children were caught and sold as ground meat.

In our village I never heard of people eating children. Some were abandoned and they were taken away somewhere, but I didn't hear of anyone in our village eating children.

How and where were the victims of the famine buried?
They were just thrown into pits and covered up. People said that Stalin was to blame for the famine. I don't know whether that's true or not.

Recorded by Kateryna Mashkina, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Halyna Ivanivna Novokhatska,
born in 1918. Village of Troieshchyna, Kyiv oblast.

Do you remember the famine of 1932–1933?
Of course I remember. I was fifteen years old. Stalin was in power then and wanted to annihilate a nation. And he created the famine. He sent his agents. And whatever was found, around the house, on the stove, his *komenzams* [committees of poor peasants] took it away. Whatever was stored up in the attic, whatever one tried to hide away, a piece of pork fat or some grain, Stalin's goons seized it all, not leaving a gram of anything. Some people buried potatoes, and they found them and took them and hauled them away. People were left with nothing. And people were deported. If someone was a *kurkul*, that is to say, if he owned a fur coat or a sickly horse, he was deported.

They made the famine. We weren't hungry before that. We had grain like this [she demonstrates with her hands], rye like this, wheat! The harvest was very good! And they took away all of it, to make sure that people would starve to death. And they starved. Mostly men died. Because you know, men are weaker.

We had to step over the corpses. There were mounds of them. Folks got all bloated, their legs swelled up and oozed, but some survived.

The *komenzams* went everywhere. Everywhere. But there were some *komenzams* with a soul. Those would climb up into the attic, see something, and then climb back down and say, "Nothing there." Stalin ordered that the people be

eliminated so they made the famine. People went to the collective farms, where they cooked millet mush. We'd go there to eat, too. Take me, for example. I was fifteen, not so young already, and they gave me one ladle of mush in a bowl. But for a grown working man, what's a ladle of that mush? People died.

They found and dug everything out to the last gram, not leaving a single potato; they took all of it. The famine was Stalin's work.

There was this Vasylyna, she died a long time ago. It was she who cooked the mush. Little pieces of bread, pieces the size of a small match box were handed out with the mush.

People went to the collective farms, and I did, too, for soup. Bodies lay in the street. We stepped over them and went on. And did they die of their own free will? I don't know how you're going to write about this, sonny.

Those who were afraid to join the collective just gave up. My father-in-law, his mother was religious and it was considered a sin to join the collective. So they took his horse and his wagon and everything he had. They returned, one final time, to take the rest of the things away and my father-in-law lay on the bench, already dead. What were they to take now? Take the dead man!

The famine! We were fine . . . and then they created a famine, that's what. Stalin did not want this nation to exist.

People ate other people, people ate their children. Starvation is no one's friend. . . . Was there any pity? Nobody pitied anyone—not their relatives, not their children, nobody. When you're starving and your child is dying in front of your eyes, how can you have pity for anyone? Everyone for himself. People did whatever they could.

No, no, in 1933 it was impossible to trade for anything. In 1946, we also had a famine. I had two small children then, and I would go to western Ukraine. We would take cast-iron pots and clay pottery to trade for bread. I had a beautiful icon that I took to trade for bread in western Ukraine, too. But in 1933 that wasn't allowed.

The famine in 1946 was nothing like the one in 1933. In 1946 at least it was possible to get something. And we would. There were such long lines. For a small loaf of bread about the size of a brick, the line was as long as from here to that bread stall [gestures] . . . there was a mounted guard, and God help you if you stepped out of line . . . you would feel his whip.

All kinds of things went on. And in 1933, if you got caught picking an ear of wheat, you would end up in prison. A starving person would pluck a few grains out of the sheaf, get caught, and sent to prison for that.

In 1946 people would have starved to death, too, except that they were able to travel, and they did—to the covered market at Brestovskyi, to Sarny, to Zdolbunov. I went everywhere. I had two small children. I would leave the

children. Then I would bring a sack and leave it and go again. By the time I returned, they had eaten everything. I gave away what I had, clothing, pieces of fabric, all kinds of things so people would take care of my children while I was away. My son was born in 1946, and I had a daughter born in 1941.

Stalin wanted to erase the nation, he wanted people to starve to death and for the nation to vanish. But it made no difference. Many people died, but some lived.

I know of the *torgsin*. I'll tell you about it. My mother had these gypsy earrings and a gold coin. Then I had a stepmother. My grandfather, my mother's father, took the earrings when she died. Then, when my grandfather died, my stepmother took them to the *torgsin*. She herself had small earrings—they're still around, but they're worthless. My sister has them now. She's my half-sister, but she's kind. But my stepmother took my mother's earrings to the *torgsin*.

Recorded by Tymur Horbach, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Yevdokiia Demydivna Pavlenko, born in 1920. Village of Pashkivka, Makariv district.

Yes, I remember the famine of 1931–1932. I was around ten.

What caused the famine? The start of collectivization when grain was taken from the people. Brigades of *Komsomol* members went to the houses of the more prosperous peasants, and also to the houses of average people, looked through everything, and took everything. Hardly anything was left. Where it was all hauled off to, nobody knew. All that started in 1931. By 1932 people had already started going hungry; apparently, besides everything else, the harvest wasn't very good, and then it got so bad that there was nothing to eat. People dropped dead in the middle of the road; they fell over like bundles of straw. It's terrible to think about. A horse-drawn wagon hauled them away. Livestock was confiscated; people were forced to hand it over to the collective farm. Houses stood empty; entire families starved to death. That's how harsh the famine was. In 1932 and 1933, very many people died. Young men couldn't find work, there was nothing to eat, they starved to death. It was so terrible that it's impossible to describe what we witnessed.

The brigades went from house to house. They had no documents and nobody asked for any. They weren't armed. People didn't defend themselves.

There were instances when the more prosperous ones were secretly murdered; they would be found dead at the dam, shot by somebody. Things like that happened. We heard about it from our parents.

People tried to hide things. Those who were stronger and richer went to town to trade things for food. They would trade a wool scarf for a loaf of bread. If someone had clothing, it could be traded for food. My father went to town maybe ten times until he had traded away all the clothes from Mother's chest; not a single piece of clothing was left. Gold earrings were traded for a loaf of bread. Death from starvation is the most horrible death of all.

Who gave us anything? No food was doled out at the collective farm. That didn't happen. If they had any bread in the pantry, they ate it themselves, the bosses did—on the sly.

If you were caught picking up and putting a few kernels of wheat into a sack, they would beat you so badly that you wouldn't last long. People were taken away and sent somewhere, too, and they never came back.

There were those who didn't want to join the collective. They were called "individualists" and they were threatened. Most people handed their horses over to the collective voluntarily.

The famine took many lives in 1932 and 1933. Houses stood empty. People starved to death. Those who had hidden away some bread still had a bit of strength and still tried to do something in their gardens; those who were weak from hunger couldn't do anything any more.

Nobody helped anyone. Everyone worried only about their own survival. There was no way to help, even if there was the will to help.

People roamed the fields, picking some grain, some beans. A guard patrolled the field on horseback, trampling whoever was in the way. There was no help.

Berries? No, weeds. People ate weeds! Nothing was left on the trees; they ate everything, like caterpillars, they were so hungry. And then, eating all those greens made them sick, and they died.

I know people ate leaves—from linden trees and acacia trees. They gathered pigweed and cooked it and ate that too. Then their stomachs swelled up; people died of bloating, too.

There were no animals. But then how could you catch anything anyway? Nobody had any chickens, nothing like that. Dogs were killed and eaten. There were no cats to be seen, or maybe they had all been eaten already, I don't know. Maybe there had never been any cats?

Cannibalism? There was one incident. A woman's husband disappeared, then the children disappeared. When she was asked, "Where's your family?" she said she had eaten them. She was taken away and was never seen again. That was the one incident we had.

I believe that those who collected the bodies for burial were stronger than everyone else. I believe they were given 200 or 300 grams of bread for digging a pit, for hauling the bodies, and for burying them.

A ditch was dug at the edge of the cemetery. That's where the bodies were dumped. We were still young—we didn't see this, we just heard about it. What I remember most clearly was that I had a friend, Khrystia (this was the most painful). She was young and she starved to death. Her mother laid her on a small wagon and took her to the cemetery. I remembered it for the longest time, and I missed her so very much.

In my opinion, the authorities were to blame. It was said that bread rotted in storehouses while people were dropping dead from hunger.

Recorded by Serhii Kadakov, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Maria Yukhymivna Tizesh remembers.

Born in 1922, village of Vilno, Fastiv district.

Yes, I remember the famine of 1930–1932, and I remember it quite well. I was 10 or 11 years old—I was born in 1922. We would throw five potatoes into a 10-liter pot, add a cup of millet, cook it, and the three of us ate it. Father would take some clothing and go to Byelorussia to trade. He said that the trading went fine but that everything he got was stolen at some station. Who was guilty, I don't know. Or maybe the police simply confiscated it, just took it away.

They say that grain was seized from homes. We didn't have any. No grain, no nothing. There were three of us children and Mother and Father.

When did people start dying? Our neighbors, our cousins, they were young and they died. They picked flowers to eat, leaves. Those who died were buried in the orchard, near the house. A hole was dug, and two little ones were buried there.

Nobody took care of anybody, nobody thought about anything. People were deported. There was nothing anywhere. There was nothing to wear. I went to school, and I had nothing to wear . . .

When Father was still with us, some people voluntarily joined the collective. Some went, some didn't. What did the collective farm have? They didn't give anybody anything at that time. Maybe there were people who didn't go hungry. But everybody around here was hungry.

In the cities? I don't know. I know I had an uncle and cousins who lived in the city. I would go there sometimes, and they would give me some bread to take back. Bread was brought from Kyiv. So people in Kyiv had bread. Most likely they paid for it; they must have had some money, because they bought it.

If people had something, they shared with relatives—a cup of millet or some bread. What kind of help could there be? It was terrible . . .

Three girls were put on trial in our village. They were jailed for three years for picking wheat ears. If they saw people doing this, they chased them, killed them. I didn't pick any.

Recorded by Serhii Kadakov, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Varvara Makarivna Taran, born in 1921. Village of Byshkiv, Makariv district.

I remember the famine. They didn't give people anything because there was nothing to give, not because there was no harvest, but because it was hauled away. I can't tell you exactly how this happened, because I don't know.

There was nothing to take from people because the collective wasn't giving them anything. The harvest in 1932 was poor. We had collectivization. Everything was hauled away, and people were given nothing.

What was there to protect? They took whatever they wanted. People were silent because there was nothing they could do about it.

By 1932–1933 people were beginning to swell up. I can't talk about it. In the forests, on the roads . . . it was terrible . . .

There were those who didn't go hungry. Not many, but there were. People like us, who had livestock, got some nourishment from milk. We ate grated potatoes and some kind of cooked cereal. That's how we lived. Those who had no livestock died.

No, the livestock wasn't confiscated. Only during *dekurkulization.* This was the beginning of collectivization. They searched homes to see what could be seized. If someone refused to hand things over to the collective, the collective just took things. Down to the last loaf of bread. Our father, he's dead now, said that we should join because we wouldn't survive if we didn't. He joined the collective right away. We had livestock. You don't starve if you have a cow.

People ate whatever they could. They ate dried leaves. We didn't because we had a cow and potatoes. We had a nice crop of potatoes. We weren't starving.

People tried to help however they could. Those who couldn't be helped died.

Bodies were brought to the cemetery and stacked in one pit. They were buried there or somewhere else. Where? Everywhere. Maybe in the fields.

People tried to pluck stalks of wheat and were chased from the field.

Recorded by Serhii Kadakov, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Anastasia Mykolaivna Pavlenko remembers.

Born in 1923, village of Petrivske, Tarashchan district.

I remember the famine of 1932–1933. I remember we were starving, it was a true famine! The famine was created so that people would starve to death. Do you think that Stalin didn't know that people in Ukraine were starving to death? Of course he knew! One part of it was a bad harvest, but the other part was that the authorities provided no food . . . they took everything and hauled it way. They exported the grain and gave people nothing.

The *Komsomol* confiscated it from people! The party took it away!

What documents? There were no documents. They took it and that was it. They took our grain and then sentenced my father to five years for not sowing anything. He said, "You took my seeds, you've taken everything, my horses, my cow, everything. How can I do anything? How can I sow anything?"

Where could you hide anything? They found everything anyway.

One group of people would come and then another would come. They came in threes, in fours. Sometimes five at a time. I remember only the one with a mustache, the one who took my mother's necklace.

They came in the morning, in the evening, at night, whenever. They ripped out our souls, our hungry souls.

It was impossible to hide anything. They came around searching, poking. They found everything.

People worked without pay at the collective farm. Those who worked were given 100 grams of bread—100 grams per person. Only those who worked got it. They didn't care about the workers' families—let them die.

Yes, people were put on trial! For picking wheat ears and just for looking for food. They tried people for that, beat people for that, killed people for that.

People started dying from hunger in 1933. All summer long. It started in the spring, even in the winter, the starving. Those who had a little of something managed to survive somehow. Whole streets of people died. Wagons picked up the dead.

Orphans were taken to a children's home. Many, many died. Few survived. In the fall, when things started turning around a little, my brother died.

Parents ate everything there was, and children did too. Nettles and pigweed were steamed, we dug out roots, cooked them, and ate them. Whatever there was. We picked the blossoms off acacia trees, dried them, and ate them too.

What berries are you talking about? The cherries were still green, so we picked the leaves, dipped them in molasses, and ate them.

There was nothing. Sparrows? How could we get them? Does a stupid sparrow fall into your hands? Now there are pigeons, but there weren't any then.

Pits were dug out and the bodies were stacked in them. Who buried them? They were laid on a wagon and carted away. Once they tried to cart me away, but Father stopped them. He told them, "She's still alive!"

Who was to blame? No one was guilty! Who can you find that was guilty? Stalin knew, of course, but who else? Maybe Stalin did it all deliberately? Who knows?

Recorded by Maksym Hubsky, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Nadia Ivanivna Khvoia, born in 1927. Villages of Hlevakha, Vasylkiv district.

What, in your opinion, were the causes for the famine?

There was a famine. I was six years old at the time. We suffered horribly. We baked bread out of rotten potatoes using lantern oil instead of seed oil. We cooked borshch out of horseradish. I walked with a small metal pot around all the gardens looking for whatever rotten potatoes I could find. We were horribly hungry. We were alone, five children, but not one of us died. We survived thanks to the greens we ate.

People were forced into everything. It was the times. It was the famine. And they took from us, they didn't care. Our village had a famine, and that was it, but in other villages, entire villages starved to death. Like in Kozhukhivka. In our village, in Marivshchyna, a woman ate her children; she ate them after they had died. And she survived. Other people can tell you about it . . .

Do you think that they took everything from people on purpose?
Of course. Why else was there such a horrible famine? Because they took absolutely everything from people.

Were people forced to work at the collective farm?
Yes, they were. People didn't want to. The collective farm didn't mean anything to them, and they didn't get anything for working there. That's why they confiscated grain from people, to force them into the collective farm. It was terrible. There are villages where everyone starved to death.

Which villages, for example?
Krushynka, and there, past Buhaivka, those villages, everyone perished.

Were people allowed to pick wheat in the field, or vegetables?
A "red broom" swept through everything. Everything was cleaned out.

Why were those places targeted?
People there had more land there than we did here.

In what year did people start dying of starvation?
They started dying then.

What happened to young orphans? Maybe the state provided for them?
They're dying? Let them die. If they survive, they survive. Nobody cared for anybody anywhere. In those villages, people said, so many people lay dead. You could go into a house and find the entire family was dead.

I remember my mother worked under the Soviets, at the collective farm, and we were always so poor, it was dreadful. Everything was available but we were starving. They didn't care about the people, not at the collective farms nor at the regional collective. Nowhere.

So what did you eat? What plants?
Horseradish. Borshch made of horseradish. Pigweed, that kind of stuff. Mother knew about herbs.

Were there instances where people ate tree bark or leaves?
People ate everything. They ate all the cats, all the dogs.

Recorded by Oksana Muzhenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Maria Larionivna Horbachenko,

born in 1923. Hlevakha village, Vasylkiv district; at the time of the famine, resided in Krushyntsi village.

Why was there a famine in 1932–1933?

Honey, the harvest was a bit worse, but then folks said that the harvest was fine but that the wheat was dumped into the Dnipro River so that all Ukrainians would die. That's what people said. I was young then, but that's what they said.

Was grain confiscated?

A Jew and other authorized agents arrived from the Vasylkiv region. The *komenzams*. They conducted searches. Mother was a widow with three children. They searched in the pantries and took all the grain. *Komenzams* from the district headquarters conducted the searches, and later on, *Komsomol* members did the searching. I started school early; I was six. Mother wasn't home, just me and my brother.

They went into every house: the man in charge, was from Vasylkiv district, a secretary . . .

They came around by threes, sometimes by fours. The bosses. They would go into a pantry and stick their noses into everything.

I know my mother was a fighter. She shouted at them, "You dirty Jew, may you be covered in scabs." He found the wheat bran, the stuff that gets sifted out of wheat flour . . . he scooped up a handful. I had run into the pantry, and I heard him say, "Is this for sowing?" Mother yelled at him, "You dirty Jew, may you be covered in scabs. You want to sow bran? What are you doing in people's pantries . . ."

And the *kurkuls* . . . they shot my uncle. Not during the famine, but earlier, when the collective farm was first organized . . .

My uncle, he didn't have anything. He had five children. He went to work for someone because one of his daughters was there. He fixed himself up with a house and a barn. He didn't want to join the collective. He was evicted from his house with his children. The house was demolished, the barn, too . . . Things like that happened.

It was forbidden to gather anything in the field. After the crop had been harvested, people would go looking for loose stalks lying around. If they took any, they were dragged before the village soviet.

Did people want to join the collectives or not?
They were forced to join. It was compulsory. Who would want to join? To surrender one's land and to work for no pay? Horses and wagons were confiscated.

People began dying in 1933, but in 1934 they were still dying. Toward autumn, after the grain was harvested in 1934, factory-made bread was doled out. My little sister, my mother, and I went to Kyiv. We saw dead people; they had bought bread, ate it, and dropped dead because their starved stomachs couldn't take it. Lord, along the way to the Solomianskyi market a man was lying in the street, and I asked Mother, "Mama, why?" Couldn't they have carted them away? It was terrible, children, may you never live through anything like it.

What did you eat?
In the spring, pigweed. Our village had this yellow pigweed with big leaves, and this gray pigweed. For borshch.

Did many people die in your village?
Yes, many. Two men worked as gravediggers and two men drove the carts to the houses. Entire families perished. They were all loaded up on those carts, driven to the burial place, the cart was turned over, and plop-plop-plop, the bodies were dumped into the pit and covered up.

Were they paid, those diggers?
Day labor. It was the collective, after all.

Were there instances of cannibalism?
Not in our village. In Velyki Buhaivtsi a woman ate a boy. How do I know this? Because my husband's brother's wife was the head of the collective farm, and someone stole some grain there and mixed it up with sand . . . and they locked her up in the local jail and then sent her to prison. "You're the head of the collective farm, why didn't you see this?" And then she told us about what she had heard from another woman who said she was from Velyki Buhaivtsi . . . "And why did they put you in prison?" So the woman says to her, "The neighbors noticed that the boy was gone, and then the girl disappeared, so they turned me in." That's how it was, but we didn't have anything like that.

What did we eat? In the spring of 1933 and 1934 we'd go into the fields digging for last year's potatoes. The potatoes that were deeper in the ground had rotted already, but the ones closer to the surface were still starchy. We picked those. We added some buckwheat husks (normally they were fed to the pigs) to the potatoes and pounded it all up in a mortar. Then we strained it through a sieve

. . . So those rotten potatoes were mixed with that. Mother would go to church. The church lanterns burned oil. At home, we didn't have any oil to fry with, so Mother would get some from one of the lanterns. But that oil didn't stick to the rotten potatoes and the husks. Mother made husk flat-cakes for us. We each got three of them, once a day.

Do you know what a torgsin was?
Where folks took their gold? It was called a *torgsin* in Kyiv. That's where people took their gold earrings to trade.

People said government officials dumped the wheat into the Dnipro River . . . to kill off the Ukrainians. That's what people said.

Recorded by Oksana Muzhenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Letter written by Larysa Fedorivna Shevchuk

Greetings, Respected Sirs,

I'm very glad that I accidentally stumbled upon the famine 1932–1933 "association" (that's how it was presented on the radio). I'm one of the citizens of Ukraine who lived through the famine and survived. By chance, but we survived.

I can never forget those days. I think back with dread to the days of my "happy childhood" that the "leader of all peoples," Father Stalin, had promised us.

I was born in 1927 into a large family in Zhytomyr district (at that time it was Kyiv district).

Until 1932, my childhood was unremarkable, like that of any village child. I loved my Granny Yavdokha, I played with other children, I tended geese.

In the spring of 1932, our family (Father, Mother, Grandmother, and five children) began to see that food was becoming scarce. It was difficult for me, at age five, to understand what was happening to us. I remember always being hungry, from morning till night, and that my parents always seemed to be troubled.

There was nothing to eat. Strangers came and poked the walls and the floor with metal spikes . . . searching for something. They took the pot with beet and poppy seeds. Granny was alarmed: "I was going to plant the seeds. Now there's nothing."

My parents, meanwhile, sighed with relief: "They didn't find the sack, those damned robbers." My mother and father had buried a sack of grain beside the house, covering it up with stones. Not long after, they ground that grain with millstones at Grandfather Yukhym's and Granny cooked a flour gruel out of it.

A large clay bowl always stood in the center of the large table. Granny would pour some boiled food into it. We dipped our wooden spoons in and slurped it up. There was no bread, so we ate it without bread.

Father was the only provider for the family. He worked constantly: plowing, sowing, mowing, threshing. He was tired and weak from the meager food (one half-liter bottle of milk and a thin slice of black bread) and the hard work. He could barely drag one foot after another. Mama contracted tuberculosis.

Father swelled up from the chronic malnourishment. I cannot forget how much grief this bought our family. My brother Vania, barely breathing, lying in tattered rags. Father, sitting on a bench, unrecognizable because he was so swollen. I was frightened. Father's legs, filled with fluid, looking like oak logs. Mama, crying, trying to be helpful. Granny, stirring something in a pot and praying. She fed Father. She kept telling us, "Pray for Tato,[15] children." And we prayed.

One day Father didn't go to work. He just couldn't get up. But brigadier Makhmoshka came knocking in the window every day, yelling: "Saboteur! Get out and mow! If you don't, I'll turn you in to the NKVD!"

What followed was horrible. Rumors spread throughout the village that people were dying, that children were disappearing, that parents—their brains addled from hunger—were eating their children.

Those rumors turned out to be the terrible truth. I'm writing only about that, which I remember well, that I know well. It's ghastly! But true. At the end of our street lived a family (I don't remember their name). Two of the girls would come to our house to play with us. Then the girls vanished. Their brother, a six-year-old, ran away from home. He wandered around the village begging and stealing. He was nicknamed "Mishka the Crook." When he was asked why he wouldn't go home, he said "I won't. Father wants to cut me up." His parents had already eaten the girls, hiding the remains in a pile of manure. That was where an apron belonging to the older girl was found. The parents confessed to what they had done. The militia took them away. Misha was left to his own devices.

Another case. A neighbor girl, Dasha (we called her Dasia), and her little brother would come to play with me. Granny fed them the same mush that we got. Once, Dasia came over alone.

"Sit down, Dasia, have some."

"I don't want it."

"Why not?"

"I ate some meat."

Granny and Mother could not say a word. As we later learned, Dasia's mother had killed Dmytryk, cooked his flesh, ate some of it, and fed Dasia with the meat. Then she salted his head and hung it up on a joist.

Twelve-year-old Nastusia became attached to us. She, too, was fed Granny's gruel. Her entire family had starved to death. I always looked forward to our time together, because she was teaching me the proper way to pronounce the letter "R." Then Nastusia disappeared for several days. She was found half-dead. She had eaten buckwheat bran. She died. Her entire family perished.

One day I noticed that my little brother Vania was nowhere to be seen. Mama couldn't stop crying and Granny was incessantly praying and prostrating herself. I turned to my grandmother and asked, "Where's Vania?"

"He's gone . . . "

"Where is he?"

"Far away."

"Why doesn't he come back?"

Even though I was young, I could sense Granny's dread. Crying, she replied: "Vania's never coming back . . ."

And then my little sister disappeared. Just the three of us were left. So the rest of us could survive, our parents sent me and my older sister Liusia to serve as nannies. We were to care for Yasha, the son of a seamstress we called Auntie Tsilia. We ate scraps from the table. Auntie Tsilia gave the same scraps to her beloved dog, Bobyk. She shouted at me all the time and slapped me across the face. "Girl, are you deaf? Can't you hear? The baby's crying!!!"

Then 1933 arrived. We had already eaten all the grass around our house, the leaves off the mulberry tree. Somehow, our parents had started a garden. We awaited a new harvest. The fields, filled with wheat and rye, were strictly protected.

One of our relatives, Maria Ivanivna Palamarchuk, went to the field and peeled 4 kg of unripe grain to feed her mother and brother, who were ill with TB. She was caught and put on trial. Her mother and brother both died while she was serving a four-year sentence.

From Grandmother I never heard anything but prayers. She would be on her knees, beseeching the Lord: "Lord, accept and repose the souls of your servants: Hanna, Yukhym, Natalka, Andrii, Yosyp, Mefodi, Ivan, Petro, Pystyna, Onyska . . ." She named all of the relatives who had died.

I wondered to myself, "Why doesn't she mention my name?"

"Granny!" I asked her, "Why don't you mention my name?"

"Don't interfere, child . . ."

Later, Granny prayed for those of us who still lived: "Lord, protect and have mercy over the souls of Your servants Oksana, Fedir, Larysa, Liusia, Olimpiada, Mykhailo, Maria . . ." Sadly, that list was very short.

The famine took people by the tens. Entire families died. No dogs, cats, cattle, poultry remained. All had been eaten.

Once, Granny Natalka came to visit. She brought us some food that looked like scrambled eggs in her mortar. It tasted good, but there was very little of it. Granny Natalka brought us that "fried stuff" two more times. It turned out to be turtle meat. Sadly, all the turtles were fished out of the reservoirs back then. Today, those turtles are extinct.

Granny Natalka's husband was a church bell ringer. He was a quiet man and never spoke much. One day, Granny Natalka came and informed us in a strange way (happily, it seemed to me): "Prokip (that was her husband's name) is gone."

"Where is he? Is he dead?"

"No, he's alive. But he's been carted away. It's impossible to save him."

"Think what you're saying! You're a human being!" Mama yelled. "Go get him . . ."

"What will I feed him? He's going to die, anyway, if not today, then tomorrow."

It was hard for us children to understand the feelings and moods of the adults, their apathy (more like numbness) to everything around them. The famine had sucked all humanity out of them.

Whether it was "Father Stalin" or whoever, instructions were issued to open "cereal kitchens" to feed the village children. These instructions were followed, and each child was given one ladle (250g) of cereal. My parents sent me to the "kitchen." To this day I love the smell of cereal. We got three ladles. But not for long. We were later barred from the cereal kitchen because Mama didn't work at the collective farm. She was ill with TB.

In spite of everything, we survived.

In 1933, a photographer arrived at out village with a camera and a tripod. He explained to our parents that he had been entrusted with the job of photographing all the children who had survived. I'm enclosing the photo. I'm on the left; my sister Liusia is next to me. This is after we had been fed with that cereal.

Honored friends! All that I have written is true. I swear! There are some who deny that the famine of 1932–1933 was a genocide. Let them ask us, us, who lived through it and survived.

Respectfully, Larysa Fedorivna Venshyk (at that time Shevchuk), retired veteran, participant in WWII, Invalid 2nd degree, widow of a tank driver who took part in battles and also barely survived the famine of 1932–1933.

Account of Kateryna Prokopivna Butko,
born in 1921. Village of Hoholiv, Brovar district.

They came one night, rattling our windows and doors. Father opened the door. Four or five of them entered. My brother, my sister, and I were young; we didn't understand what was going on. We sat on the stove and cried. They began questioning Father, and then they proceeded to search for food: in the oven, in all the corners. Whatever was there they took. They took Father's fur coat and shoes, too. Father started shouting at them, so they shoved him and kicked him in his belly. We cried. Such horrible things were happening. I don't even want to remember them. Two of them were armed, and the one who must have been their leader beat Father with a whip handle.

How could people protect themselves? The men going to the houses were strong, armed. They beat people, they seized whatever they wanted, grain and bread. People had families, wives, small children, what could they do? And if a man tried to defend himself, he was beaten and taken away, exiled to places from which no one ever returned. When they searched our house, I remember, two of them stood guard over Father, to prevent him from getting in the way, and two others poked around, searching for grain in every corner, taking whatever was out in the open. At the neighbors' house they found some buckwheat and some food in a cast-iron pot in the oven, so they took it all, demolished the stove, and beat our neighbor Savka for hiding the grain.

People didn't want to join the collective, but they had to. They were beaten and their livestock and all their farming implements were seized. Those who resisted were deported. And those who joined suffered less. There was a *kurkul* in the village, Hatsenko. He didn't want to join the collective, or give up his cattle, so they seized everything to the last straw, his tools, his cattle, his house, all of it. He built himself an earthen hut. He died in it after he got sick in the winter.

People went foraging for mushrooms in the forest. They cooked them and dried them. They cooked acorns and ate them; they cooked the leaves, too. They ate nettles. Some people had some bran; they would cook that and eat it. In the summer they picked berries: raspberries, strawberries, guelderberries, belladonna berries, and wild apples and pears. Tree bark was cooked and eaten, too. They trapped birds in the woods. In the winter, they ate crows. I think the fish saved us. Because in the spring when there was nothing to eat, there was a flood, and the marshes and ponds filled up with fish.

I remember people saying that if it wasn't for the fish people caught, nobody would have survived.

Mother had buried silver in the garden. It all ended up at the *torgsin* in town: all the coins and a huge crucifix. She brought back three loaves of bread and three kilograms of pressed oats. People traded gold for bread. If they ate too much, they died.

Recorded by Evhen Khan, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Vira Mykhailivna Tyshchenko, born in 1918 in the town of Skvyra.

I remember that horrible famine. Summer had arrived and folks roamed about, gathering whatever was growing. As the gooseberries got bigger, we picked them, even though they weren't ripe. We ate wild geraniums. The acacia tree bloomed. We shook the blossoms off and ate them. We went into the fields and picked sorrel. Once, Mama went to the market—it was Easter, I remember, and she bought a cup of millet and about ten potatoes. And she cooked a big pot of millet soup. It was all liquid. That was our Easter.

We took hatchlings out of their nests. And then some kind of *torgsin* was set up, and people went there to trade whatever they had. But what good was a *torgsin* to someone who didn't even own a shirt.

In our village, many people starved to death. In our corner of the village, too. A wagon was driven up to a house, the dead were loaded up and taken away. No funerals, nothing.

Recorded by Oleksandra Pylypchyk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Recollections of Maria Mykytivna Chkhun, born in 1926. Village of Maliutiank, Kyiv-Sviatoshyn district.

You couldn't say that the harvest was bad. But thugs, good-for-nothings, just like those we have now, confiscated everything. They were around in those days, too.

They took everything out of the closet: clothing, and later, grain. We had straw bins. We had filled them up with grain, and they raked it all out.

Mother would go to Russia to trade things for bread. Sometimes, she came back with biscuits, beans. . . . Twice she went to Russia to trade . . . everything had been taken from our pantry, and we were left with scraps. She traded whatever she had for beans and grain. The next time she wanted to go, Father said, "You stay home, Nastia. You weave some cloth and I'll go." So she took woven cloth off her loom and gave it to Father. Nine people went and not one returned. And so Father was gone. Mother didn't go any more after that, either. We were starving.

Ivan, my little brother, would go to Grandmother and say, "Granny, give me some cabbage or a cucumber, little Maria is dying." I no longer had the strength to get up. And Grandmother would give him some and he'd bring it to me, saying, "Here, Mania!"

Mother was hungry too, but she would sometimes go to Kyiv with our neighbor. The neighbor wandered among people and begged. She'd give Mother what she got. Mother said, "I won't go begging." She was ashamed.

People caught birds in their barns. They threw them into a fired-up stove and ate them.

Recorded by Yulia Marchuk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Anastasia Nykyforivna Hlukhivska, born in 1918. Skybnytsi village, Tetiiv district.

I remember the famine well. We were *dekurkulized*. Our house was confiscated and other people moved into it. I ended up in the street. . . . I'll never forget this: There was a field, our own field, where Father had sown wheat. That spring everybody in the house died. The wheat wasn't ripe yet. I was left all alone. So I went to that field to gather some wheat. It was about a three-kilometer walk. I was a child, sick and hungry. I picked a full sack of wheat and then I saw a man. I knew him. He came up to me and began to insult me horribly. I told him, "This is my field, my father sowed the wheat." And he answered, "I know your father sowed the wheat, but it's not yours," and he beat me with his whip handle. He was on horseback. He yanked me up on the horse, beat me again, and took me away. He kept me in a cellar for three days.

Before this, those in charge would come to our house and ask my father, "Nykyfor, have you made up your mind to join the collective?" And Father replied, "I'm staying put." We had a horse, and Father had his own farm and farmed alone. By spring everybody in my family had starved to death.

Nobody was allowed to leave the village. There was one train that ran between Kyiv and Kashporivka village. I was alone after everyone else in the family had died. My legs were swollen. My father had wanted to go to Russia. He was a tailor and had been promised a job there in Russia. When we went to get the ticket, we couldn't get one. There weren't any tickets. Anywhere. They took Father to prison. He died in prison.

Grain was stored in the church.

Recorded by Valentyna Kuricheva, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Oleksandra Seminivna Dalevska (Marchuk), born in 1918. Skybnytsi village, Tetiiv district.

You know, I can't tell you how that famine started. But I heard that Russian, Stalin, was to blame for it.

My stepmother was arrested for picking ears of wheat, and they were going to put her on trial for this. She was held for several days (or maybe weeks) and then released.

In 1932 people were already dying. My grandfather starved to death in 1932. Grandmother told us shameful things: He ate his own excrement.

I was naked as a wild bird. Grandmother had some wax. I stole it. I would spread some wax on the skillet and fry up some greens and Father would ask, "Why are you giving me less?" Father was a working man, and so was my brother. I had to give all the greens to Father. He worked day and night, after all.

There was a burial brigade of some kind. When Grandmother was to be buried, they wanted to throw her into a common grave, but Father raised a ruckus, and he began digging a grave for Grandmother himself. The burial brigade joined in and helped him. In other words, Grandmother was buried in her own grave.

Recorded by Tetiana Shevchenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Maria Mykytivna Kolisnichenko,
born in 1916. Hlevakha village, Vasylkiv district.

I remember the famine, why wouldn't I? A neighbor woman, she was a *komenzam,* told the authorities that when my father's children (my father's name was Mykyta Petrovych Posichko) went to the toilet, there was wheat in their excrement. So three of them came to conduct a search. Mama had divided the sack of wheat into bundles. She set my sister down on the edge of the stove and told her, "Katia, lie there and don't move." She was three years old, she remembers it. Mama put one bundle of wheat in an empty corner of the house and covered it with something black; she did the same in another corner. Then she let the rabbits and chickens into the corner.

So they came to search. One lifted the door leading into the cellar. Well, this was a man who didn't want to betray us. As the two others stood by, he lifted the door and said, "Nothing here." The village soviet had sent them. He gave the stove a quick look and said, "I see only rags here." And they left after telling Father that it was Halia who had reported him to the village soviet. So Father immediately went to her house. "You go spy on the neighbors and you report on us? I'll kill you, I'll go to prison, but you'll be dead." And her husband told her, if she kept doing this she would regret it. "Don't go anymore. Refuse." And she stopped.

Folks who worked in the field at the collective farm all brought their own bowls and they were given food.

Pillows were confiscated, fur coats. Those who resisted joining the collective were taken away and transported somewhere. Propagandists came around, encouraging people to join.

One young boy, he was twelve years old or so, was thrown into a burial pit. He crawled out. He went to the river, and my husband was there—he was still young then, he was hunting turtles. He was a widower; I married him. Those turtles . . . people roasted them and then put them into a pan or pot and into the oven. So the boy said to him, "Kolia, give me one," and Kolia gave him a turtle. The boy swallowed it, raw, and said, "Another." Kolia said he wouldn't give him any more. "You stingy, miserly man," the boy said.

At home his mother gave him only so much to eat (half a finger's worth) seven times a day. He returned home and stayed for three days. He told everyone about how Uncle Kolia had saved him. Then he said to his Grandmother, "And you, Granny, are stingy."

"No, I'm not," she replied, "if I let you eat any more, you'll die."

"Fine, if that's how it is. I'm stronger now. And I'm going. I have a sister and a mother. If they haven't starved to death yet, I'll hunt those turtles and I'll feed them to my sister and mother bit by bit." They survived, his mother and his sister.

Recorded by Iryna Marochkanych, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Oleksii Semenovych Lytvynsky, born in 1919. Village of Hrebinky, Vasylkiv district.

There was no drought in 1933. The harvest was fine. The Soviet leadership instituted all that grain requisitioning. And this spitefulness was directed at the Ukrainian peasant because the Ukrainian peasant wasn't a part of the working class, which was the backbone of the October Revolution.[16] Nothing was confiscated from the urban working class. Whether he was rich or poor, whether he had a piano in his apartment, nobody bothered him and nobody took that piano away. But the last chicken was taken from the peasant. If he had a cart, that, too, was taken. And the peasant—he loved farming, and the harvest was good. So the peasants filled all the quotas, but the plan was to confiscate as much as possible and to punish the peasant nonetheless. That was the goal of the Bolsheviks, to wipe out the Ukrainian peasantry. To exile as many of them as possible to Siberia.

In those days they sang: "*Kurkulnia, kurkulnia,*[17] and we are the communists. You sowed and reaped but we're the ones who'll eat."

The leaders were armed (not all of them) because they were supposedly battling saboteurs. Imagine—party activists showed up from the entire region. Dovzhenko, the head of the regional communist committee proclaimed that nationalist groups had been uncovered in our region. What they really meant was in one village, and that village had to be destroyed. The police had weapons not only for themselves, but they had a supply of weapons besides, just in case. . . . So those activists, communists, party members arrived, and the weapons were distributed. They were all put on trucks and driven to Pinchuky village. In one night they executed their operation. They arrested more than thirty men. So much weeping, such an uproar, so many tears. They went to almost every other house, taking the fathers away. The mothers cried and wailed, the children screamed, the dogs barked. It all happened.

Mykytiansky was the director at the "Red Stalk" collective farm in Pinchuky village. One day he killed a child. A little boy, eight or ten years old, Andrii

Ivanovych Lynnyk. The boy had stolen a piece of bread when bread was being doled out. Mykytiansky remembered him, and when he saw him in Mykhailo Mykytovych Shevchenko's yard, he was so angry, can you imagine, such anger seized this director because the starving boy had saved himself. He grabbed the little boy, took him by his feet, and smashed his head against a tree. The child died. And nobody was ever held accountable for this.

The Communist Party, with Stalin at its head, they are all to be blamed for the consequences of their policies, all the calamities Ukraine went through, starting with the October Revolution. For the Ukrainian peasant, the famine began in 1922 and wasn't over until Stalin's death in 1953.

There may be films shown about our joyful lives, but the truth is I was starving and my entire family was starving until the time Stalin died. I never knew what it felt like to be well fed. We never swelled up, but nevertheless, we were starving.

Recorded by Anastasia Vereniova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Hanna Semenivna Sukhenko remembers.

Born in 1922, village of Usivka village, Zhuriv (Berezan) district.

I remember that terrible famine. It was fashionable in those days to inform on your neighbor. Reporting on neighbors was rewarded; the informer got a part (maybe a third) of what was confiscated. In our neighborhood, across the street, lived four children; it was a very poor family. The mother had tuberculosis. The parents ate their children, but they starved to death anyway.

There was a house in our neighborhood that folks used as a library. It was *dekurkulized*: Everything was removed and they started a fire in the wood stove and then the whole house burned down. Who started the fire? The *kurkuls*. The authorities took Father away. They kept him in custody for a long time. Finally somebody came forward and said that the stove itself had caught fire. Father was released after that. He starved to death. I said to mother: "Mama, what did Tato say when he was dying?" And she answered, "He said, 'I'm so hungry, I'm so hungry.' He didn't say anything else." Mama survived somehow.

People didn't defend themselves. They were hungry, cold. Even something hidden under one's clothes, next to one's heart was taken away.

Only the very poor voluntarily joined the collective. Those who didn't want to work—drunkards, alcoholics, that's who.

Those who were *dekurkulized*, like us, we were left with what we had on our backs. We were evicted from our house, everything was confiscated, even dirty laundry. Mama was setting aside a dowry—there were two girls in the family—and she had woolen scarves. They were huge, with fringes, beautiful. She had twenty-five scarves. She had worked very hard to make sure there was a dowry. She had daughters, after all. Expensive skirts, embroidered shirts, all kinds of things. And I'm telling you, we were left with what was on our backs. Such was Soviet rule.

We didn't want to join the collective. We were as afraid of it as a devil's afraid of frankincense.

Who lived well? Those who stole, the robbers. People never said "they took something"—they always said "they stole." The thieves lived well.

People took care of the burials themselves. Some dug graves in their yards. Nobody was buried at the cemetery.

Those who were in power are to be blamed. The order was issued from above. Stalin ordered the annihilation of the people. Starving people aren't fit for anything, they don't need anything. They just want to eat.

Recorded by Oksana Ovsiiuk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Oksana Andriivna Zhyhadno, born in 1926. Town of Boiarka.

The famine. It was so horrible that those who survived will remember it till the day they die. What reasons? There were none. Everything was cleaned out of people's homes, and if they could, the communists would have stolen people's souls too. They came once, then again when they saw that people hadn't died yet. They were scoundrels, those who robbed us. Some of them were strangers and knew no one in the village. There were beasts among them, like our neighbor's cousin. He didn't even shave yet, he was so green. He lived in the second house. Village life was such that everyone had a relative in almost every house. So he would go and steal things from his aunt's house. What a devoted activist he was, stealing from his family. When he returned a second time, accompanied this time by his damned friends, his aunt cursed him. And that same day, as they were crossing a dam in their wagon (the water hadn't frozen all the way yet), he drowned. They were activists, communists.

Those who made the rounds didn't die and neither did the Jews. They had a bar in our village, and when the famine began, they converted the bar into a *turkseb*[18] where gold was exchanged for grain. But where would you find gold in a village?

Those who lived by the river cooked frogs and cattails. When cattails are fresh and young they're sweet like cucumbers. But because people were eating them to stave off hunger, the authorities trampled the cattails. They never reported this to their leaders, they just trampled the cattails and even burned them.

When all this first started, some women (those with small children) would go to other villages for a couple of days, carrying goat cheese tucked into their shirts. If they happened to cross the path of any officials, the officials would pull the cheese out and trample it. They didn't like goat cheese and didn't eat it.

Life began after Stalin died.

In 1933 entire families, entire villages died of starvation. People from the village would go to towns in the hopes of finding at least some potato peels at a dump yard. But there was no longer anything edible anywhere. People just dropped dead.

People roamed around listless and hungry. Father died. There was a slaughterhouse by the river, where they butchered animals. To stop people from picking through the waste, the waste was sprinkled with carbide. Mama went, she got some ears and hooves. She brought them home. After scrubbing them, she boiled them and we ate them. But carbide is toxic; it just masks the stench of rotting meat. Mama died. I survived, probably because I didn't eat as much. But I hallucinated: I thought there were snakes and frogs crawling all around me. I was young and didn't understand that Mama was dying. I screamed and ran from the snakes and fell at the doorstep and fainted. My older sister had gone with the neighbors to the forest to pick some grass, *leverda*—it smells like garlic. She came home, and Mama was dead. A wagon was making the rounds, picking up the dead. We wrapped Mama in a linen cloth and they took her away.

Men stood over a deep pit. We children stood there hungry, numb, comprehending nothing. Our mother was thrown into the pit, and we didn't even cry. Back home when it got dark we realized that Mama was gone forever. We started crying, screaming, calling out to her. We sat, screaming like that, and if it wasn't for the neighbor, our hearts would probably have burst. Our neighbors calmed us down, gave us something to eat, and went home.

Windows were boarded up. Weeds grew taller than houses. Entire villages were dead. But not for long. New people were brought in by the authorities, people from Russia, from Byelorussia. They repopulated the villages. Folks said, later, that the Poles had wanted to send help to the starving in Ukraine, but the Soviet government had denied that there was a famine.

In those days there were a lot of Jews in Oleksandrivka, but not one of them starved to death . . .

Recorded by Anna Pererva, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Recollections of Valentyna Mykhailivna Tsaryk, born in 1922. Village of Kniazhychi, Brovar district.

I remember the famine of 1932–1933. My father worked here in the village. I'm not sure exactly what position he held, but he traveled to Crimea on horseback for salt. With the money he made he bought food: He'd bring a loaf of bread or something else. We were terribly hungry. We ate potato peels. There was very little bread. There was no pork fat to be had. To survive, we ate flat-cakes made from acorns. They were very bitter, but everyone tried to survive somehow.

Then they took everything. The *komenzams*. Whatever they found they took, even clothing.

Nobody had any written orders. They simply came, took everything, and left. Sometimes they came back every three days or so.

People were deported. If you owned a horse and didn't want to hand it over, they could throw you in jail.

If they noticed that the ground wasn't level, if it was obvious that the soil had been disturbed, they poked around with spikes.

Up to six men at a time would come to our house. The *komenzams*. They took everything. Livestock. Linens. Food.

Wheat was harvested for the *Komsomol*. I never heard of the "Five Wheat Ears Law." I worked as a reaper at the collective farm.

Everybody was starving in the village. There wasn't a single person who wasn't starving.

And yes, people survived, especially those who had relatives who helped one another. They shared whatever they had.

People ate everything: grass, nettles.

The famine was everywhere, in the towns, too.

Many people died.

There was a man in our village, Roman. He ate human flesh during the famine. He would catch people, lock them in his cellar, and then eat them. When one of our neighbors disappeared, a woman, we didn't suspect that he had taken

her. But everybody in the village was afraid of him. Mother wouldn't let us out of the house. She was afraid for us.

People were buried all kinds of ways. Some were taken to the cemetery. Or common graves were dug. But sometimes people were buried wherever they happened to drop dead.

The victims of the famine are commemorated at every church service.

We have no monument in our village. Nevertheless, everyone remembers those difficult times. I'm telling you about it so that you never live through anything like it.

I don't know who is to blame for that dreadful famine. I only know that millions of lives were sacrificed on the altar of something incomprehensible. Someone just wanted the village to die.

Everyone in the village was starving. There wasn't a person who wasn't.

Recorded by Natalia Bobrovnyk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Hanna Oleksandrivna Molokoiid remembers.

Born in 1925, village of Fasov, Makariv district.

Father worked in a blacksmith's shop. For that he received his ration of bread. The poor man didn't eat it; he brought it home for the two of us. My sister was placed in a children's shelter; I wasn't. My mother cooked there. I would hang around under the windows of the shelter, hoping to get a piece of bread. I was hungry. Whenever Mother peeled potatoes, she fried the peels for us. She had to do this very carefully so no one would see. And she would carry the peels out for me and I would eat them. But once when Mother hid a lump of sugar, the director caught her and she lost her job.

They didn't let me go to the kindergarten. Mother begged them, "Take her, or she'll starve to death. The bread Father brings is nothing." But they told her, "Let her go pick grass in the field." There were five other girls like me, and we would go to the field to pick sorrel. Mama cooked it and we ate it.

I remember 1933 very well. . . .

I was walking with the other girls, and we saw some people threshing buckwheat. We gathered up all the chaff and brought it home. Mother sifted

it and baked flat-cakes out of it. But after we ate them, we all got horribly constipated. We ate corn stalks. We grated them and Mother baked them.

Father got all bloated. His legs swelled up. Mother wasn't so bad.

Many people weren't even buried . . . Mama's relative died under a fence. A sleigh came around. She was wrapped in a linen cloth and taken away to be buried.

My sister-in-law's sister's husband starved to death in 1933. The family was starving, so the wife buried him right under a window near the house. She hacked chunks of flesh off the body and cooked it. They ate it. They had two boys.

Once, when my brother came to their house, she said to him, "Taras, will you have some headcheese?" He said, "Yes," and she brought out a plate of that headcheese for him.

People ate horsemeat too. Anything you could think of. We ate clover and nettles. I picked it myself.

My brother (he was born in 1919) went to the collective farm to unpack potatoes. He brought a sack of those potatoes home. But all the potatoes had already sprouted, and we nearly poisoned ourselves.

There was another famine in 1947; there was nothing to eat then either.

People picked wheat ears. If they were caught, they were imprisoned. My neighbors got three years for picking wheat ears. As soon as the watchman on duty passed, we would go and pick some. We tore them up with our hands and boiled a soup out of them.

The people in charge didn't starve.

Many people died in the famine of 1933.

Who buried them? A horse-drawn wagon came around. They were carted away and unloaded into a pit. No coffin, nothing.

My brother's baby died. When the baby was born, his mother would bring him to our house. We would chew up some bread and give it to the baby to eat, but he died. My other brother's wife had a baby too, and she nursed it for a while. But then she said, "My baby will go hungry, and I'm going to nurse someone else's."[19] And she stopped nursing hers. It died.

My brother and a neighbor went to dig the grave for the baby. It was so cold that some half-frozen sparrows fell into the grave. They caught those sparrows and cooked them. That was the feast they had after burying the baby.

Young and old starved to death. There was nothing to eat.

If you went to the collective farm, you got millet. Mama would cook a gruel out of that millet. She had handed everything over to the collective—the horse, the plow, everything she owned.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Maria Fedotivna Kashtan,
born in 1918. Village of Pashkivka (formerly Vitrovka), Makariv district.

There *was* grain. People hid everything in the stove, but they found it and took it all. It was local folks, our own people, from the village soviet. The *komenzams.* They had no documents. What documents could there be at that time?

My father joined the collective. Those who didn't were the "*kurkuls.*"

Everything was confiscated. But those who had joined the collective weren't cleaned out of everything and they could go to Kyiv to buy bits of bread. They traded things.

A piece of cloth could be traded. Gold earrings were traded. That's how we survived. My mother had big, beautiful earrings. So Father took those earrings to Kyiv and traded them for crumbs of bread. And we survived.

We had a cow; that helped.

I had a cousin, our fathers lived next door to each other . . . two brothers, my father and his. My cousin's parents died. His father left to find work somewhere and never came back. His mother starved to death during the famine.

The boys stayed here. The girls, there were three of them, went to the Donbas region; they lived and worked there. The boys, one was still very young . . . he lived with us, and my mother took care of him. In the spring he tended the cows. Later he went to Kyiv, to see Postyshev,[20] because he believed that as an orphan he was entitled to a job. They put him to work at a sewing factory.

The boy would gather some husks, bake some biscuits. In the spring we picked rotten potatoes in the field and ate them.

My parents didn't suffer too badly from hunger during the winter; they had things to trade. There were many who got all bloated, who starved to death.

They stacked up to five bodies in one pit.

One family in this village ate their own child. Their own child.

While tending cows in the pasture, my cousin dug little gophers out of their burrows; there were times he brought us a whole bucket of those gophers.

Who knows whose orders were being followed when they took grain from people. Everybody had grain, everybody threshed. What was the cause of the famine? What?

The people in charge caused it.

You couldn't hide anything. They would poke the ground with spikes, searching. In the house, everywhere . . .

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Yivha Ivanivna Yovenko,
born in 1910. Village of Sytniaky, Makariv district.

My father and mother had eight children: five sons and three daughters.

The famine. People just dropped dead. A child running along saying, "I'm hungry! I'm hungry!" They said someone ate that child because he went into a house and never came out. In 1933, during the famine, folks would go to Kyiv to get bread. . . . People were starving, they were falling down dead.

I hoed, I dug, I mowed, taking my baby into the field with me. I bound the wheat into sheaves while my baby played in the shade of those sheaves.

We gathered rotten potatoes from the field and made flat-cakes. We found rotten potatoes in the water, next to the distillery. That's what we ate.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Liubov Andriivna Orliuk,
born in 1918. Village of Sytniaky, Makariv district.

This is what happened. In 1932, the potato crop was poor. . . . The grain harvest was fine but it was confiscated; no one was given bread for working days (*trudodni*).

Those who could make it to Kyiv could get a kilogram of bread there. There were long lines, but they were giving out bread.

Those who had a cow survived. I had some neighbors . . . there was a little girl—she was eight years old, and people said that the neighbors ate her.

Everybody in our family survived because we had the cow. Mama would trade some milk for a cup of grain or for a slice of bread. That's how we ate.

One of our neighbors' daughters was married. She survived. But the oldest, the one who had a child, she died in front of my eyes. About the child . . . we asked her about the child and she said, "I gave her to someone to take care of her." Some said that they ate her. The youngest of their boys, I saw it with my own eyes, would catch dogs and cats to eat.

People were sentenced for gathering ears of wheat. Their sacks were taken away and they were sentenced. They would get two, three years.

Very many people died in 1933. What priest? What are you talking about? They came to the house and those who were strong took the dead out, stacking them on the wagon. A common grave was dug—that's how people were buried.

No, nobody made any caskets. What would they be made of? And who was there to make them? Everybody was trying to survive. Trying to save their own families.

As far as I can remember, there were very few households in which someone survived. There were very few houses where the entire family survived.

They say some people ate other people.

In the spring, weeds and nettles sprouted; people picked them and cooked borshch. They made soup out of pigweed. Millet was thrashed and people ate the husks that were usually fed to cattle.

Our family had no gold, but I heard that people who had gold earrings, rings, or bracelets traded them for bread or grain.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Vira Danylivna Oliinyk,
born in 1920. Village of Sytniaky, Makariv district.

It was 1933. I was born in 1920, so I was twelve years old and I remember the famine. We picked wheat ears and potatoes. Then three boys in our family died. Seven of us remained.

There was collectivization. Our horse and wagon were taken. Mother had poured grain and seeds into jugs and they poured it all out. They took all we had.

Who was there to defend us? We cried . . .

We didn't want the collective farm. What did we get there—100 grams of grain per day. We picked rotten potatoes and sorrel. Wild beets. That's how we ate.

Yes, they put people on trial for taking ears of wheat. It was forbidden. One way or another, you just had to survive.

Many died. Right over there the whole family perished. There were four of them . . .

What service are you talking about? People were simply covered with a shirt, carted to the cemetery, and dropped into a pit.

Where could we hide anything? Bury it? It was forbidden. They would see a piece of linen cloth and take it away. They imposed some kind of taxes, but there was nothing to pay them with, so they took clothing.

There was no place to trade. In 1947 we'd go to western Ukraine to barter things. In 1933, many people starved to death. Nobody traveled anywhere. Children died. The elderly died. Travel was forbidden.

You'd see a wagon hauling something covered up, and you knew they were transporting someone who had died. Where would you get a coffin!

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Yakiv Stepanovych Zubar,
born in 1918. Village of Sytniaky, Makariv district.

I'll tell you. In 1933, the grain was already ripe. People went into the fields and picked ears of wheat and rye, cooked a gruel, ate it, and died. That was how they died.

But the truth was that everything was confiscated. Storage sheds were emptied of everything that was in them. We were required to hand over thirty *puds* [about 500 kilograms] of buckwheat as tax, and then they decided that they wanted an additional thirty *puds* of buckwheat . . . and when Mother couldn't pay the tax, she got one and a half years of prison. She gave birth to a daughter while in prison.

Those in power demanded that Ukraine supply the Soviet Union with bread. I lay all the blame on the local authorities; how brutally they treated people.

Picking ears of wheat was forbidden. People were put on trial for that. If bread had been available, people wouldn't have touched those wheat ears.

We ate whatever we could get. We had a lot of corn. Mama cooked it, we ate it and fed the neighbor girl with it. We survived because of the corn.

Many died. They were buried at the cemetery. What services are you talking about? Family buried family. What funerals are you talking about? People were starving to death.

In the village of Nalyvaikivka they say that families ate their own children. I heard about this, but I didn't see it.

God willing, you will never live through or witness anything like it.

When our collective farm was first organized, it was called the Lenin Kolhosp. It was very primitive at first.

Account of Hanna Volodyrivna Demen,

born in 1917. Village of Yerkivtsi, Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi district.

People just dropped dead. They ate chaff, flatcakes made of rotten potatoes. People just collapsed. There was nobody to bury them.

The famine in 1933 was terrible. . . . We had a cow, but Father went to sell it because we had no bread. He died on the way.

I haven't forgotten how terrible it was, that famine!

So Father died and we were still very young then. I was thirteen when Father died.

They made the rounds, taking things out of pantries. The police came and took everything. When I tried to pick a few ears of wheat, they beat me and chased me away.

People ate dead cats. May the Lord have mercy. There was one woman, she was out of her mind, she ate her children. They died and she ate them. This is the truth. She lived not far from us. They called her Shapchykha. Her children died. She boiled them and ate them. It was horrible, I tell you!

Many people died, I'm telling you, they lay like chaff and there was nobody to bury them . . . They lay there, unburied. Family might drag them to the cemetery, dig a small hole, and cover the body with soil so that dogs wouldn't tear it apart.

I was a young girl. I would go to the field for some ears of wheat and the guards would catch me and lash me with a whip. People were tried for taking wheat ears. Women were jailed. Sometimes you had a basket of wheat ears, and the guard would catch you and lash you and the wheat ears would scatter all over the ground. Sometimes the guards took them for themselves.

I was beaten. And we ate chaff and those rotten potatoes. We ate sorrel. Tiny apples. Beets.

I was thirteen, and I pulled weeds [at the collective farm]. I would come out to weed and the brigadier would say: "Look at that weeder!" Others would work two rows while I did one. We lived at the collective farm and we worked for free.

How they abused us! It was unbearable! I had four sisters and a brother. We all survived. None of us died.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Testimony of Vasyl Petrovych Konchenko,
born in 1926. Village of Yerkivtsi, Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi district.

We little ones went to the children's shelter, because they gave us bread there. Our parents would meet us in the evening. We had a cow, and we had milk.

Father was the director of the collective farm. But in spite of this, in 1932, he was tried and sentenced to five years for not fulfilling the grain quota. Mama worked at the collective farm while Father was in prison.

In 1933 Father was taken away. The accused were tried in the regional courts; they were all sent to Lukianiv prison.[21]

Somewhere in Podil there were cellars full of rotten potatoes. Everybody was brought together to sort the potatoes. The Dniprovska War Flotilla [a collective farm] was being organized in our village at that time and was allotted about 100 hectares of land. Within one month they had a pig farm and a stable for horses. Those who joined were given a pack of Aurora cigarettes, whether they worked or not. That's how folks in our village survived. That's how the Dniprovska Flotilla helped.

I went to the children's shelter. I remember a pit being dug, and by the time the body was brought for burial, the pit was already full.

They say there was cannibalism, but I don't recall anything like that.

We ate nettles . . . we ate anything green. We ate flowers from the acacia tree.

No one foresaw the famine. Folks had been living normal lives, and then suddenly everything was confiscated. Our own government seized everything,

leaving nothing for the people. So we figured, "It's all the same . . . there are about six hundred of us . . . and maybe they'll give us something at the collective farm," but how it all turned out—you can't imagine.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Testimony of Mykhailo Hryhorovych Lokha,
born in 1922. Village of Yerkivtsi, Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi district.

What happened was all the grain was swept away as if with a broom. In 1932–1933 people were left with no bread. All the grain was handed over to fulfill a plan. An order from above was issued. Local brigades made the rounds and confiscated everything.

There were six children in our family, and Father and Mother. We survived because we had a cow.

People hid food, but they found all of it . . .

By the time 1933 arrived, people weren't living long enough to see the harvest; they were dying. There were many deaths in 1933. And many of those who lasted till the harvest ate their fill and also died . . .

In the spring we roamed the field picking beets, potatoes . . .

What priest are you talking about? They buried people however they could, some, most likely, without a coffin.

About half of the people in the village died, many died! Especially the old ones; the young ones, like me, walked about looking for something to eat. Maybe a crow's nest with eggs in it. And baby crows. I myself ate them.

People ate dogs, cats.

They sentence people for picking ears of wheat. It was the same in all the villages.

Taking anything was forbidden. End of story.

Nobody in my family died.

Who knows if there were people who didn't go hungry?

We joined the collective from the first day. What did they pay? They did give bits of something, doled out in grams.

Those who had anything made of gold took it to Kyiv. They decided how much gold earrings or gold teeth were worth, and they traded the gold for flour or grain.

Those who resisted joining the collective were *dekurkulized* and sent away. Quite a few were deported. They live in the Urals, beyond the Urals . . . It was rare for any of them to come back here.

You survived if they didn't find anything hidden.

Maybe there was some resistance, but nobody helped us. They took everything they found. So many in Ukraine died!

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Hryhorii Ivanovych Mazurenko remembers.

Born in 1921, village of Semenivka, Makariv district.

It was a terrible tragedy. I remember it well. My mother baked bread at the collective farm until the fall of 1932. Then one day they told her, "Don't come back. The pantry has been cleaned out."

When the grain disappeared, the famine set in. I would go to the church up on the hill and tear the bark off the linden tree. At home we had buckwheat husks. Mother would sift them, add ground-up linden leaves and bark, and bake biscuits. That's how we ate.

Once we dropped in on our neighbors. His name was Fedir and he had a daughter, Olia. It was a stiflingly hot day and both of them were lying on the stove. His skin was all cracked and he stank horribly. I never saw anything that horrible even at the front.

Ninety-six people starved to death here. Not far from here is another village, Liudvynivka; they ate their children there. They had horses there once, but they killed them and ate them. They ate human flesh, too. Here in Semenivka there was a woman whose children had died, so she cooked them and ate them. It was a very difficult time.

When I think back on those years . . . one day I was lying down, and somebody threw three potatoes into the house. I washed them and cooked them and gained enough strength to stay on my feet.

There was a *radhosp* [state farm] in our village. When I was ten, I went to the office and said, "Give me work."

They asked, "What will you do?" and I answered, "I'll tend to the horses." So they gave me a piece of bread, maybe 200 grams. They grew beets at the farm. They would gather us children and send us into the rows of beets to weed. They fed us some gruel. We worked until midday.

Then the KGB would come. "You don't want to hand over your grain? You don't want to work at the collective farm?" And the minute you bought something, people informed on you to the village soviet and they came and confiscated whatever it was you had in your sack. I knew those boys. None of them is around anymore. They were shot under the German occupation.

They took the last crumbs. They didn't care about anybody. And those who resisted were exiled to Kolyma.[22] Many never came back.

My aunt's husband, Vasyl, tried to sell his grain. He falsified receipts to show that he had deposited the grain. He was caught. To this day he hasn't returned.

My father and seven other men were the first to join the collective. . . . And after they joined, they worked for nothing. People lived in poverty. Before the famine, they took all the cows to the collective farm and they became communal property.

A man, still alive, says, "I'm still breathing," and he's told, "What, am I supposed to come for you another time?" There was a horse. The dead were picked up. There were diggers. They were given special rations for digging. They dug pits, the dead were brought over, and they unloaded them into the pits. People were buried in whatever they were wearing.

My neighbor was the head of the village soviet. All the deaths were recorded at the village soviet. I met him many times after that, and he told me that in 1933 ninety-six to ninety-eight people starved to death in Semenivka.

Kyiv had a *torgsin*. I went there with Mother . . . she had gold rings. We walked to Vasylkiv; I was very young then. We got six or seven loaves of bread for the gold. We carried it all in a sack from Vasylkiv. How did we do it? There were no buses; we walked. Somehow we made it. In the village, there was nowhere to trade anything. Kyiv had the *torgsins*. They were called that because they were places where gold was traded for bread.

My family survived the famine. But my sisters were all swollen. And my feet swelled up, as big as boots.

Those in power are to be blamed. They say that in Voronezh [in Russia] there was a lot of bread, but in Kyiv, in Obukhiv, there wasn't any. The famine was created on purpose, set into motion to exterminate people.

Nineteen thirty-three was the most difficult year. In 1932, you could still survive more or less, there were still things to eat. But in 1933, there were heavy rains. The fields were flooded, the potatoes rotted, and there was nothing to plant.

There were some wheat ears in the field. I picked some up and put them into my sack. I was afraid of being caught. They gave folks five years for picking wheat. Stealing state property! In our village two men were sent to prison for that.

I know about that law. Kalinin signed that law. Stalin, Molotov,[23] Yezhov,[24] they're the ones who did this to Ukraine. And how was Ukraine standing in their way? They wanted to crush Ukraine because Ukraine wanted independence.

There were a lot of our people in Siberia. Many went to Kyiv. To Russia. Entire settlements. Here it was the famine. It was hell.

In 1946–1947, western Ukraine saved us. They took our harrows, our cast-iron pots, our linen, and they traded with us. Not a single person died of starvation in 1947.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Maria Oksentiivna Sukhomlyn, born in 1922. Village of Liudvynivka, Makariv district.

My mother, father, sister, and three brothers died of starvation in 1933. They were all buried separately. There was nothing to eat. We ate weeds. When my little brother died, the gravediggers came for him. You were expected to give them a kilo of bread, but we didn't have any. They took him to the cemetery. Bodies were tossed in like beets. I was left all alone. "Why have all of you left me?" I asked.

There was nothing to eat. They did that, the activists. We had a cow and a sow. Taxes were imposed: 100 rubles for a piglet.

When Father was released, we still owed 300 rubles, but the debt was written off.

Those who came to take everything even took things off the stove.

It was such misery! We endured such hunger!

Many people died in every house. Seven people died in our house. I alone survived. I ate all the same things, yet I survived. God let me live.

I don't remember those who came to take things from us very well.

Here's how the dead were buried. They gathered them and put them onto a cart and then unloaded them. Then they dug a pit. Then they dropped them into the pit like beets.

They say that there was cannibalism in other villages. My brother caught some birds. We steamed them and ate them.

Oh, why did we live long enough to live through this! Oh, how we had to live! We fed the lice! There were so many lice, we couldn't pick them off.

Those who joined the collective were better off.

I was eleven years old at the time. My parents and my brother and sister died in 1933 during the famine. Most people died during 1933.

Naturally, those in charge lived better. They cooked some kind of gruel at the collective farm. It was cold and damp in 1933. People swelled up; my brother and sister did, too. Not my father, though. I just shriveled up. Those who swelled up didn't survive.

Five wheat ears. One woman here picked some wheat and was sentenced. Her sister cared for the woman's baby while she sat in prison for two years. She's dead now or she could have told you how it was.

You'd go and pick some wheat ears and put them into a sack. They chased people away. They didn't allow it. They wanted to cause as much damage and harm as they could. Ukraine had grain. But they starved people deliberately. There were orders.

They drove people out of villages. Houses were destroyed, windows were smashed.

They paid nothing. Twenty *kopeks*.[25] How could we pay taxes? Besides, we had a 300-ruble loan.

People had to meet quotas: 120 eggs per person or 150 eggs from smaller families.

Life improved under Brezhnev. It was Stalin who gave us such high taxes.

Those with a cow survived.

They cooked some kind of gruel thickened with flour for those who worked at the collective farm. Where else could you work? How could you work anywhere if you were swollen with hunger? Only at the collective farm where they got some of that gruel. Some didn't make it back home. They collapsed in the road. So many people died. Three girls and two boys were left in our village.

The dead were buried at the cemetery.

It would have been better not to live than to see such a thing. It was hell.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Hanna Pavlivna Komlyk,
born in 1920. Village of Liudvynivka, Makariv district.

I remember the famine in 1932. We were starving. There was nothing. Officials came and confiscated everything. Everything was swept out. People starved to death. It was done deliberately, the famine.

I picked beets that were not yet ripe and ate them. I had a father, a mother, brothers, sisters. They all died.

They took everything to kill off the people. People dropped dead walking. They would lie there. Eventually, someone would find them and cart them away.

Both of my brothers died right at the start of the famine.

Across the road, I came across someone's horse. I hitched that horse to a small wagon and pulled my brothers into it. I dug a grave myself. I put a linen cloth down and laid them on top of it. I covered them, and then I thought to myself: "How am I going to climb out of this pit?" Then I sat down and cried.

Our neighbor had five children. Only one daughter survived. The rest all died.

Do I know why this happened? Probably to exterminate people. Do I know why they did what they did?

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Testimony of Vasyl Fedorovych Kulyk,
born in 1919. Village of Liudvynivka, Makariv district.

In 1933, it was my job to carry water in buckets to the fields. We ate beets that were cattle feed.

I came from a large family. They searched with spikes. They took everything. Even if there was something in the oven, they took it all. They confiscated everything and what they did with it, I do not know.

We dug out last year's rotted potatoes and made flat-cakes out of them and ate them.

Not less than three hundred people, maybe more, starved to death in our village.

They were buried in a common grave. They would cart ten corpses at a time and unload them into a pit. Those who did the carting lived better . . .

Those who joined the collective generally lived better than the rest. Some lived worse.

For gathering ears of wheat in the field people were put on trial.

Of course there was thievery. One man here would sneak around and steal ... maybe a goat, maybe a calf.

It was worse in 1933. It got so bad people ate frogs.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Testimony of Hryhorii Antonovych Harashchenko, born on November 25, 1919, in the village of Yablunka, Khabnenskyi district (presently Polissia district).

He completed ten years of school in Khabne. Served in the army from 1939 and participated in military campaigns in Finland, where he was wounded and suffered from frostbite. Graduated from a military college; specialized in radio communications. From June 22, 1941, fought in World War II.

Harashchenko served as an infantryman in the navy in the battles for Odesa and Sevastopol. He was wounded and later served in tank battalions. Took part in the Battle of Stalingrad. In February 1943, during the Soviet campaign battle to liberate Luhansk [from the Germans], his tank was blown apart. His family was notified that he was dead, but although he suffered burns, he miraculously survived. He returned to the front in May 1943 and fought in battles for the liberation of Kharkiv and the surrounding Kharkiv region, the Poltava region, Kyiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and the Mykolaiv region. Took part in the siege along the Dnister River and later, fought in battles in Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary. Participated in the liberation of Vienna. On May 9, 1945, he was in Prague, again fighting for its liberation [from German control]. Received many military medals of honor. Discharged with rank of colonel. During the war, he was wounded twelve times. He had been shot in the chest, had broken arms, and had suffered concussions. Invalid of the Second World War. Served in the military until 1953. Discharged as a disabled veteran.

Harashchenko completed the evening division of the Kyiv Polytechnic Institute (KPI). Worked as an engineer at the Petrovsk factory "Arsenal" and at the KPI. At the time of the interview, he was eighty-seven years old and retired.

In 1932–1933, Harashchenko was fourteen years old and a schoolboy. During the summers he worked in the field, driving a tractor and threshing. In the winter of 1933, he helped his teachers bury pupils who had starved to death. He was from a large family that survived because they owned a cow. His aunt, who lived several kilometers away in Zhelonia village in Byelorussia, where there was no famine, helped, too.

When I hear those pseudo-communists, those charlatans, Salamatin and Symonenko say that there was no famine, I cannot listen. Those are lies! How can they deceive people like that from the pulpit of the Supreme Soviet?[26]

I come from Polissia. Yablunka village, Polissia district, Kyiv oblast. The Chornobyl zone. A wealthy zone.

Actually, ours was a family of blacksmiths. Blacksmiths are hard working, smart people. My father's brother was a blacksmith, too. I had six brothers. I had sisters, too. Ours was a family with lots of children.

I was born in 1919. In 1924, my grandmother, who lived to be 124 years old and who spoke Ukrainian at home, became my first teacher. Our ancestors were

Hryhorii Harashchenko discussing the Famine with Kateryna Yushchenko. 2005 photograph.

Zaporizhian Cossacks. When I was six, Mother took me to a blacksmith and I learned to be a blacksmith . . .

Our village was large. There were two long streets. One street was more than a kilometer long. There were more than 200 households in the village, and two *khutirs.*

The intrigues surrounding the creation of the collective farms began in 1933. *Dekurkulization* began and the organization of the collective farms began. We had communes before the collective farms were established, and those communes were the model for the collective farms. One of these communes was named "Mane" and became "May First" collective farm. Another commune was known as "Ash Tree"—it was later renamed "Shevchenko Kolhosp." The first *khutir* had 80 houses; the second had 70 houses. My family moved to that one.

Kaganovich[27] arrived in the 1930s when the collectivization of village agriculture was set in motion. He was originally from the Polissia region. He was already a leader at the time when he arrived at his native village, Kabany. A neighbor presented him with a bunch of half-rotted pears and said, "Oh, here's our dear little Jew." Peasants referred to people of the Hebrew faith as "little Jews." Kaganovich ate the pears. Two days later the woman and her husband were brought to the regional center where they were sentenced to six years in Siberia.

Half a month later, when Kaganovich left for Moscow, resettlement from our village began. There were two Jewish families in our village. They conducted some kind of business. And suddenly they vanished. It turned out that the removal of all Jews from villages into cities had begun. It was the groundwork for things to come. It was 1931.

Cities were overcrowded, especially Kyiv. The expropriation of the expropriators began. The rich were evicted and the Jews from the villages were settled in their stead.

In 1932, because I was an exemplary pupil, I was sent to a pioneer[28] camp, the "Eaglet." It was all-Ukrainian, in Klavdiv. After leaving the camp I became a member of the *Komsomol.*

I returned from camp at the beginning of August. It was harvest time, and there was a good crop: wheat, millet, oats, everything was fine. It was a joyful time for the collective farm. For the state, too. The grain was threshed, stored in sacks, and loaded onto wagons to be taken to Vylcha station. Everything we harvested, the entire yield, was taken to Vylcha station. Even the seeds for future sowing were shipped out.

And when sowing time arrived and the head of the collective farm hastened to start the sowing, he was told that all the seeds must be handed over—the government would distribute them.

When the threshing machine was taken to another village, the collective farm workers used flails to finish threshing the grain. And they sowed the grain that they had threshed with the flails.

Anytime the threshing machine was being used, an NKVD lieutenant was present to oversee operations. Not a single sack of grain moved without him. Two other NKVD officers were with him. They kept records of everything. Not a grain went unaccounted for.

All the grain was harvested and threshed. There was nothing left. But the head of the collective farm had sowed all the seeds that had been threshed by hand.

Winter wheat was sowed. Aron Friedman, an NKVD lieutenant, and two other agents from the NKVD arrived. *Dekurkulization* and confiscation took place under their supervision. In the neighboring village, a Lieutenant Meer (NKVD) supervised.

We had fulfilled the required quota. But because the head of the collective farm had sowed seeds without permission, he was taken to regional headquarters and beaten so badly that he returned all black and blue. And he was the head of the collective farm! He was brought back to the village to fulfill the grain-collection quota. A percentage had been added on top of the already fulfilled quota—more grain had to be handed over.

At that time, livestock was being expropriated from the collective farm. We had more than a hundred cows and heifers and a lot of horses. As the livestock was being herded up, brigadier Vozniuk and the managers of the farm blocked the removal of the animals. As a result, brigadier Vozniuk and the director of the collective farm were taken away. The director later returned to fulfill the plan; the others were killed. They were beaten to death at the Polissia regional headquarters and thrown into the Uzh River. Their bodies were found all the way up the Prypiat River. So NKVD agents arrived to take the animals away. We had a lot of cattle, more than a hundred head. We had sheep, pigs, horses. All of them were being herded up and taken away. The manager of the farm protested: "You can't have them, you can't!" He was put on trial. He was beaten. He was put into a wagon and never returned. It was a tragedy for his family. His wife lost her mind; they had a daughter, too. They were a young family. When his brother began searching for him, people asked, "Do you want to end up where your brother did?" That meant in the Uzh River. Because, as we later learned, he had been killed and thrown into the Uzh. He was identified by his clothes.

Meetings about required quota and the added percentage began with the fact that there was not a grain to be found, the storehouses, once full, were now empty. Lieutenant Friedman arrived and set about confiscating grain from people's houses. They made the rounds from the first house to the last, taking

whatever there was. All the land had been appropriated by the collective, but each member of the collective was allowed sixty *sotok*[29] of land—that was the law.

People began hiding things, and soon, the officials started coming with spikes. They searched in storage sheds, in houses, digging everything up. When they came to my mother's house, I was at home. They asked her, "What have you got, auntie?"

"It's all out in the open, go look," she replied.

"What do you have in that earthen pot?"

"Sour milk for the kids."

"And in that bundle?"

"Millet."

"Yes, it'll come in handy." And they took the jug and the bundle and tossed them into the wagon. "It'll be for the Red Army, for the defenders of the country, it'll come in handy." And who were they? The airborne troops were stationed in the Polissia region. That's where the wagons that hauled everything away came from. Anything that was left after the first round was taken the second time around. Mother said, "I have school children to feed," and they answered, "It's alright. You'll manage."

We were cleaned out. Everybody was cleaned out. Those who resisted were taken by wagon to the Polissia regional center—they either came back or were beaten to death. It was impossible to defend yourself. There was no protection.

They took everything. Nothing remained. From 1932 to 1933 when the snows came, covering everything, that's when it began. The terrible famine. When the first snow fell, they came and seized all the animals. And at the same time the party and the government issued a directive about "the liquidation of the *khutirs*." We had two in our village so it was necessary to liquidate them; it was necessary to displace the people. Nobody could move. Everyone was starving, dying. Entire families.

Those collective farm members who had a cow were left alone, but not everyone had a cow. . . . Before, you were allowed to own one cow, one piglet, and five chickens. You were forbidden to have any more than that. We had a young cow, and she saved our family.

At the end of 1932, the Great Famine began. All the provisions were gone. Everything was covered in snow. People would go to the woods for acorns or whatever was there; they would dig for potatoes. Whether there were any potatoes left in the soil is the question.

There was no place to complain. There was nothing. The *khutirs* were dismantled. Everything was stripped, despoiled. It was a real famine. The farmsteads suffered the most; it was an absolute famine, everything had been

confiscated. But in the village it was the same. Almost all the residents on Pugachev Street in the village starved to death.

As a result, all the children from the *khutirs* starved to death along with their elders. . . . There was a girl from my neighborhood, a girl from a lower class family, and a third child, even younger. When the famine began, orders came from the regional authorities to feed school children. Rationing began. Children who came to school received a meal and 100 grams of bread. Those who did not go to school got nothing. Thus, children tried to make it to school. Not to learn but to eat. Quite a few children were saved that way. All the children from the *khutirs* died. My class had 26 pupils. Twelve survived. In Rahiv village, a similar picture.

The school director summoned me: "You will be my helper at burials." So I helped the school director. I was asked, one day, "Hryts, why hasn't your neighbor Vasia been in school for three, four days?" I rushed over to Vasia's. The gate to the yard was open and at the entry to the house lay their dog, dead. I entered the house. Vasia's parents were lying on the clay stove. I approached them and saw that they were also dead. I entered the next room and there in the middle of the room lay my friend Vasia and his younger sister. I approached—they were both dead. A little girl, Maryshka, sat in the corner. All bones. Still alive . . .

I went back to school and reported everything. The director told me to take some bread and other food to Maryshka and to feed her. I did. "And stop in at brigadier Hordei's, take the wagon, harness the horses, and we'll pick up the whole family and bury them."

And so I took the wagon. We loaded it up. We saved Maryshka. We dug a pit. There were no graves, only pits. And who did the digging? School children. We ourselves buried our classmates. We dug a pit, laid them all down together, covered them with dirt. We went back to the school director, Ivan Stepanovych, and told him everything. He was a very nice man.

We buried others, too, not just that family.

Those who lived near the forest were able to survive by picking tree bark or by killing birds.

Teachers received rations at that time. One kilogram of millet per month.

The end of 1932 saw more deaths than ever. Between the New Year and the spring of 1933 people starved to death on a massive scale. When the snows melted, those who had survived began searching for whatever could be eaten, maybe something had sprouted somewhere, maybe an animal somewhere, which they would immediately kill. Pigweed was picked and eaten. In the woods things began growing, and people began gathering acorns. Many died from eating acorns (poisoned themselves).

Potatoes were picked. No matter how well the potatoes had been picked through and gathered, there were always some small potatoes left in the ground. People dug with their hands, searching for those potatoes. They had been frozen but hadn't rotted yet. So all the little potatoes were picked. After that came straw. It was ground up and used to make a kind of bread.

And people made borshch out of snowdrops. That's how they made it to harvest season. The crop was ripe. People began harvesting.

Then some of the collective farms were outlawed and shut down . . . the "Budennov" and the "Voroshilov" in the village of Yablunka. At our *khutir,* the houses stood empty . . . four collective farms were merged into one.

It was all done to exterminate the people. I was among those who helped with the harvest that was shipped out in wagons with a red flag in front. I took part in that.

All the grain was carted away to the Vilcha station. Vilcha was the main station of the Polissia region. . . . There the grain was loaded into trains and transported to Russia. But they couldn't keep up, they couldn't transport it all at once. So it began to pile up.

The piles of grain stretched along the railroad tracks. When snow covered the ground, the grain sprouted, hardened—it turned golden, like in the fields. The grain was being destroyed, there was no saving it. All was lost. And only when spring arrived, after the famine had rolled through Polissia did people begin to work at survival. They saw that the grain from those piles could be had. People threw themselves at that grain.

But imagine: That grain was state property, and there they were, taking state property, and who had the right to do that? Guards were posted, but people still took grain. Warnings were issued: "Leave! That is state property!" But people were trying to save themselves, they were starving, and the grain was useless to the state.

And what happened next: Two people from our village were shot down, there next to those grain piles . . .

Our aunt from Byelorussia helped us. They had no famine, and she gave us millet, buckwheat, oats.

A kilometer or so from Vilcha station was the village Zhelonia, along the Zhelonia River in Byelorussia; there, people didn't know there was a famine. And just next to Zhelonia was the village of Oleksiivka where almost everyone starved to death. Further out was Brianshchyna—that was already Russia, and people there had no idea there was a famine.

Houses stood empty after the famine, after all the deaths. Wagons loaded with entire families from the Kursk region began arriving. Showing them the deserted

houses, the regional party secretary encouraged them to settle, saying, "Here you have vacant homes. Stay here, settle here." The new arrivals looked around. There were decomposed corpses in some of the houses. They looked at that and ran off into the woods. They ran off. Nobody stayed. Everyone ran away because there were unburied corpses in those deserted houses.

Then 1934. How it happened, nobody knows. Everything was secret. The director of the school was summoned to appear before regional authorities and never returned. Another teacher left and didn't come back. What was going on? It was later announced that they were enemies of the people. They were put on trial and executed. You ask why teachers were executed? They were enemies of the people. But what did this mean? What were their sins? The fact that they saved school children? I've told you how they saved them. With soup, a piece of bread—so that the children could stand on their feet. The law said those coming to school had to be fed. And those who did not come to school received no food.

Of course, very few survived. In Yablunka village, on Buden Street, 50 percent of the people survived. Next to it was the long street, Pugachev; almost everybody on that street starved to death. Earlier, they had tried to organize several small collective farms, around the *kurkul* farmsteads; later, after *dekurkulization*, a single collective farm named Buden Kolhosp was organized for the entire village.

And what they say about putting folks on trial for picking wheat ears, that had already been instituted before the famine.

After everything had been hauled away, school children would mobilize and go to the farms and gather the scattered wheat into little sacks. Not a stalk would be left anywhere in the field. It was all deposited at the collective farm. No one had any right to take any.

To analyze things properly, who paved the way for the whole operation? Keep in mind that Kaganovich arrived in Ukraine in 1931. He traveled all over and right after that all the Jews moved into the cities. A question: What was that campaign all about?

In the area around Yablunka, including the *khutirs* and Rahovke village, there were four schools. Children came to school emaciated . . . it was the famine. Teachers started getting rations: one kilogram of millet or buckwheat per month.

We went to school. It was ten degrees [Celsius], at times colder. We sat and shivered. All the *khutir* schools were closed down and only one remained in Rahovke village. There were once 500 children in all the schools and fewer than 100 remained.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Maria Evhenivna Shynkova,
born in 1944 in Kyiv.

I learned all about the famine of 1932–1933 from my parents. They lived through those devastating days of starvation, *dekurkulization*, and political repression.

In 1930, my grandmother Domakha and grandfather Ivan Shynkovy (my father's parents) lived in Kyslyna village, Butskyi district, Kyiv oblast (presently Mankiv district, Cherkasy oblast). They owned one *desiatyn* of land for a garden and three *desiatyn* of tillable field, a pair of horses, a pair of oxen, about ten sheep, and poultry. They had, for those times, a well-built, good-quality house, and it was that house that brought misfortune upon them. When collectivization began, they had six children and were expecting a seventh. My grandfather—Ivan Yakhremovych Shynkovy—refused to join the collective and was *dekurkulized* for this. All of his property—his house, his livestock, everything he had stored and everything that was used to run the farm—everything was seized and taken to the collective farm. His pregnant wife and his children were thrown out into the street. They found shelter in the neighbors' cellar. Grandfather traveled to Russia, thinking he might resettle his family there, but by the time he returned, he found that most of his family had starved to death. Two of his daughters and a son had died: Yavdokha (b. 1925), Kylyna (b. 1927), and Vasyl (b. 1929). His wife Domakha had died, too, together with their newborn son.

Only two children remained: Evhen (b. 1921) and Marichka (b. 1923). One aunt took the girl into her home; the other took the boy. A few days later, the little boy went to see his sister. He brought along a few pumpkin seeds to give her, but when he got there, he was told that she had already been taken to the cemetery. The next day, a neighbor, Elyzabeta Yevtushenko, found Evhen at his mother's gravesite holding pumpkin seeds in his fist. She took the child home with her and cared for him the rest of her life. She saw him off when he joined the Red Army; she married him off. Evhen fought at the front in World War II, defending his country. He received military medals. But the local head of the village soviet had his eye on Evhen's *dekurkulized* father's house; he didn't want to see Evhen come home, so he wrote twenty-five denunciations against him. As a result, before the demobilization in 1946, my father, Evhen Shynkovy, was

arrested and sentenced under article 58-1 "b" UkrSSR to ten years incarceration and all of his property was confiscated. Grounds for the arrest and sentencing was information from the village soviet in Kyslyn, dated February 5, 1946, documenting the *dekurkulization* and the eviction from their home of Evhen Shynkovy's family in 1931. My mother and her little daughter were left with no place to live and with no means of survival.

My father served his sentence, the entire ten years, and it was not until 1976 that his case was reviewed. Because there was no evidence of any crime, he was rehabilitated. But he died before this rehabilitation, of complications from beatings he received at the hands of the interrogators and from his war injuries. A death notice was delivered ten days after he died.

In 1997, my mother, Liubov Hryhorivna Shynkova, submitted a request to the committee in charge of reinstating the rights to the formerly repressed and now rehabilitated at the Mankiv district council of state deputies of Cherkasy oblast, asking for compensation for the property confiscated during *dekurkulization* and for the repression of her husband. Witnesses testified that buildings, animals, and an entire inventory of farming tools and equipment had been confiscated. On the strength of their testimony, Mother's request was considered, and the value of all the confiscated property, including what was handed over to the collective, was determined: a sum of 112 *hryvnias*[30] and 50 *kopeks* was to be paid in fifteen installments.

Grandfather 'kurkul' (left) with granddaughter Maria and son Evhen.

I will forever be plagued by questions: Why did my aunts, uncles, and my grandmother have to die such a horrible death? Why was I forced to grow up without the warmth and support of a father? Why did my mother have to suffer so?

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko, 2006.

Kirovohrad Oblast

Account of Praskovia Serhiivna Pobludna, born in 1924. Village of Novoandriivka, Novhorod district.

Do you remember a famine in 1932–1933?
I remember the famine of 1932–1933.

They came in horse-drawn wagons and took everything from people's yards, everything there was. They took the private grain; they took the state-owned grain.

To survive, many people informed on others . . .

They came and seized things however they wanted. They beat people, put them on trial, imprisoned them—all of this happened. They were all armed . . .

Resistance? People tried to resist, with pitchforks, shovels, and rakes. But it was impossible to hide anything, anywhere. Someone would inform on you and everything was found, everything was dug up, and everything was taken away.

They came from the city. They took carpets, pillows; they shook children out of their blankets.

People buried produce, but they found it.

Those who worked at the collective farm got mush: flour mixed with water, no fat, nothing. But it was only for those who worked a whole day. And they gave nothing else. They paid nothing.

Anyone picking five ears of wheat from the field after the harvest got five to seven years. For one beet, sugar beet, or even a beet used as animal feed, people also got five to seven years. Sentences were served in a strict regime prison.

Were people ever allowed to gather wheat in the field?
Children my age, my friends and I, were sent into the field. We'd go into the field to gather wheat. We would bring the wheat to the village soviet and leave it there. We got nothing in return. Nothing. Not even food.

Nobody hid livestock. They came with carts and wagons, loaded everything up that they could find, tied the animals to the carts, and took it all away.

How often would they come?
As many times as it took to ferret everything out.

When did people start dying of starvation?
In 1933.

When? In the fall? In winter?
When the cherry trees blossomed. Yes. By 1933 the famine was already terrible.

No, the state didn't care. I had a brother; he was two years old, and he died. My friends and I decided to bury him properly. We dug a grave with our hands. We planted flowers on his grave. When we came the next day, the grave had been dug up, and my brother was gone. Mama was lying, half-conscious, on the stove. She was dying. We told her about my brother, and she said, "Let's eat him, and I'll survive. If we don't eat him, I'll die." In a few days, Mama died. There was nobody to bury Mama. We screamed and howled. There were four of us left. It was two in the morning, and our neighbors heard us and came rushing in. We told them that Mama was cold already. There was no light, no water, no food, nothing. Then the authorities from the village soviet came. They took us to the village soviet for the night. They put us on stools and on the floor with nothing, no blankets, nothing. They returned in the morning and sent us to a children's home in Novhorodka. We were taken there.

The head of the children's home was a drunk. He drank and went out while the children starved to death and died of dysentery. My sister, she was four years old, ended up there. And then Father arrived. He had been sentenced as an enemy of the people. He served six months and was released.

Why was he sent to prison?
I told you, he was tried as an enemy of the people. And he was released.
He found us at the children's home. When he walked in, I called out, saying: "Shura, Papa's here. Call Papa." Papa walked in. Shura threw her arms around his neck. Hugging him and kissing him. She died, still holding him around his neck.

Starvation. Dysentery. The children's home had both. Starvation and dysentery were everywhere.

. . . When Mama died, her brother and sister came and dragged her down into the cellar. Dogs tore her apart, or maybe people did, I never found out which; after Papa returned we didn't learn anything, but we did find Mama's skull. My brother's, too. No bones were left. But Mama died a month and a half before Papa was released from prison.

How old were you when all this happened?
Nine years old. Papa took the skulls, Mama's and my brother's, kissed one and then the other, laid them back down, and we left. We never went back. Papa was constantly cursed as an enemy of the people, called this and that, and accused of escaping from prison, but none of that was true. He was wrongly charged. So he volunteered as a laborer and left for Murmansk. He took us with him. That's how it was.

People ate everything: cats, dogs. But the dogs were all rabid; they ate human remains. They were rabid. Cats, too. Everything. And parents killed their children and ate them. They buried their bones anywhere: in the garden, among the flowers—they claimed that they had just died. There was one family, the father and mother killed the oldest child, ate him, and buried his bones. Then they killed the middle son and buried his bones. Finally, the little one. The youngest. They ate him, too, and buried his bones. Well, after that I was taken to the children's home, so I don't know what became of those parents. I was no longer there, in Novoandriivka.

Many people died. Nobody buried them. Dogs ate the remains and that was all. Bones were scattered about. Skulls, too.

We couldn't go to the city. We had no money, and we had small children in our family, only two to fourteen years old. Papa was taken away as an enemy of the people. We had no help from anywhere. Our parents did not register us anywhere.[31] Papa couldn't support us. Well, I've already told you that when Papa returned, he was rejected by everybody.

Was there famine in the cities?
Kirovohrad had a famine, but not as bad. There were things in stores that you could buy, or at the market, but in the village, on the whole, there was nothing.

The authorities are to blame. In those days there were a lot of enemies of the people, a lot of arrests. Law or no law, guilty or not guilty, you got arrested. But they loved Stalin. They called out "Father" to him even when he simply checked things off. They shoved documents in front of him, and he put check marks on them: Execute this one, and this one, and this one . . .

Recorded by Maryna Nekliudova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Maria Vasylivna Pykhtina,

born in 1924. Village of Pokrovske, Adzham district (presently Kirovohrad district). At the time of this interview, living in Kirovohrad.

Do you remember there being a famine in 1932–1933? What, in your opinion, caused it?
There was a great famine in 1933. The crop yield was good. It was harvested, as in years past. The officials took everything they could, food, they hauled everything out. That's what caused the famine. At first people surrendered things voluntarily. Later on, they were forced to. There were special brigades. They were known as *prodotriadovtsi.*[32] People called them brigands because they beat people to get information about where food was hidden. The KGB agents made the rounds, too. They were all armed with pistols; they came into yards with special metal spikes, poking in the ground. People who resisted were clubbed with a rifle butt. They beat people, sometimes they shot people. One official came to our house. We were a small family: Father, Mother, my brother, and me. This was at night. They entered the house and we got up. Father said to Mother, "Do what they say." We had almost a full sack of corn. My brother and I had been sleeping on the stove. Father had picked us up, poured the corn on the stove, covered it with a cloth, and put us on top of it. So they didn't take the corn, but they took the beans. They took everything from everybody. They took our horse, too. It died at the collective farm.

They summoned Mama to the office of the directors of the brigades. I went with her because I knew that we no longer had any grain. "We have no more grain," she said. "Let us go." And they replied, "No, we'll put her in the cellar until you bring the grain here."

Oh Lord! At first we tried to hide food somehow but later it became impossible. There was nothing you could do. Everybody was so frightened that nobody could let out a squeak. Besides, there was nothing. They came around in groups of three, four. They came around a hundred times. They'd find everything.

And if you picked some wheat, and if you were caught—I never was—they sentenced you for five ears of wheat. The fields were patrolled, they were watched all the time.

Who was there to turn to for help? No food at home. People ate whatever they could. There were large families; they had to be fed somehow. Nobody helped the poor orphans. Many of them wandered around, all swollen, starving to death.

The officials weren't starving, nor were those who worked at the village soviet. Those who worked at a combine could get something to eat. Those who informed on others, those close to the officials, had enough to eat. And the simple folk? The lucky ones survived. Relatives tried to help one another, though there was nothing to help with . . .

We cooked soup from nettles; we baked bread out of pigweed. All kinds of pigweed. Acacia. Buds of linden trees, I ate them—they were good, tender, not bitter. Poppy seed mush was dumped at the pig farm, and people ate that. Sometimes bread crumbs were dumped there, too. While people starved. That's the kind of nourishment we had. Some ate tree bark, though we didn't. There were no orchards then, like there are now. People ate all kinds of animals. Not rats, but horses, cats, dogs. A mulberry tree grew nearby; it helped us survive in the spring. People ate hedgehogs, frogs. Whatever there was. What else could you do?

Later, Father got a job as bookkeeper at the collective farm. In school he had finished third grade, and in those days, that was enough because he could read and write. They gave 200 grams of grain per person at the collective farm. Father got 500 grams because he was the bookkeeper, and 200 grams for each of us. But the collective farms were poor, too. People didn't get enough to eat there either, and there were times when there was not a crumb to be found there.

. . . Let me tell you, there were stores . . . what were they called? *Torgsins.* All those hungry people who still had gold crosses, earrings, any kind of beads—they would take them there. For what? For grain, for food.

About 25 men starved to death in our village. There were about 127 households. It was a small village.

I'd heard of cases of cannibalism, but I wasn't a witness to that. In the village I saw people who were swollen, skeletal, yellow as wax. I saw people walking along and dropping dead. That I saw. People said that there were a few trials for cannibalism. They said some people ate their children. But I didn't witness anything like that.

Those who had family tried to bury their relatives properly, even though they were feeble themselves. But there were those who had nobody to care for them—they were buried together in a huge pit. So many of them died who knows where, far from their homes. I know there were burial brigades. What they were paid, who knows. No crosses were put up. People had other worries.

So, who is to blame? The government. So many people perished. They took everything, leaving nothing. There were no documents. Nobody registered the deaths.

Recorded by Ivan Semenist and Volodymyr Basarab, students at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Luhansk Oblast

Recollections of Zinaida Ivanivna Irmolenko (born in 1925) and Oleksandra Ivanivna Saveleva (born in 1919). Village of Pokrovske, Troitsk region.

Oleksandra Ivanivna: We baked buns out of scraps. We pounded things in a mortar. We hid things. The collective farms doled out some kind of scraps to those who worked there. But they took the mortars away, they were prohibited, so we pounded in the cellar quietly, so no one would hear.

We weren't allowed to go to Russia, so we had a famine. If they had let us take things to Russia, the peasants would have gone there with their linen, with things to sell or trade, and they would have survived. But the borders were closed. They took those rags from them and sent them back home, and they returned with absolutely nothing.

They could at least have left them those rags, why take rags from people? They stop you—hand it over. So they come home empty-handed, and there are five children with a sixth still at the breast.

Zinaida Ivanivna: They wanted to smother Ukraine. How terrible 1933 was. People dropped dead while walking. Their grain was cleaned out. What kind of *kurkuls* were they—it was their land, it was the fruits of their labor, it was their own horse, and the government issued an order to sweep it all out. That was the famine. Some fled, some buried food to hide it, and some were able to survive. The government is to blame.

Oleksandra Ivanivna: Maybe Stalin didn't know anything about the famine. How can we know?

Recorded by Anna Synytsia, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Poltava Oblast

Account of Hryhorii Omelianovych Onatsky,
born in 1907. Village of Onatske, Myrhorod district.

I'm from here, from the village of Onatske. Like my grandfather, my father, my whole family.

Oh, I remember it well. They confiscated . . . Russia . . . that's where the party was established, that's who imposed the taxes. The harvest in 1932 was very good, and then they imposed such heavy taxes on it. They confiscated the grain. Prior to that, they had *dekurkulized* people. The party did all this.

Who came to search? They were young guys, like you. They assaulted Father: Hand over the grain. They searched. It was horrible. Father wouldn't give it up. We were poor; we had a large family, and no land. They took him, took him to the school, right where the Byblyk's house is. Young louts and old men were in charge, party members. And they beat him with sticks. "Hand over the grain!" The grain was already being shipped out. They made the famine. They went around to all the houses seizing beets, potatoes, everything.

In 1929 a school had been built here, in the middle of the farmstead. It was known as a reading room, for "*liknep*"[33] sessions. In the evenings, all those who resisted joining the collective were summoned to appear at the school. They were kept there all night: They were beaten, terrorized, and pressured all kinds of ways to join. Those who had any grain, who refused to hand it over, whether they had 10 kilograms or a milligram, were summoned to appear there. They were beaten.

Where did people hide food? Those who had been forewarned about a search buried it. Wherever they could—maybe at the foot of a hill, in the tall weeds. Many people died. People ate horsemeat. At Vasylyk's father's, they slaughtered their horse and ate it, but they still died. What's a horse when you have a large family?

At least the peasants who joined the collective weren't searched as much, at least they might have a turnip they could take to Romny to sell it and buy some grain. It was terrible. The more prosperous farmers were now *kurkuls:* Hand over your grain and that was that. We hauled the grain to the train stations, Lord. It belonged to the state now.

They even took clothing. Imagine: ten children in the house and no clothes. In those days, folks spun their own yarn and wove their own cloth,

their own linen. They tried to hide it, burying it underground. But whatever was found was seized.

Gathering wheat in the field was forbidden. They chased people away, beat them, took it away. There were guards. People took their cow to graze and tried to pick some wheat. Some made their own millstones; they milled by hand. It was dreadful, impossible to describe.

Of course there were guards. There was a man named Kovbasa. He made the rounds on horseback taking wheat from people. Many people died. The prosperous ones were deported. There weren't many trucks, but they loaded them in wagons and took them off to Sencha.

Every week they made the rounds, searching for food. One adult and some schoolchildren. In the old days, the walls on houses were plastered over with clay to reinforce the walls and keep the heat in. So they knocked down the plaster and found things hidden in the wall . . .

They came at night, too. I would hear them coming, so I'd climb up into the chimney up the rungs all the way to the top, and still they'd find me.

They didn't beat us children, but they beat Father and they pinched us and asked, "Do you have any grain?"

The famine? It began in 1931 or 1932 and lasted about four years. Nineteen thirty-three was the worst. There was no grain. No place to get any. The collective farms had been set up and everything was confiscated. The horses, the oxen, everything was taken, but they kept coming back. "Hand it over!"

So many people died. Entire families perished.

When both parents died, and there were children, what became of the children? Where did they go?

There was some kind of shelter here. That's where the children were taken. Soup was doled out to those who worked at the collective farm, one ladle per person.

When the collective was first cooked up, from the first year, pigs and livestock were taken to the collective farm . . . from the *kurkuls*. But what kind of *kurkuls* were they. . . . It's true they didn't take from the poorest peasant, but from those who lived nicely. They built stalls for the calves.

The clover that has blue and pink blossoms, that was eaten during the famine. It was nasty on the stomach. Later, dried cherry leaves and linden leaves, mashed turnips. Land was tilled for beets, and later, people went all the way to the sugar refinery for beet pulp. Still later, the pulp was taken to the collective farm. People ate pigeons. They have nice meat. It's impossible to describe. Clothing was taken from people who had nice clothes.

So first, the prosperous peasants were taken away, and then they came around and took everything from us. We had a barn, a nice shed, benches, tables.

There was famine in the cities too. I sometimes went to Romny. There were people who managed to hide grain there and then sell it.

There was nothing here. Or in Berezluka. My uncle, Khvedir, married a woman who lived on the outskirts of town and worked as a servant for a Jewish family. Her child lived with her. She went to Berezluka; the child stayed here in Vakuliv. When he grew a little, he went to see his mother . . . and that's where they caught him . . .

People were buried. In the Khrestenko family, there were several sons, and they all died except for two.

They died. There was no place to dig a hole in the village, so corpses were thrown into cellars, into pits . . . without a casket. The dead were buried in whatever they were wearing when they died.

Memorialize? [Bitter laughter.] How? With what?

Here they built a club instead of a church.

People were buried in yards. The strong ones would find someone to make a cross out of whatever was available. A cherry-wood cross, or . . . Lord, how dreadful it was. Terrible.

If you could hide something, you did. I did, too. There was a hole right here, I put things in it and covered it up with hemp. They didn't find it. I heaped dirt over the hole and covered it up with all kinds of stuff. Yes. That's what saved people, hiding things. Some people hauled grain out into the field, hiding it under a mound somewhere; they would bring some to the house, later and hide it there. Some were able to save their millstones; there were a lot of millstones at the farmstead. The Marvenkys had millstones, Herasym had some, the Makovenkos did. A drop, a cup, how much could be milled? So you'd have a cup or two of flour . . .

Who knows who's to blame for the famine? The harvest was fine. The party . . . they took our barn, our tables, benches, our storage shed, they dismantled our barn for firewood . . .

I had an aunt in Ostapivka, my mother's sister, she buried five of her children in 1933 and her husband, too. Just she and her daughter remained. The daughter left—she worked as a cleaning woman at a kindergarten somewhere near the crossroads. The other children died, and my aunt buried them near the entryway to the house. She embraced them tenderly and laid them down in a hole under the thistles—and that was it.

Recorded by Anna Pudovkina, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Maria Mykhailivna Mashchenko, born in 1912. Village of Skybyntsi, Myrhorod district.

People were deported. I'll tell you about our family, about myself. They took my father and my older brother to prison. Then they drove us out to some field and left us in the buckwheat. What were we supposed to do? We dug out a shelter and settled there. Brigades made the rounds leaving nothing for people . . . not a crumb of bread. My mother lay on her coat, as if she was sick. The brigade came. They pulled the coat out from under her and took it. They beat people, too. We would all run into our shelter and cry. What were we supposed to do in the middle of an empty field? Where could we go? Where? They pulled the clothes off people and beat them. They gave my brother a solid beating and threw him into a cellar. My God! They beat people for no reason. We had worked hard for our money. We had a horse, two cows and sheep, and a bit of land, seven hectares. What kind of *kurkuls* were we? They found the things people hid underground and took them, even ripping the clothes off their backs.

Where could we turn for help? How could we defend ourselves? There was no protection. They had orders to fulfill a plan and they drove people out of their homes in the middle of winter. So people starved to death. Lord. It was the famine. There was no law, no order.

Yes, you could bury things. And people did. If they didn't find it, it was yours, and if they found it. . . . They poked around with spikes, searching for the tiniest grain.

They came around in groups of five. With spikes. . . . That's what it was like. They confiscated the harvest.

We would look for places to hide things. In the ground. We buried things. Or into a small barrel or box. We hid things under the animal pens. And they searched and they found what we had hidden and they hauled it away.

And those who joined the collective, were they given any food?
Who gave anything to anyone! No food. People pounded leaves in the mortar, they picked acacia leaves and husks and cobs. That's what people ate. Dead animals. Everything. Weeds. Acacia leaves, sorrel, folks would dry it, pound it in a mortar and eat it.

Did they just take food?
Grain and clothing. Clothing, too.

Picking wheat was forbidden. There would be some stalks left here and there, and we would go with our sacks and pick them. And they came and took them away along with the sacks. They were just simple fools. Some kind of guards. And who was there to watch over the guards? That's how the fields were guarded. Impossible to run away. Or to take anything. They'd take it away. Whose orders were they following? That's how it was. People ate raw beets and crabapples.

Did people join the collective voluntarily?

Voluntarily? No, they were forced into it. Party representatives came around and talked people into it. To sign up, to hand everything over to the collective farm. Plows, horses, threshers. To hand everything over to the collective to be shared as communal property. People didn't hide their livestock. The livestock was all taken. They came more than once. And they showed up just when someone was digging up something to eat and took it away. Not a piece of bread in the house. Very many people died in the spring. The wheat was ripening already. People ate half-ripened wheat berries.

Children whose fathers were sent to prison were taken to a shelter. But in 1933 nobody took any children in. Many a family died in our village. The parents and the children.

Those who survived, survived. I'm one of those. I ate weeds and husks. I ate everything. Corn cobs. Not corn kernels but the cobs, what was left after the corn was gone. Before, we just burned them in our stove. Now I pounded them in a mortar and ate them. And I survived. Not everybody did.

Yes, we helped one another. Relatives, especially helped one another.

Berries. We ate thorn berries. There weren't too many apples then, it was pears and thorn berries. We picked them and ate them in the woods. And mushrooms. We ate everything. Sometimes our bellies would hurt so badly after the mushrooms, we'd be climbing the walls. Some died from eating them. Hunger drove us to eat anything. Acorns. Pounded leaves. Horses died, and people ate dead horses.

At our collective farm about twenty people starved to death. How many people were in the collective farm altogether? I don't know. It was a large farm.

Were there cases of cannibalism?

Not in our village. In other villages, they said, there were.

People were buried in pits. No caskets. They would throw the dead into one pit. There was a woman here who couldn't talk right . . . they took her and she

tried to tell them, "I'm still alive." And people who just couldn't do anything anymore . . . walking along the road and just dropping. And just lying there. Then they'd be picked up. The old ones took them in wagons or carts and unloaded them into one pit.

People went to the train station. There were hungry, crying children there. They came to the station, hoping for something, and died there. They were carted away and dumped into a pit. Thrown in, one on top of another. Who would pay them [those who buried the dead] in those days? The dead were taken in wagons from Romodan past the station to the outskirts of the village. Pits were dug in the middle of the field. Families couldn't pay, most of them were probably dead already. So they were unloaded into one pit. No casket, no nothing.

Yes, people who survived know about the famine. But everyone who survived here is already dead. I'm the only one still alive. I know about it, I haven't forgotten, what it was like. Now people are buried in the cemetery. Then they were just thrown into a pit.

No, there are no grave stones. Just crosses. For the victims who died of starvation there are crosses. But not always.

Nowadays things can be bought in a store, so many things. All you need is money. There was nothing like that in those days. Nowhere to buy a piece of bread. If you didn't have any at home you couldn't buy any—you just starved. Nowadays bread is baked and you can buy anything. All you need is money.

Who do you think was responsible for the famine?
Who's to blame? Who was there? Stalin, most likely. Stalin is to blame. Stalin was in charge.

Some time later I went to Poltava to work. I worked at a brick factory where they gave half a kilo of bread and a ladle of some broth. I swelled up. As long as I had gold coins. There were gold coins in those days; they had little eyelets in them and we wore them around our necks. The *torgsins* took them. So I would take my gold coins to the *torgsin* and in return I got bread. So until I ran out of gold coins, I had more bread to eat. And that's what the *torgsins* were. So my swelling went down. And then when I didn't have any coins left, I got all swollen again. And I worked, I made bricks of compressed manure. That's how they fed us. . . . One ladle, one lousy ladle, and so watery. One ladle and half a kilo of bread. I was as big as a tree trunk, I was so swollen. Later, the swelling went down. How? I ate crabapples, raw beets. I had an uncle, he would bring me some milk. Otherwise I'd be dead and buried.

I survived. And I got married. I married a poor man. He hadn't been deported. His family had all died. He alone survived with a sister. His family starved to death. I got married and I'm still alive.

Recorded by Olha Vasylieva, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Kateryna Ivanivna Matviichenko remembers.

Born in 1922, the village of Mali Sorochyntsi, Myrhorod district.

I was born on September 28, 1922, in Mali Sorochyntsi village, Myrhorod district, Poltava oblast. Well, everybody says that it was 1921 . . . the documents were lost in a fire.

I remember the famine in 1932. There were five of us, and Father and Mother. My sister was married and her children stayed with us. We had a cow, and we survived because of that cow. And my mother and one of the neighbors, a woman, learned where there was a grain milling plant; it was called Vynohradiv Mill. Pieces of cloth, linen, embroidered linen, Mother took all of it to that mill and traded it for buckwheat flour. She would bring a bundle of flour home and then she'd grate half a bucket of the beets we had. She stirred it all together in our ancient, earthenware mixing bowl, and then she fried up flat-cakes from the beet mixture. We were so happy. Winter was hard. But when spring came, we would go and pick wild geraniums, or that—What was it called? Not pigweed and not mustard grass, it was some kind of a weed. We would pick those leaves and then go to the meadow, where we picked other plants. Mama diced it all up, and that's how we ate. All kinds of flowers. And when mulberries ripened, we came back to life. We didn't swell up. Father would sprinkle a bit of salt on what he ate, and Mama would ask, "Ivan, why are you salting it, why eat it salty?" And Father would joke, "To make me drink water, to fool me into thinking I'm full." And then his legs swelled up.

They came around and confiscated things. They didn't take anything from us, we were poor and had joined the collective right from the start. Those who hadn't joined were cleaned out. If something was buried, say a sack of beans, they walked around with metal spikes poking around, searching for what folks had buried underground. There was a family in our neighborhood; they called them *kurkuls*. You couldn't tell what the man's pants were made of, they were patched over so much, but he had two cows and two horses, and so they called him a

kurkul. His house is still there. It had a metal roof, so they called him a *kurkul.* They were driven out of the house. Everything was taken from them.

They took everything. They said it was party representatives from the city, communists.

My dears, I'm telling you, even if folks buried something underground, they came around, and I'm telling you, they had metal spikes. They searched, and they found. It was impossible to hide anything because they searched everywhere.

Was food given to those who worked at the collective farm?
They gave some kind of food. Whenever I went to weed they did. And they let us work with a horse, but that was in 1935 already, around there. We learned about horses, how to harness a horse, and we used the horses in the field. And they gave us food for working. We worked in the collective farm field, weeding, just to get that food.

What was the "Five Wheat Ears Law?" Have you heard of it?
Oh, my Lord! After the wheat sheaves had been hauled out of the field, after the field was tilled over, they sent people into the field to collect any ears of wheat that might still be lying around. And even after all that we would still run over hoping to find an ear or two. And if they found any on you, they took them away and beat you. And that was it.

There was a guard. He circled the field on horseback, watching. People had nothing to heat their houses with, so they would go to the field hoping to pick up some straw or something, and if he saw anything, he beat them with his whip handle and reported on them to the village soviet.

They could come at any time—at night, maybe you're not sleeping, maybe you're hoarding things; in the morning, during the day, any time. If someone noticed that you still had grain and that not all of it had been handed over, they would set up a trap, watching.

We children weren't allowed to go anywhere, to go looking . . . but we heard things. That one died, or five corpses have been carted away, or there they go with ten. That was at the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933.

What became of the young orphans? Did the state provide care for them?
At the house next to ours, that *kurkul* house from which the parents were deported, there were small children and they were taken to a shelter, a children's home, so people said.

Only those who had a cow and some cloth or linen embroidery that could be traded, only they didn't suffer starvation. Those who maybe had some gold.

That was rare in the village. More likely those who had some cloth. And at the Vynohradiv Mill, for example, people got to know one another and they shared whatever they had.

Did people help one another to survive the famine? Did they share food?
Yes. My mother would fry up flat-cakes—the beets would be sticking out of them, but that was okay—we were glad to eat them. But there were folks worse off than we were, boys who tended cows. We lived above a pasture, and there was a lake. Mama would call out, "Fedko, come here!" And Fedko would come and Mama would give him flat-cakes and a small bottle of milk—they didn't own a cow—they tended other people's cows, and folks either gave them a little milk or none at all. He (that man who used to tend cows) died about three years ago. Every time he saw me, he'd say, "Your mother was such a nice lady. We drove the cows close to your house because we knew Auntie Yavdokha would bring something out for us."

We ate all kinds of weeds. They warned us not to pick madwort or we'd go blind. There were tiny, black berries, smaller than thorn berries. We picked mulberry leaves and berries, not even waiting for them to ripen. And then there was some kind of grass in the meadows, sorrel. Once the sorrel sprouted, we'd have sorrel borshch. Those little round leaves and little yellow flowers we picked for borshch . . . and if sorrel was growing already, we'd add the sorrel to the borshch. I tell my sons that wild geranium leaves saved us from starvation.

Was it possible to buy something or trade for something in town?
If you worked at the bread works or at some mill. Next to that place with the eternal flame was a mill, an oil press; a Mr. Zeiman ran it. There was also the Vynohradiv Mill, where Kalynka worked, that was Biletsky's. If you had friends at Zeiman's, it was possible to trade for a bundle of poppy seed mush.

How many people died? Are there statistics?
In the village? A lot. I don't know exactly. I had an older sister—she was the sixth child. The dead were transported to the cemetery. They said a pit was dug and the dead were buried there. People were feeble; not many could dig pits.

Those who died were better off. My father's cousin swelled up, right when the wheat berries ripened and he ate too many and his intestines burst.

Are the victims memorialized during holidays?
Yes, especially by the old people whose relatives died. That cemetery isn't used for burials any more. It's closed. But people go there to remember the victims.

In Soviet times, they watched the churches. Children were baptized secretly.

There used to be a church. I remember, at the beginning of the war, we had the water blessed . . . for the Epiphany, and a cross was carved out of ice. That I remember. The church was dismantled, though, and then it was turned into some office, or a medical clinic.

Who is responsible for the deaths of so many people?
Who? The leaders, those in power caused it all. The harvest was fine. But there were such high taxes. And they forced people into the collective and confiscated everything from those who wouldn't join.

Recorded by Yurii Savchenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Oleksandra Fedorivna Lysenko, born 1923. Village of Kotelva, Kotelva district.

I've lived for 83 years. Always here in Kotelva. It seems like ages, forever.

Do you remember about the famine of 1932-1933?
I do. The harvest was fine in 1933, but it was seized. Brigades came around with metal spikes, poking the ground everywhere in the field, searching for hidden food. My father had hidden a large sack of wheat right where we kept the cow—most likely, somebody informed on Father and he was sentenced to three years. After that, they came and took everything from us; they even poured everything out of our pots and jugs [witness cries as she speaks of this].

What do you think caused the famine? Was it the harvest? Was there a drought?
No, no, no, no! It was the politics, to take everything. If we didn't have a cow, we would all have starved to death. We had a milk cow, and its milk nourished us.

Yosyp Mykolaiovych Kolisnyk was a member of the brigade that made the rounds, conducting searches. He's no longer alive. And Maria Fedorivna Pustovit was one too. I don't remember all of them . . .

The most frightening time was when a party representative from Poltava arrived and made the rounds with the local officials. They poked through all the gardens.

Did they enter yards or break into homes?
They came into the yard and asked, "What provisions do you have?" Mother replied, "We have nothing." So then they went up into the attic and found some hemp; they emptied the pots. They ripped through everything. They went through pillows, they went through the cellar, everywhere—they even looked into the oven. When they came, they would announce, "We are the grain collection brigade."

. . . The minute someone tried to resist, the minute someone said, "You can't come on my property," the black raven—it was a special truck—would appear and take them away to the Solovky.

They had metal spikes. Spikes for poking.

No, people didn't do anything to defend themselves. They were frightened, afraid of being exiled to the Solovky. Everyone was afraid of those brigades. Terrified.

They came in groups of three, and when the party representative from Poltava was around, there'd be four of them.

Those who joined the collective got 150 grams of bread and some kind of mush three times a day.

My mother went to work and she would bring us a half-liter jar of mush. There were five of us, so it came to two spoonfuls for each of us. She worked at the collective farm to survive.

They took all the livestock. If they found a lot of grain buried, they took the sheep and the cow as punishment for hiding the grain.

There was the "five ears of wheat" law. When the wheat was ripe, we would go picking the wheat berries. There was a very cruel mounted guard; he was hard of hearing, but he beat the girls, all the children, so hard that they passed out. He beat us horribly. I've forgotten his last name.

If we managed to bring some wheat home, we would press the grain. Mother would boil some water, we would pour the grain into the pot to cook, and that's how we would eat it, like *kutia.*[34] Many people died when the grain began to ripen. They were starving and then ate too much of the grain on an empty stomach. The stomach got all bloated and very many died.

People didn't want to join the collective. Only after the land was confiscated and the gardens cut down, the livestock taken away . . . then people started to join.

My grandfather had two horses. They took the horses, they took all the harnesses, what was he to do? Join the collective . . .

There was a swamp nearby, it was overgrown with cattails, and that's where we kept our cow.

They made the rounds from morning till night. Those who resisted were taken to the village soviet where they were held until some party official from Poltava arrived. He deported them to the Solovky. Those who were sent there never came back alive. They all perished.

They took nice clothing from people. They emptied entire closets. They sold it all at the marketplace.

So many died! There was one woman who had four children; she killed them all and ate them.

It's horrible how many died. Six of my friends died.

Nobody cared for the orphans. There was nothing anywhere. The orphans just wandered around until they swelled up and died. They dropped dead in the street.

Those who sold flour in Kharkiv survived. There was a store called *torgsin*. If people had anything made of gold, they would take the gold items to the store: rings, earrings, coins. They traded them for flour. Those people survived.

Families helped one another.

Listen, a lot of horses died then and people ate horsemeat. Dogs, cats, rats, crows, storks—they ate anything they could get their hands on. It was a famine. They ate roots, cattails . . .

Very many people starved to death. I think it was 830 people.

They were carted away and stacked in a pit. Five, ten people at a time. They were buried at the cemetery.

Listen, nobody memorializes them because they were famine victims and all their relatives are dead. It was long ago. Churches around here were burned to the ground. There were seven churches here in Kotelva and now there's only one.

Have any crosses been erected in the village, gravestones for the famine victims, maybe a memorial sign somewhere?

No, nothing. Not anywhere.

Stalin was responsible for the famine. He was in charge. He had promised to supply Germany with grain, so they seized everything and gave it to the Germans. And our people perished.

Recorded by Tetiana Ponomarenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Recollections of Mykhailo Pavlovych Havrylenko, born in 1919. Village of Kotelva.

Do you remember the famine of 1932–1933?
I know it well. And I believe it was a manmade famine.

Here in Kotelva we had seven churches, and each church was filled with grain, yet people starved to death. The flour mills and windmills were sealed up. They moved the bread out in crates, twenty, no, thirty loaves, so no one could take it. That's how it was . . .

They took away the potatoes, the horses, to the collective farm. Brigades came around. They seized the grain and the sugar beets.

There were 17 men in the brigades, maybe more. A mixed group. They had headquarters, of course. The chief stayed at headquarters. He issued orders, and the brigade carried them out. They had a leader. In our village, the following belonged to the brigade: Shvydkisny, Hnylosyrivsky, Molokhivsky.

They came around to confiscate things. They had sharp spikes with a handle, and they searched everywhere with those spikes, checking to see if anything was buried in the ground.

People tried to hide grain. In our house, Mother hid the grain. In those days stoves were like this, with a chimney; we still have ours. Mother stuffed about 20 kilograms of grain into it, laid beans and poppy seeds out on the stove. There were onions hanging above the stove. I came home from school with a friend, Sheremet. Mother shooed us up to sit on the stove so that the brigades wouldn't look there. We had a barn where we kept animal feed, and a storage shed; they looked wherever they could. We had floorboards in the house, not a clay floor. So they said, "Maybe that's where the grain is hidden."

Let me tell you what happened. So Pavlo [Sheremet] and I climbed up onto the stove. Mother pushed us up, thinking maybe those men from the brigade would ignore the stove. Pavlo and I sat there, our feet dangling.

One of the men from the brigade said, "Let's see how they make borshch," and they looked into the oven. Mama had borshch cooking in there. They took the borshch out, saying, "Those parasites. They're still hungry, still cooking borshch!"

Father had fled by that time. We were left fatherless. But he came back and joined the collective eventually. He got bread for working. He had bought a lame horse somewhere and was given the job of cleaning the pond . . . this one; now it's called Ivanovka.

So Father had bought a horse and horses were fed bran, two kilograms per horse. Father got some gruel or bread as a worker at the collective farm. So

he brought the bran that was meant for the horse, sometimes feeding us and sometimes feeding the horse with it, and that's how we survived. Father told us there were twenty of them at the collective farm, taking turns bringing bran home, just like Father did. That was in the beginning of summer.

Later Father told us that some people started chasing the horse, and the horse ran away. There was an old woman who lived near our village, Kohushka. . . . She came to our house at Easter. She came often. We had nothing, except a few potatoes that Father would bring home. So this granny came to our house at Easter and said, "Give me something to eat. I'm hungry." Her name was Hanna, and my mother's name was Varka.

"What can I give you, Hanna?"

"Something. Anything. I haven't had anything in a long while."

"So how are you surviving?"

"If only you knew. When they take away a corpse" she said, "I dig it out and slice off some flesh."

Mother became very frightened, and said, "Oy-yoy-yoy, is it true?"

"It's true."

So Mother gave her a bit of something. After she left, we locked the doors.

People? Well. I'll tell you. No one here perished. But at Klemenko's, at my godson's, they were all lying in a row, bloated. But somehow they all survived. He had goat kids; somehow they were able to stay alive. But Buz Maksym, his son Andrii's wife died, so did three children, and the mother and father.

How were they buried? Over there, where the dam is. In 1933, there was water on the other side. A lot of water.

For taking away the bodies and burying them, they gave people 400 grams of grain or bread.

Good God, what service? They were thrown into a pit, and not just one corpse, either.

Listen, at Kuzia's, five died. At Petro Hnylosyr's, I don't remember his patronymic, how many died there? Five, also; the daughter, Maryna, remained, all alone. The three boys and the grandfather all died.

Are you familiar with the five wheat ears law?

That's all nothing. That's been around since after the war. Guard towers stood in the field to watch over who was doing what. So that if they caught someone picking ears of wheat, he would be put on trial. The field was guarded. Those who were caught were called "enemy of the people." They were deported.

Hrytsko Hnylosyr and Ivan Salashny were two of the mounted guards. They surrounded the people picking wheat ears, on horseback. They had whips or something, I don't know.

The women began to cry, the children started to scream. And I said, "What are you doing?" I knew that Ivan Salashny well. "What are you doing, Ivan? They're our children, what are you doing?"

What were the torgsins, do you know?

There was a *torgsin* in Okhtyrka. The Shcherbak woman, she walked to Okhtyrka, I guess they had a few things. In Okhtyrka there was a place where gold could be traded in. How much people got for it I don't know.

They gave bread there. That woman carried four *puds* from [about 75 kilograms] Okhtyrka, walking. She would lift the bundle, put it in front of her, and shuffle along. That's how she walked from Okhtyrka. Neither my mother nor my father went there; we didn't have any gold.

What gravestones? Who commemorated them? Nobody ever mentioned them. Any talk about it was suppressed. Nobody ever talked about any of it. I don't know if there's been a cross put up, even now.

Those who know anything about the famine are keeping quiet about it. There was this: three young guys would arrive at a house in a "black raven." That's what it was called. They would come, it was said on official business, or something like that, I don't know. The leader takes out a list: "Is so-and-so here?" He reads the last name and the patronymic. And the person, carrying something, maybe soup, would drop his spoon. Terrified.

They took him away. "Get in," he was told, and they drove off. And to this day no one has seen him since.

Now listen. I will tell you the truth. I won't lie to you. Who do you think dug the Bilomor Canal? Who? There were some cigarettes named "Bilomor Canal. Who do you think? They dug it out using wheelbarrows. There weren't any tractors back then. A wheelbarrow, a shovel, a pick: They needed a canal to get water from the White Sea.

Whom do you blame for the deaths of countless people, the rulers or a poor harvest?

What do you mean poor harvest? There was so much grain everywhere at that time.

It was the rulers! It was all premeditated! The famine was created, and that's all. I can't remember it any other way.

Recorded by Tetiana Ponomarenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Hryhorii Tymofiiovych Yemets, born in 1915. Village of Kotelva.

Do you remember the famine of 1932–1933?
Yes. I remember. The government confiscated things. It had been a good harvest. There were young men, specially selected to go around and search. They smashed the pots and took the grain. They showed no papers, no orders. They just came and took things.

One night some of these boys came to my father-in-law to warn him, "Yakiv, go away, they're coming to get you." He fled to the Donbas and stayed there for a long time; nobody knew where he lived. Eventually, he returned to Kotelva.

Those who made the rounds conducting searches had rifles.

People tried to defend themselves. They bolted their gates and their doors; they unleashed their dogs.

Yes, people hid things! But they smashed wood stoves, searching for grain. They searched in houses, in sheds, everywhere. They climbed everywhere, searching, and took everything. They came in groups of three or more.

We were so poor, we had nothing; there was nothing to hide. Mother tended to the pigs, and I helped her. That's how we survived. We had nothing. They doled out some kind of food at the collective farm. Different kinds of porridge.

That's the only place we ate. We weren't given anything to take home.

Livestock was confiscated. People picked wheat ears in the field, but guards chased them, took their sacks, and took the wheat for themselves. Then they chased the people away. I didn't pick those wheat ears.

People joined the collective to survive. To survive, that's all. Those who protested too much were taken to Siberia.

They came, most often, in the morning. Neighbors would let neighbors know, "They're just around that corner, they're coming . . ."

Many died. I saw bodies taken away, I saw wagons loaded with dead bodies . . . there were no funerals.

People helped each other if they could. There was a man in the village, I remember, Trykoza, he helped people. He got grain from somewhere and helped the poorest villagers, those with large families.

Very many died.

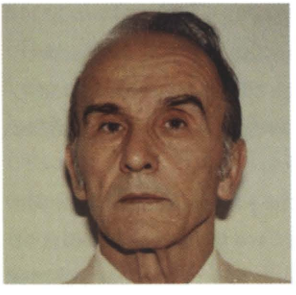
In our village, we didn't have cannibalism, but they said there was cannibalism in other villages. They said they had seen human flesh being cooked. Not in our village.

Who knows who's to blame for the famine. There was grain.

Recorded by Tetiana Ponomarenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Testimony of Ivan Danylenko,

born in 1923. Village of Svichkivka, Luben district; at time of this interview, resided in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.



The Svichkiv *khutir* was located not far from the village of Svichkivka, which is presently in the Luben district of Poltava oblast. This is where my childhood began. The *khutir* consisted of ten to fifteen households. One-third of the households, settled earlier, belonged to the more prosperous farmers; they had seven or more hectares of land. The rest were middle-class households with not more than four hectares of land. My father belonged to the latter group. His property adjoined a larger property owned by his older brother, my Uncle Yakiv. Father worked in the field and, to make a little extra money, he worked as a tailor and, less often, as a carpenter. I remember, this might have been around 1928, Father's well-kept homestead, an orchard, a wheat field with wheat as tall as a man. My older brother and sister had started going to school. Later, I did, too. It seemed that there was every reason to look forward to a happy childhood.

But things changed without warning. Toward the end of 1928, or possibly at the beginning of 1929, Uncle Yakiv's family vanished. So did the families of other prosperous neighbors. Their homesteads were abandoned, in ruins, overgrown in weeds. This occurred during the short-lived period of *dekurkulization*. Soon after came the call to join the collective. At first, people were encouraged to join voluntarily, and later, when the homesteaders failed to show the proper enthusiasm, they were forced to join under duress. Taxes were levied on grain (they called this "seed deposits") and on animals. At first people were able to meet the required payments, but after the taxes multiplied several-fold, their reserves were exhausted and they had nothing left to pay with. Then the

so-called "seeding threesomes," responsible for meeting state plans, appeared. They would appear without warning, at one homestead or another, search out stored provisions, and forcibly take away what they found. When my father was appointed head of a "seeding threesome," he declared that he would not use force; he failed to meet the quota and was sentenced to two years, with a notation explaining "though he is not a *kurkul*, he has the views of a *kurkul*."

The frightened villagers were finally forced to give up their property and join the collective. My father, from the start, was an avid anticommunist and had no faith in a system that deprived people of the fruits of lifelong labor and initiative. He steadfastly vowed, and kept his word, that he would not join the collective. As a result, both my father and his homestead became the focus of special attention, strictly monitored. Our neighbor informed on Father, and a brigade of activists appeared. They searched the yard and the house, taking food and tools: shovels, axes, pitchforks.

The famine became more intense. Some time around the fall of 1929, Father began taking Mother's pre-revolutionary clothing to the city to trade them for food. But the reserve of clothing was soon gone and traveling beyond the borders of Ukraine was for some reason curtailed. In early spring of 1930, my older brother, sister and I would go out into the field to dig the previous year's leftover beets from the frozen earth. In the fall, after the harvest, we would gather ears of wheat from the field at the Kelychkivskyi state farm. Guards on horseback chased us away, beating us and grabbing our sack with the wheat if we didn't run fast enough. I especially recall one incident, when a guard (Shemet) beat me, a six year old, until I lost consciousness—for picking strawberries amid the weeds in the ruins of Uncle Yakiv's homestead. Hearing my screams, my mother and my brother came running. Shemet, with hatred in his voice, threatened to "send all you reptiles to Siberia in red boxes." My twelve-year-old brother could not let this pass. Running off, he snapped back, "I'll do the same to you, you reptiles . . . !"

Toward the fall of 1931, hungry and desperate, I walked from house to house, begging for a piece of bread. No one opened their doors. I hadn't come across a single live soul, so I went home, frightened and humiliated. Once, along the road to Butivka village where my grandfather and several uncles lived, I came across a dead man lying face down across the narrow road.

At the beginning of 1932, the famine got progressively worse. The brigades of activists made the rounds more frequently. They always came when Father wasn't home. My brother was our protector. I remember several instances when he tried to fight off the brigades with an ax, a pitchfork, or a shovel, trying to save the last scrap of food. By the fall of 1932, everything in our homestead had been confiscated, though we still lived in our own house. One evening at the end of

October 1932, a brigade led by the head of the village soviet (his surname was Serdiuk) appeared and ordered us out of the house. Mother's pleas (as usual, Father wasn't home) that we be allowed to stay until morning went unheeded. They threw Mother and us—five children, the oldest fourteen and the youngest a year old—out of the house into the cold night. Our neighbor (Mefodi Karpenko) took us in for the night, even though he was taking a great risk by helping the family of a "class enemy."

Not long after, Father took us to the Velychkivskyi state farm (it was formerly a farming estate). It was here, in a windowless barn with no heat or light, that we survived the winter—exhausted with hunger, like skeletons, though I was all bloated. My one and a half year old brother, weak and exhausted, sat hunched over on the floor moaning and groaning, asking for food.

Spring 1933 arrived. It was the most frightening, the most difficult time in the life of our family. To get a "*paiok*" (ration of food consisting of soup and 200 grams of bread), three of us older children had to work, usually pulling weeds in the field. I can still see it before my eyes—a skeleton of a girl standing in line for soup. She is holding a piece of bread in her hand. Suddenly I lunge at her, grab her bread, and try to run away. But I fall and drop the bread in the thick mud of the yard. I'm still ashamed of what I did and it still pains me. I'll never forget how one morning in May, instead of going to the field to pull weeds, I felt an irresistible urge to be alone, to warm myself in the sun, and I sneaked out of the state farm. But Father saw me and stopped me. Guessing what I was up to, he said to me, "If you do this, son, you won't get anything to eat and you'll starve to death." To which, with tears in my eyes (as Father later told me), I replied, "If I have to live like this, I'd rather die!" I wept, and seeing the tears in Father's eyes only added to my grief. Weary and debilitated by starvation, we had lost our desire to live and waited with indifference for the end to come. But a miracle happened—we all survived. Doubtless our parents' steadfastness saved us. Not once did our parents abandon us.

These are my recollections of the catastrophic events of 1932 and 1933. I'm passing them on as they have been etched in the memories of my childhood.

Today, from a perspective of more than seventy years from that time, I wish to add that *dekurkulization* and collectivization were, in every respect, acts of terrorism. They were carried out with forethought and with violence, and the results of those actions—the Famine—was premeditated. Countless statistical data and details of those events, and in particular, men snatching ears of wheat from children's hands . . . children desperately trying to save themselves, even for a short time, from starving, just as I did, also attest to the brutal premeditation and intent of this catastrophic horror. What is almost never mentioned is the psychological torment and suffering it caused. It can be conveyed by those

who have gotten past the fear and cynicism of that insidious [communist] propaganda, by those who are still among the living.

P.S. Uncle Yakiv, whom I mentioned earlier, escaped with his family to the Crimea after *dekurkulization*. Sick with malaria, he was taken by his daughter (Natalka) to a healer-sorceress. Natalka stood outside in the street and waited, but Uncle Yakiv never emerged from that house. It is rumored that he was a victim of cannibalism.

Aunt Hanna, from my mother's family, was caught picking wheat in the spring of 1933. She was trying to save her husband from starvation. Her husband died, and Aunt Hanna was sentenced to Siberia for seven years.

My grandfather and grandmother, also from Mother's side of the family, starved to death at that time, too.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko on October 7, 2006.

Laying of flowers on the Hill of Sorrows erected in the area of Luben near the Mgarsky monastery, Poltava Oblast.

Sumy Oblast

Account of Varvara Tymofiivna Yushchenko,[35]
born in 1918. Village of Khoruzhivka, Nedryhailiv district.

When the collective was organized, my parents joined right away. In 1932, brigades of five to six men made the rounds and took everything people had.

About four kilometers from the village, they organized a commune, "Spartak." It was an activists' commune. There were women there, "heroes" who hurled children out of windows. One of those women was buried recently. The poor woman suffered so much, she was so tormented, in the hospital and everywhere, God have mercy. . . . She was such a sinner . . .

The brigade made the rounds, searching people's houses with metal poles; they put them to use as soon as they came. Looking for grain. It was all about grain!

My aunt had three sons and a husband. The brigade came. They found a little sack of grain . . . hidden next to the stove. Maybe six, maybe eight kilograms. They took the grain and they took her husband for hiding the grain and not admitting it. They took him to prison and beat him there. He came home about three months later with, as they say, a frog in his chest. Three days later, he said to his wife, "Call the boys . . . " Then he died.

God, how they searched. Once, I remember, they came to our house, and neither Mother nor Father was at home. They made me climb up into the loft. It was dry up there . . . for the grain. The ladder stood next to the house. I climbed up, and one of the men followed. The other five just stood there. I was afraid. They searched everywhere. One of them shoved his metal hook under the hay and the hook slipped into a hole. They all started stomping their feet. Our neighbor, Uncle Ivan, walked over and told them, "Fellows, that was his storage place. Now it's just a hole. That's why your hooks slipped in." They left after that. God protect us! We ate linden leaves; we made biscuits out of them. Having a cow saved people. We had a good milk cow. She gave us more than thirty liters of milk.

Father had buried grain in the garden, in a wooden barrel. It didn't spoil. In the spring we ground it up with a homemade grater and that's how we survived. Many, many people starved to death . . .

Some people went to Russia to trade clothing or linen. Some disappeared somewhere along the way. There was a lot of that . . .

We had a teacher, Anatolii Kostiantynovych, who taught Ukrainian. His wife had died. At the time of the famine, his two children were still little. We brought him milk every day. And he's say: "You're my saviors, you've saved my family." People helped one another. Relatives or neighbors took in orphans. We've all changed. Nowadays, there aren't any true Ukrainians. . . . My Grandfather Hordii looked after a childless old man and old woman when he was a young man. He was always helping them . . .

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in October, 2003.

Recollections of Maria Feodosiivna Demchenko, born in 1913. Town of Krolevets, Krolevets district.

I remember the famine of 1932–1933 well. I was already an adult. The crops were good. But those government agents came around, and they hauled everything away: the harvest, the poultry. They weren't from our village—they were from the city, and they took everything.

They didn't pay for the grain. People were afraid of everything that was going on. The agents had no papers; they just barged in and frightened us, telling us that we would be put in prison or shot. They frightened people, beat them, arrested them. They carried whips, I remember that well.

Who defended themselves? We were too afraid. They searched everywhere—in the house, around the house, in the shed, in the barn, in the storehouse.

I didn't go to the collective farm. I don't know what they gave out or didn't give out there. My husband worked at the mill and he'd bring a bit of something home for us to eat.

People were forced into the collective. It was frightening in the morning and all day because we knew that they'd be coming. Evenings were quiet. I don't remember how many times they came around, but I do remember that they came six times and finally took our last cow.

Nobody cared for those orphaned children. Who needed them? Not too many people died here, but it was worse in other villages.

The famine wasn't too bad in the cities.

Those who made the rounds, those who took everything from people, they're to blame.

Recorded by Yulia Stetsiv, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Olha Vasylivna Shevchenko, born in 1929. Village of Chervona Sloboda, Buryn district.

What caused the famine? *Dekurkulization*. All of it happened under Stalin. Grain was shipped here, they drowned us in grain, and then they sent it all across the border. It was all done to bring about a famine.

We only had a *pud* of millet, but we had it, and when the agents came to *dekurkulize* us, they took everything. One of them, it was Tolko Zubrenko's father, said, "What the hell good are they, those children? Who needs them?" But there was a kinder one, Mykyta, a friend of this Tolko, who said, "Leave it, leave it for the children! They're our children too." But the other one took it anyway.

People defended themselves as best as they could. With sticks, with pitchforks . . . but we didn't see this [in our village].

My mother was sentenced to a year of hard labor for five ears of wheat. Kolka Chevhuze's father was patrolling the fields, the son of a bitch.

What didn't we eat! We went into the meadow and found wild garlic and ate it. We ate mustard greens.

A lot of people starved to death. You couldn't count how many. Whole families.

Recorded by Oksana Bilous, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Kharkiv Oblast

Testimony of Kateryna Antonivna Panchenko,
born in 1921. Village of Pishchanka, Chervonohrad district.

I remember the famine of 1932–1933 and the one in 1946–1947. They took everything. If they found it, they took it. This was the party's decision. For hiding things people were sent to Siberia.

People gave them everything, even without being threatened with weapons.

They came and they searched. If they found something, they took it away. People couldn't protect themselves. They were afraid that they would be sent away [to Siberia]. There were lists. They came with lists. They knew whose house they were in.

Those who came and took everything were called *komenzams*. They came in groups of three.

If you joined the collective, you got a bit of food.

They took everything: clothing, linen, anything they could.

For picking wheat in the field you could be put on trial. It was forbidden. We were so hungry . . . but if they caught you, you could be put in jail. For two or three years.

The fields and storehouses were watched over by activists from the collective farm.

People were supposed to join the collective voluntarily. If they didn't volunteer, they were forced to go—they were considered to be enemies of the people.

People were pressured to hand their livestock over to the collective farm.

They came at any time during the day. They came in the evening, in the morning.

The harvest was good in the spring of 1932. But when winter came, there was nothing to eat. And especially in the spring of 1933—wonderful days. The grass started sprouting in April, and people ate grass to survive.

Orphans were cared for by relatives or neighbors. People with hearts. The state didn't care for them. But there were good people. They helped one another.

Our grandfather always shared whatever he had with us.

In the spring, people ate dandelions, sucking up the sap. They ate leaves, cherry tree bark. They grated oak bark and boiled it, but it was bitter. They ate crows, sparrows.

In the city, there was a rationing system, and people could buy bread. The famine wasn't so bad in the city.

The dead were buried in common graves. Without gravestones. Without anything.

Men with horses were sent from the collective farm to bury people, but they didn't do anything.

Here in the Kharkiv region, there are places where victims of the famine are buried.

Recorded by Natalia Bulhakova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Testimony of Mykola Mykhailovych Ostroverkh,

born in 1918. Village of Zamirka, Derhachiv district; at the time of interview, resided in the city of Boryspil, Kyiv oblast.

I remember, in 1921–1922, I was three years old, there was a poor harvest and we had a famine. Children and whole families ate whatever was growing: pigweed and nettles. It was all ground up or diced and baked as biscuits. Mother distributed them among us children. That was in 1921–1922.

But the famine of 1932–1933 was the result of the government policies regarding private property and collectivization. Some villages had already gone through collectivization; private property became part of the collective and everything people owned—chickens, geese, horses, cows, sheep, etc., became communal property. And those villages that were collectivized shipped everything out to the city, and the peasants were left with nothing. That's why those villages had a famine. People in *khutirs* lived poorly, but they survived. Take me, for example. I was fourteen years old in 1932, and I'd stand in a bread line for 36 hours to buy bread, because there was such a shortage.

Armed men—probably police—came around and took everything away, especially from those who refused to voluntarily join the collective.

At our collective farm, everyone who worked was fed at midday—two courses. The first course was soup or borshch; the second course was some kind of porridge, not necessarily with meat. We rarely had meat. Those who didn't want to work didn't get anything, which means they went hungry. Mother and Father both brought what they were given at the collective farm home. My brothers and sister worked, too. I would work for an hour or two, helping in the stable or with the cows, so I also got something. And after lunch, I would run off to school.

For picking ears of wheat . . . sometimes nothing happened and sometimes they put you on trial. There were cases like that.

Back in 1928, nothing had been officially decided, but we already tilled the soil communally. Ten to fifteen farmers had one team of draft animals and they sowed as a group but reaped separately. And when collectivization came, it was introduced as a volunteer system. In some remote villages, armed guards forced people to join. That's how it was originally. Sixty households remained independent. For them it was even worse because they were taxed and they couldn't do anything about it.

I stood in bread lines in the city in 1932–1933. There were a lot of orphans, maybe from the villages. At that time the government had ruled that homelessness was to be eradicated. The homeless were caught and put in shelters. In Derhach village we had two shelters, and there was a wonderful commune near Kharkiv—just so there would be no homeless people.

Anything that was edible, any plant that grew and could be turned into something to eat, it was all milled, grated, mixed in with the husks of rye or wheat, and made into biscuits.

The local leaders who distorted state policies and instructions regarding collectivization and merging of all the private farms, they're the ones to be blamed, they took everything from people, even livestock, so that families couldn't make ends meet.

There was no cannibalism in Derhach, but I heard people talking about it while I was standing in bread lines in Kharkiv. There were cases of cannibalism in villages where people killed children to save themselves. We didn't have that because we didn't have collectivization.

Where did you hide food from those who came searching?

People hid it in the hay, in the straw; then there were those who would dig a hole under the hay at night so they could get it and use it later. We had a large family.

In families that were *dekurkulized* before the famine, before 1932, the men were arrested; the rest of the family was deported. In our village, only one family was deported.

In our region, they took only horses and oxen, to be used as work animals. They left the cows and the sheep.

For example, we had one cow for a family of eight, five sheep, and two pigs. The same amount of taxes was levied for all the animals alike, even for chickens. They would count them, "How many chickens do you have?" We would answer, "Twenty," and then a certain number of eggs had to be surrendered. Apple trees and cherry trees were counted, too.

There were the so-called commercial stores, the *torgsins*, that traded for gold. Father took his and Mother's wedding bands to trade. He brought back about a *pud* of flour. Those who had more gold got more flour.

What is a torgsin?
It's a "*torhovyi sindikat*" (trading syndicate) for gold. You bring gold and you get products; later, commercial stores were opened.

Recorded by a student from Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Kherson Oblast

Account of Kateryna Arkhypivna Velyka,
born in 1925. Village of Blakytne, Vysokopil district.

Agents from the village soviet in Blakytne village, three, four men, made the rounds, going to houses and searching for grain. Our neighbors were evicted from their house even though nothing was found. But because they were considered to be *kurkuls*, they were taken to the valley and left there. This was in winter. Then they came to our house. They meant to take us out there, to the valley, too, because they thought we were hiding grain. We had no grain. When we ran out of food, my older sister and Mama would go and trade some of our things for bread, beans, corn. People slaughtered horses. We traded horsemeat for things.

They took a manual sewing machine from our neighbor Semen Sholokh, and took his dishes. From us they took a cow, a horse; Father took our entire farm inventory to the collective farm. They took our land, they confiscated everything. We were left with absolutely nothing. From that moment the famine began. There was nothing. It was winter. It was cold. We were starving. We hadn't sown anything in the fall, we hadn't plowed—we didn't do anything. Those who still had a cow, used the cow for plowing. They sowed by hand and they raked the soil because there was nothing else to work with.

Some of our neighbors were *dekurkulized,* and many others were driven out to the valleys. But because they were unable to survive there, some of them went to Kryvyi Rih, and some of them went to the Urals. Wherever they had relatives, that's where they went.

During the famine we ate grasses—all the fungus that grew on logs, we ate all that. In the spring, we ate "prosurenky"—that's what they were called back then—they're small with little heads in the ground . . . now they call them "podsnezhynky" [snowdrops] . . . they come up early in the spring, with little bulbs in the ground. And we ate rabbit ears—that's a kind of plant, too.

No, there wasn't any cannibalism, but very many people died—old people, young people, children, entire families, especially those who had many children and families where there were few men. We survived because of our father and his family. He had five brothers and three sisters, and the sisters' husbands helped. They all helped one another.

When people died from hunger, there was no one to bury them properly. Everyone was too weak. So the dead were carted away to the crypt in the cemetery. A long time ago, an old man and an old woman with a large family lived in these parts. The old man dug out a huge pit and built two vaults in the ground. The old woman died, and he buried her in one of the vaults. He didn't seal the crypt; he made a door that latched with a hook. For a long time he visited the vault every week. He took off the old woman's scarf, her blouse, her apron—he took them off and brought them out to dry thoroughly. She was in a coffin and he was forbidden to do that but he did it anyway. A year or two passed, this was just before the famine, and then he died. He was buried in the crypt, too, and this time it was sealed up. But during the famine there was no way to bury people, so they collected the dead, opened up the crypt, and put the dead in there. At first they did this nicely, though without caskets, without anything. Then the crypt was completely filled up and there was no more room left, so they started burying people in other pits. That crypt is still around, but the ground there has leveled off. They said that on church holy days there are ghosts walking there.

We wondered, after the collective farms were organized, what was this? Why did it happen? They say that in other towns there was bread. Those who went somewhere else to trade things said they had everything. People traded whatever they had—dishes, clothing.

The river saved us. People caught crabs, snails. They picked out the meat and ground it up and ate it. My sister would wade in the river at sunrise; she did this so often she knew what could be found under what rock. She found more turtles than anyone else. A lot of cattails grew along the river; they're very tasty when they're young and tender. People cut them down; they're sweet. Reeds grew there, and they were sweet too. Those snails and those water plants nourished us. We burned straw to keep warm. When there was no straw, we cut down wild grass and burned that.

Recorded by Artem Prokopchuk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Serhii Mykytovych Stavytsky,

born in 1936 in the village of Arkhanhelsk, Vysokopil district.
Learned about the famine from his parents.

I know about the famine from what my parents told us. The famine was organized by the ruling party. Whatever was harvested was confiscated. Almost all of it was hauled out to the train station at Blakytna village. There was so much

grain that it didn't fit into the grain warehouses, so it was heaped on the ground. Some of it was covered with a tarp, and some of it just lay there under the open sky. As my parents told me, soldiers with dogs guarded it. The results are well known. People had no grain and there was a famine. Agents went from house to house demanding grain, searching everywhere, in the oven, taking everything. The famine made people do horrible things: One man in our village killed his seven sons, aged fourteen to three months, and their mother, and then hanged himself.

My mother's grandfather, Ivan, had served in the army. Once they came and said to him, "Old man, hand over your cow and horse." And he answered, "Take them." Afterwards, someone talked Grandfather Ivan into writing to the village soviet, and he did. And a document arrived at the village soviet, apparently signed by a military official, stating that the family of someone who had served in the army was not to be bothered or there would consequences. From then on, they left Grandfather in peace.

Recorded by Artem Prokopchuk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Khmelnytskyi Oblast

Olha Viktorivna Tsymbaliuk remembers.

Born in 1917, village of Velyka Berezna, Polon district.

There was this Kaganovich, he was Jewish, and he created the famine. Agents and activists confiscated flour and grain—if it was in pots, they poured it out. They took clothing and livestock.

It was impossible to hide anything anywhere. They came around with spikes. They confiscated everything from the *kurkuls*. They dug out their potatoes while the *kurkuls* stood there, crying. Five of their children starved to death. Someone from the village soviet came with a wagon and they were taken away and buried at the cemetery.

Under cover of darkness they took people and sent them to Siberia. They had the right to kill people. People couldn't defend themselves against that kind of government.

Tymish Tymofiiovych Kariuk, Khvedko Kurdakh, Martiuk, and Yurko Buichuk made the rounds. There were fifteen of them. They arrived in gangs; Lev Levandovsky would climb up into the attic. It was impossible to hide anything, even underground or under water. They searched in ovens, they tore up floorboards, they tore down walls. They took the livestock, the cows. From those who refused to join the collective, they took cows, pigs, beehives.

A storehouse keeper, Vasyl Kucheriv, and a guard were stationed in the field.

Those who joined the collective voluntarily got to keep their houses; those who didn't were sent to Siberia. Clothes were taken away. They signed people up to join the collective. If you signed, you went. The collective had a lot of land. I worked for sixty years for 300 grams of ashes. They came to search three times a day . . . under water, in the house, wherever. They beat people, put people on trial.

No, nobody helped anybody. People were like animals. Priests were exiled, killed, driven out, beaten.

If I stole a potato, I would eat it. We ate beet greens, frogs. There was famine all over Ukraine.

Some five hundred or six hundred people starved to death here. Very many. I don't remember exactly how many. Probably about six hundred.

The government was guilty. Our own leaders were guilty. They were following Stalin's orders. May the devil take him. So many were repressed.

Recorded by Inna Verhens, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Kateryna Mykhailivna Kozhan,
born in 1914. Village of Halchyntsi, Teofipol district.

Tell me please, do you remember a famine in 1932–1933?

I remember it well. The government took the harvest. They came and took things. They stripped people of their clothing. They poured grain out of jugs, swept food off stoves. People hid things if they could; if not, it was taken away. People were sent to Siberia.

They took clothes, they took benches, they took tables. Everything. And people were driven from their homes.

What do you remember about "the five ears?"

They fined people. All kinds of things happened. They confiscated the wheat. Of course, people helped one another. They watched after each other, saved one another. They shared apples and berries. They dug up potatoes and shared those. You have none, I'll give you some. People saved each other because things were so bad.

They cooked pigweed, sorrel, tree bark. Livestock was slaughtered, cats were killed, dogs. They hunted sparrows, cranes. They caught everything and ate everything.

There was nothing to trade and there was nowhere to trade. And what could you get?

How many people died? Do you remember?

No. But many. They were swollen, so swollen, Lord have mercy, and legs like sticks. Lord have mercy, may you never see or know anything like it.

Do you remember any cannibalism in the village?

No. There wasn't any. People helped each other however they could. If the father died and the mother died, the children were cared for by a sister or brother. Family. There was one case . . . Pylyp Rudkivsky was starving and lost his mind. He murdered his wife and two children; the older ones. The little one was left, and his sister-in-law took the little boy in and cared for him.

Recorded by Inna Verhens, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Hanna Hryhorivna Chyzh,
born in 1923. Village of Halchyntsi, Teofipol district.

I don't remember 1933 too well because I was still young. I was ten years old. I remember that they took the harvest. Some officials arrived in groups with two or three leaders, strangers, and a few locals and went into houses and took things. Something is drying on the stove, they sweep it away. A small child, so small it can barely walk yet, sits at the edge of the *pich*, pleading, "Don't take the grain, don't take grain." They take it anyway, just sweep if off the stove. Many can tell you the same story. The so-called *kurkuls* got the worst of it. They took everything from them and then exiled them with no shoes, no clothes, and hungry. I remember a little of this. A teacher arrived at our village; she went around the whole village and nobody wanted to rent her a room. Even just to spend a night, nobody wanted her in their house. Father was returning home from work right then, so he invited her in. Mama cooked some potatoes. We ate dinner. The teacher got up in the morning and said, "Lord, where will I go. I must go to school."

People were forced into the collective. If they didn't want to join, they were evicted from their houses. Baba Hapka lived not far from us. She was an old woman. She had a cow; it was pregnant. They took the cow, evicted the old woman from the house, and sold everything she owned. She died Heaven knows where or how.

They ransacked everything. They went into closets, like it or not; they seized everything and that was that.

And not only food was taken; they took clothing and livestock to the collective farms.

I know there was a Petro Hlushuk who lived not far from us and had some old furniture in his house, which he had built himself. Such a beautiful couch he had; such a well-made, colorful couch. He said it had belonged to Panasykha. Someone had sold out Panasykha, and that's how he got it. And such beautiful bed linens . . .

I gathered wheat ears. I was in first grade already, but it was summer when the wheat ripened, and I wasn't in school. But then they took us to the school and the teacher said, "Go, the pioneer leader has arrived (he was a stranger). Go and get everyone together. They'll send a wagon for you and you'll go to the field to

gather wheat." So we'd go and we would gather the wheat and put it in the wagon. In a day, we'd gather two to three wagons full. Just us children. . . . But in spite of this, we were almost always hungry. We were hungry in the morning, and later in the day they gave us lunch and a flat-cake of some sort with honey. If I didn't go to school, they would bring me some.

Did they allow you to gather the leftover wheat ears and bring them home?
No. People gathered them in secret, at night . . . I know that Petro Hlushko's children (he had four children) were starving. He took grain from others, he had to, because he had nothing at home. The children would go and gather a bundle and it would be milled with a millstone or ground in a mortar with a pestle and made into a gruel that they lapped up and that was it.

Were the fields and the collective farm storehouses guarded?
Yes. Well guarded. How can I describe it? Well, near Havrylo's house there was a warehouse where people stored their reserves in the days when they still had their own grain. This is where everything was piled up because there was no other place to store things—they hadn't built it yet. So people brought their grain there. And it was well guarded, but the guard didn't deny himself any.

And then in 1933 people began dying of starvation. There was nothing left. Hanka Sinchykha, the poor woman, came to weed the coriander. She was so bloated her arms were as big as logs, and she couldn't pull the weeds. She didn't have a cow. I said to her, "What do you bring to the field [to eat] for the day?" When I unwrapped her bundle there was nothing but weeds, pigweed, and a bit of sour milk somebody had given her. She was all swollen. She said, "What am I to eat when there is nothing."

Father built a roof for the storehouse keeper; the storehouse keeper paid Father with food.

There were some soldiers, some guards who kept watch. They ate there. For people working in the field, a midday meal was brought out.

People cooked with pigweed because they had no grain. Children picked pigweed every morning along the road . . .

Did people hunt wild animals, birds?
Yes. During the famine of 1933 they ate whatever they could find.

Do you remember how many people in the village died?
I told you already, I was very young then. God alone knows who died. I know people said that Hryts Rizhok starved to death.

The dead were carted away and buried, that's all. Nobody had any wakes, nothing. Tanka Porukha told us, "I buried my mother during the famine, but I didn't invite anyone or do anything . . . and later, after it had all passed and I was a bit better off, I had a dream about my mother. And she said to me, 'Oh, you're cooking.' And when I answered, 'Yes, I'm cooking,' she said 'Maybe you could give me a spoonful of borshch?' That was my dream. So I invited folks over and I cooked borshch and kasha. We all ate together and prayed for Mama together." Her husband broke into their grandmother Paranka's storage shed. There was nothing there except some hemp seeds in a wooden container and a few beans in a sack. He took it all and he milled those seeds and those beans and he baked them and died. Tanka said it was all that suffering that killed him . . .

Who's to blame? Everything was taken from the collective farm and shipped out. There had been a good harvest, lots of grain.

Yes, there was grain in 1932, I know because I carried food to Father because they didn't let him go home for his midday meal. He was building a grain warehouse at the collective farm. He said no one could take the grain home because it was all being sent away somewhere. It was all being exported until it was all gone. Only seeds were left. And the people got nothing. The people got nothing.

Recorded by Oleksii Kupchenko-Hrynchuk, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Memorial of the victims of the Famine of 1932–1933, Village of Velyke Berezne, Polonsky region, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, 2005.

Cherkasy Oblast

Account of Hanna Omelianivna Finashkina,

born in 1924. Village of Prydniprovske (formerly Deshky village), Chornobaiv district.

Yes, I remember the famine of 1932–1933. At that time, though, I was living in Russia, so I personally didn't live through the famine. But my grandmother lived in Ukraine, and she wrote to us frequently telling us life there and what was going on. Baba wrote that the famine was terrible.

I don't believe that the famine was caused by a bad harvest. Everything had been exported out of Ukraine to Russia; the harvest that year was fine. The quota for export was being continually increased. The famine was manmade, created specifically for Ukraine. We in Russia did not go hungry. Had we been home, in Ukraine, at that time, we would surely have starved to death. It was thanks to Father, who had brought us to Russia at the beginning of 1932, we are alive.

Baba wrote that government officials came and seized all the grain, but who they were, I can't say for certain. They came into houses and demanded that grain be handed over. People were afraid and gave it up. Those who tried to hide something were punished. What documents? The village wasn't very big, and it was always the same people who came to take things. They were Baba's neighbors from the village. So that every time they came, people knew why they were coming.

Why would they need weapons? People were terrified and there was almost no resistance. Especially since they made the rounds in groups of five or six men. They were rarely armed.

People defended themselves however they could, and the only way they could was with their hands. Those attempts were never successful and they were horribly punished.

It was nearly impossible to hide anything, but people thought up some clever hiding places. They hid grain underground, in walls, and in trees. They tried to hide provisions in the oven. Grain was poured into jugs or pots and put way at the back of the oven and then covered up with ashes, but they found it anyway. Some buried the grain in the garden or hid it in the thatched roof. My grandmother wrote that they had dug a hole in the floor of the shed and buried

the grain there, covering it with soil and shoving a barrel on top of that. And still it was found.

They took not only food but livestock. Baba told me that their piglets and their cow were confiscated. She wrote that they came around three times until everything was cleaned out, and after that, they never came back.

Yes, I had heard about the "five wheat ears" law. For five ears of wheat they could give you life in prison. But it wasn't just for wheat ears that they put people in prison. The same law applied to everything: beets, corn, wheat, and so on.

It was forbidden to take what was left after a harvest. It was better to plow it under than to let the people have it. And how many people were punished for taking something from the field . . .

People joined the collective voluntarily for the most part because they were looking for a way to save themselves. They herded their animals to the collective farm, handed over their rakes, shovels, hoes, and went to work there. Only a few people resisted joining. Later, they were forced to join.

There weren't many orphans in the village. Many of them died of starvation during the famine. Eventually, shelters were set up—the *patronats* as they were called—but that wasn't until 1934. During the famine, orphans were useless. They swelled up with hunger and died.

There were, extremely rarely, people in the village who didn't suffer hunger. But they were the ones who made everybody else starve. Everybody was starving horribly. Entire villages perished. Baba wrote to us that entire families died in the village, and there was nobody left to bury them. So the neighbors buried them. They would be dumped into a communal pit and buried. At times, someone died under a fence and the body would lie there until it began to decompose. Baba wrote that people were taken away by sleigh to be buried. In other words, most people died in the winter and in the spring.

Yes, people helped one another. A village is like a family. They shared to the last crumb. We lived in Russia at the time and didn't go hungry, but we couldn't help Baba at all. If Father had tried to deliver something to the village in Ukraine, he would immediately have been arrested and exiled. It was forbidden to help anyone.

People ate whatever they could find. Baba told us they found and ate wild onions that grew in the forest. All kinds of plants. Any animal that they could catch and kill: hedgehogs, birds, frogs, cats, dogs.

In cities it was possible to trade for something, but villagers didn't go to cities. Baba said that they were afraid that they would be robbed of their last possessions on the way.

I cannot tell you precisely how many people died. I knew once, but I have forgotten. But I know for certain that huge numbers of people starved to death. More people died of starvation during the famine than during the war. Starving to death is the worst kind of death, and to watch your children starve to death, you can go mad.

Yes, there were cases of cannibalism in our village. Baba wrote about a woman in the village who had seven children. She killed three of them to feed the other four. In the end, it didn't matter—they all starved to death.

The dead were buried at the cemetery. They were stacked onto a wagon and taken there. One common grave was dug out. Crosses were erected very rarely; there wasn't anyone to make them. If family members were still strong enough, they buried their dead. Sometimes people would bury their relatives in their yards. One man from the village buried his wife in his orchard and put up a cross for her.

You know, the government is to blame. Stalin issued orders and Kaganovich and Postyshev executed those orders.

Recorded by Liudmyla Zhytska, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Todos Khomovych Hodun,
born in 1913. Village of Ivakhny, Monastyryshch district.

The famine was carried out specifically to starve the Ukrainian people to death. There was grain, and there was a good harvest. But Stalin sent Kaganovich to take all the grain, to create a famine.

Regional government officials came to confiscate everything to create a famine. People ate weeds and rotten potatoes trying to save themselves—but no one was spared.

They came and took everything, with no papers, no documents. They crawled everywhere; they bribed the local devils, and they shipped the grain out of Ukraine to cause a famine.

Starving people were beaten, punished, and given no food. They swelled up and died—that is how they were punished. People were arrested and imprisoned. Or exiled. Rich people were deported for being *kurkuls* in 1930, but by 1932 they weren't deported any more. How can you deport someone who is already dead?

People begged the agents to leave them a little grain; they defended themselves. But the agents kept coming. They climbed into the loft, swept everything out, and took it all away. To leave people with nothing. To kill them off.

People tried to hide a bit of grain, but the agents found it and took it. They poked around with spikes, everywhere. Those who conducted the searches have since died. Kolia Kolomiiets, Hryhorko Hodun, Semen Ivashchuk—these were the village activists who helped the government. It was Kaganovich who was dispatched to Ukraine; it was in 1932 that the famine began. It began in the fall.

They confiscated grain so that there wasn't any, anywhere. Not in the lofts, not in the sheds.

They searched underground, they searched under the floorboards; they searched and they found and they took.

Those who worked at the collective farm received 200 grams of bread or soup—perhaps a gruel. One ladle. All swollen, would go to the canteen, begging. But they were given one ladle and no more.

They didn't take clothing, just livestock: horses, cattle, chickens.

Those who tried to pick wheat from the field were beaten, sometimes killed. Yes, in the field, for five wheat ears. A starving man would crawl along the field looking for wheat. The activists would catch him and beat him. Beat him so badly he would never get up again, never even crawl again. They killed him.

People were chased away. There were guards. Everybody was kept away.

People resisted joining the collective, but they were forced to join. They levied taxes and grazing a cow anywhere was prohibited, so people had no choice but to join.

Livestock wasn't hidden, and horses, cows, harnesses were all confiscated. I had a horse. I was forced to sign it over to the collective farm.

They made the rounds whenever they felt like it: during the day, at night.

The famine started in the fall because by then, nothing was left. By the spring of thirty-three the famine was at its height. People dropped dead. They were picked up in wheelbarrows and buried. Some people begged to be killed. . . . They couldn't walk, they couldn't lie down. Some swelled up, some didn't.

There was little care for children. They were fed some kind of gruel. The little ones were cared for, but not the older ones.

Who didn't go hungry? The activists. They cleaned all the peasants out and were taken care of.

But people survived. I survived somehow. God willed it. Do I know how? I didn't eat anything but I didn't swell up. And I survived. I suffered—I ate grass, grazed like a cow. No help anywhere and I survived.

People helped one another, but not often. Those who were a little better off shared with others—a piece of bread, a little soup, potatoes. Those who had nothing, what could they share?

Even parents. How could they help their children when they themselves were swollen with hunger.

We grazed on grass and pigweed, like cattle.

Did you eat any berries?

And who was to pick them? Could I climb a tree? If some fell to the ground . . . but . . . we ate leaves from any tree. We cooked leaves and grass. That's the kind of soups we ate.

People didn't eat mice, but dogs, and yes, rats—everything. Rats went hungry too, but where there were dead people, the rats had something to eat. People couldn't keep up with carting the dead away.

There were wheelbarrows. The dead were thrown into the wheelbarrows, like animals, and a ditch was dug, and that's where they were unloaded. Into a common grave.

Who was there to trade with? No one had anything. And what was there to buy when there was no money?

The famine was everywhere, in cities too—in all of Ukraine.

Very many people died. My God. Probably half the population, maybe more. People just dropped dead; it was like a slaughterhouse.

There was one man—his brother died, and he sliced off his thigh, cooked it, and ate it. This happened in our village, Ivakhny. There was one such case. Maybe more, do I know?

They sent the wheelbarrow from the collective farm with some old men. They loaded five bodies, one on top of another, and carted them off to the cemetery. They dug a ditch and unloaded the bodies in whatever they had been wearing, like soldiers at the front. Those who did the work were given a work order and they paid them something, maybe money, for this special work. Two horses, two wheelbarrows, and they went from house to house.

They buried people at the old cemetery, in a ditch, anywhere; it's all overgrown now.

Yes, they're remembered. Old grannies and old men get together and remember them. The grannies hire a priest for a memorial service; they pay him. There were entire families that perished. And who will remember them?

Where the school is now there used to be a church. A tall church, with bells. One bell weighed two tons. The communist activists demolished the church in 1933.

We had no *torgsins* in Ivakhny. That would be in Tsybuliv . . .

Stalin is to blame. Stalin dispatched Kaganovich from Moscow to confiscate everything. Stalin.

Recorded by Dmytro Horchynsky, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Evdokia Tymofiivna Shubko,
born in 1924. City of Horodyshche, Horodyshche district.

I remember the famine of 1932–1933 well. All the grain was taken and shipped out. Everything was taken and shipped out. They took everything from the house. To the last crumb. A small sack of corn would be standing there, and they would take it.

It was the party, it was the communists who did this.

People hid things, mostly in houses. Most of the houses had the new [wooden] floors then. Our house was not finished . . . Father was building an addition for us to move into. He had a workshop. He had dug a pit and lined it with straw. That's where he hid the grain. He covered it up with woodchips, wood shavings. They found things under the floorboards. . . .

They cooked lentils at the collective farm. They tasted like beans. They're good for cooking soup if you add something to them. They added flour. There were folks who already had nothing and they would go to the collective farm and say, "Give us something!" and someone at the collective farm would dole out a kilo or two of something. There were a lot of people who went begging there. And so they cooked that gruel. We were children then, and we'd stand in line with our bowls, with our spoons, moving up to the cooking pot where an old granny was cooking. People went to work at the collective farm for that reason—to get some of that gruel because there was nothing at home.

More people died in the spring when the grain began sprouting. Little Hania, sitting in the grass, digging out the grains. Right into her mouth. It wasn't ripe enough to be eaten yet.

How can you not give something when a child is so hungry that it's shaking? It's too hard to look back. Those poor children! Tiny little arms and legs, so skinny! Watching, hoping someone would give them something to eat . . .

People picked wild raspberries, hawthorn, thorn berries and ate them. There were large patches of thorn berries and nothing else. They're so tart, so sour! But we ate them . . .

Mostly we ate leaves from the linden trees. We'd walk along alleys, but mostly in the woods, the alleys were pretty well cleaned out. We'd pick sackfuls of leaves and bring them home. Mother would dry them on the stove and then we'd crumple and pound them in the mortar, getting rid of the leaf veins. After sifting it we'd pound it in the mortar some more. At least two, three times. Acacias started blossoming, so we added those to the linden leaves. We ate acacia. We'd break its branches. It was nauseatingly sweet; Mother would add the acacia to whatever she was preparing to sweeten it up a little.

Boys set traps. They caught little rabbits and brought them home. People ate horsemeat. Carrion.

Yes, I'd heard something about cannibalism. People said, "She ate her child!" Nobody did anything about it. Those who ate human flesh didn't live long.

The leaders were to blame, who else?! They exported all the grain! In 1946 the grain spoiled. But in 1932 it was exported and that's why people died. They dumped trainloads of grain into the Dnipro River, that's what I heard!

Recorded by Dmytro Horchynsky, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Recollections of Kateryna Nechyporivna Korzh,

born in 1922. Village of Sakhnivka, Korsun district. At time of interview, lived in city of Horodyshche, Horodyshche district.

I remember, there was a famine in 1932–1933. Wherever they could find grain and dig it out they took it. Beans were poured out of jugs and taken.

Who? The party members and their leaders went around and confiscated everything. Nobody asked to see their orders. They took grain, they took everything, they exiled people to Siberia. They demolished the barn, took the thresher to the collective farm. The large shed, so large that the thresher fit into it, they also dismantled that and moved it to the collective farm.

It was impossible to hide things. They walked around yards and everywhere else with metal spikes, poking everywhere. If anything was found, hidden or buried, they beat the owner. They barged in and said, "Tell us where, or we'll beat you . . ."

They made the rounds in gangs of five, seven.

If they caught you with wheat ears, they put you in prison. Guards on horseback patrolled the field, and you'd run off into a ravine with your sack of wheat ears trying to get away from them . . .

In 1932, people still managed, but in 1933 entire families perished. There was no place left to bury them. They were carted away to the cemetery, stacked in a common grave.

There were no shelters for children during the famine. They wandered around uncared for, dirty, half-naked, barefoot . . .

Members of the party didn't go hungry. They were the ones who took everything from people, to the last bean.

People helped one another. There wasn't any grain, but if someone had beans or some peas, they would share. People lived in peace with one another.

In 1933, as soon as the beets sprouted, people pulled the greens, cooked them, and ate them. They ate linden leaves, cherry leaves. They dried them and made a kind of biscuits out of them. Or they'd grate the dried leaves and make some kind of flat-cake. I would crawl on top of the table looking for crumbs from those biscuits.

And how would we know who was to blame? Was it Stalin?!

Recorded by Iryna Sevostianova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Maria Hryhorivna Baklytska, born in 1916. Village of Horodyshche, Horodyshche district.

There was a terrible famine in 1932–1933. What caused it? They confiscated the grain everywhere. It started in 1932 and lasted until 1933. They dug everything out, took everything. They drove people from their homes . . .

They searched everywhere. There was a small space in my parents' stove, under the oven, and they supposedly hid some grain there. They poked around everywhere and dug things out and took everything.

They were idiots. They took everything they could lay their hands on. . . . But they didn't beat anyone. Why would they? Folks were already so miserable, barely walking, they would just push them and they fell over! They robbed us without weapons.

Those poor people never got to the collective farm. But for those who were left, they cooked some peas mixed with some kind of weed that made it turn blue.

They cooked a little of this and doled it out, but not to everyone. If you could manage to crawl there, you could get some.

For gathering wheat in the field people could be sentenced to ten years. They were chased away, beaten.

In 1933 there was nothing but *leverda* grass. Some poor person would eat his fill of that *leverda* and then drop dead facedown into more *leverda* . . .

There were no orphanages in those days. Orphans were cared for by others. If there were relatives, even relatives ten times removed, they would care for them.

There were ten people in our family. Somehow we survived. We ate grass, we ate ergot. We didn't die because we had a milk cow. That's what saved us. My brother, he was such a handsome little boy, and his legs swelled up. I said: "Oh, my God, that poor child's going to die." Mama would take one container of milk to the market and leave one for us. Milk was milk! She'd buy a cup of flour and use it for cooking. Thank God, we survived.

The acacia bloomed. We ate the blossoms. We picked ergot, dried it, crumpled it up and made biscuits out of it. That's how poor folks lived. Those who had a way to buy a cup of flour would mix it in with the dried ergot. Sometimes folks would choke on that grass and die. As many berries there were in the woods—that's how many people?! That one died in the woods, that one died near the woods. That one picked berries and ate them, and that one died holding the berries in his fist.

After the famine passed, we went to Kyiv . . . to the *torgsin*. Folks brought whatever they had to the *torgsin*: a nice piece of cloth, a gold ring. That *torgsin* took gold. And what did people buy in Kyiv? Some bran, some flour, some buckwheat. But even in Kyiv there wasn't too much to be had.

Here by the hospital, near the bridge, so many children, so many folks were caught. Someone would be walking from work or to work, and they would sneak out from under the bridge and grab him. No trial, no rights. People would say, "So-and-so has vanished, so-and-so has disappeared." To this day I stay away from that bridge by the hospital.

People were buried everywhere: one in the ravine, another at the cemetery, and the next Lord knows where. The stronger men were sent out to pick up the dead and cart them away to the cemetery. One big pit was dug out and the bodies were unloaded . . .

The Soviet government is responsible. And Stalin, that antichrist. That vile communist party did it, that's who.

Recorded by Iryna Sevostianova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Maria Petrivna Bendryk,

born in 1920 in Chornobai village; at the time of this recording lived in the village of Horodyshche, Horodyshche district.

What happened in 1946 was not a famine. What happened in 1933 was. You walked past houses and you saw dead people lying here and bloated people lying there. And as you came closer you heard them say, "Give me a piece of bread . . . " You looked all around you, and you realized that it was the same for you . . .

They came and took everything. They looked inside jugs and dumped whatever was there: beans, dried bread. They hauled everything away. And where did they take it? The famine was created deliberately!

It was the *Komsomol* that made the rounds. They were ordered to. They came in twos or threes.

They came at all times of the day and at night. At midnight, at two or three in the morning. Whenever they wanted to.

And they came three or four times. They poured food into sacks and took it away. They came to our house twice. And in those houses where a woman lived alone, they came so often that the door never closed.

What documents are you talking about? During a famine? Nobody had any documents. Nobody answered for anything. Nobody reported anything . . .

And how could you hide anything? They went everywhere, searching, taking it all away. They even searched out in the street. And in the house, they went through every shelf and took it all. What did they do with it? Nobody knew.

My parents went to the collective farm. What did they get there? Poppy seed mush and scraps of buckwheat, after it was sifted. And when they gave out the poppy seed mush, it was almost like getting a piece of bread.

People began dying in the spring, before the harvest. There was nothing left to eat . . .

Who could help? We were all starving. There was nothing to help with . . .

People would pick acacia blooms, crumple them, dry them and make biscuits. Last year's potatoes were still at the collective farm. They rotted. We'd take them, peel them, they still had plenty of starch. We soaked the starch, filtered it, and used it to make flat-cakes. The potatoes were rotten, but we could still eat the starch.

We ate acacia leaves and flowers. Linden leaves. Lilac flowers.

We pounded corn cobs. The kernels had been cleaned off, but we pounded the cob into a mush and ate it. We picked leverda—it was almost like garlic—in the forest.

People hunted rabbits, deer. They ate dog meat. Everything.

I don't know how many died of starvation. Entire families perished. It was a large village, 800 households. Now when I go there, half the village is empty, overgrown.

I heard there was a woman in our village who ate her child. They took her away. I don't know what became of her.

The dead were buried at the cemetery. They dug a pit, not too deep. And they stacked the old and the young, head this way, feet that way, onto a cart and then dumped the bodies into the pit.

Stalin is to blame! The famine of 1933 was an artificial famine!

Recorded by Iryna Sevostianova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Natalia Petrivna Holub remembers.

Born in 1917, village of Horodyshche, Horodyshche district.

I remember the year 1933 very well. It was a very hard year! There was nothing. People ate linden leaves, poppy seed mush. It was impossible to get anything anywhere, because there wasn't anything. The authorities came and took everything to the last crumb. They took bread, they took grain.

We had a cow and a horse. Father was a good farmer. They came for the grain; they threatened to take the cow if we didn't give up the grain. We still owed them over seven *puds* [about 130 kilograms] of grain, but there wasn't any grain left. Father had to beg from neighbors because they took the cow and we had a large family. People helped him. And Father took the grain to the authorities, and they gave back our cow.

Where could you hide anything? We didn't do that.

We called those who came to search "brooms." Two men came to our house.

What did they give people at the collective farm? They cooked lentils. If you worked there, you would get some, otherwise, not. They didn't allow folks to take it home.

For picking wheat ears, folks were fined, not much, but they were fined. They chased children and old folks away. People came to look in the fields anyway because they were hungry.

There was nothing to eat and nobody would bring you anything. No one had anything. If you give it to someone else, you'll be hungry yourself. So people lived

this way as long as they could and then . . . in 1933 . . that was when the famine was at its worst . . .

They didn't take children to orphanages. There weren't any at that time.

What did we eat? We cleaned off the beets and cooked them and ate them . . . we didn't go to the woods, we had a small orchard. If we found an apple, we cleaned it off and ate it . . . sometimes we didn't even wash it before eating it. Then, in 1934 we finally had bread. It was much easier then, completely different! They began dispensing rations at the collective farm.

We picked acacia leaves, we dried them, grated them. Added a tiny bit of flour. And Mother baked biscuits out of that. They were shapeless lumps, but we ate them anyway.

We were in Poltava in 1933. A man came to our village from Nabokova and began recruiting us. I was still young. I was fourteen, maybe fifteen years old. My sister was older. The two of us were put on a train and we went to Poltava. We weeded beets. We reaped the harvest. We worked at the state farm. The brigade leader was very nice—he felt sorry for people from Kyiv. They gave us bread baked out of beet seeds with a bit of flour. It was a small piece, 200 grams. And lentil soup with vetch, and a few potatoes. Standing in front of the huge kettle, we'd say, "At least stir it a little, get to the thicker stuff . . ." And they did; they stirred it and poured it into our bowls. But the bowl wasn't very large . . .

We returned from Poltava before the New Year. We brought bread and rye . . . I don't know how many sacks, not too many. Wheat, barley, a sack of sugar. And a little money. We set about saving our family. We pounded the wheat and poppy seeds and sugar for the *kutia*. Our little sister Marishka and brother Hrysha revived: They got up on their feet. The swelling in Father's legs went down.

Entire families died. Working at the collective farm, I never heard anyone say anything about how many people had died. They just said, "So-and-so died, and so-and-so." No one recorded the deaths.

Yes, there were cases of cannibalism. One mother ate her children. She was starving, killed her children and ate them. And then vanished herself.

The stronger ones dug small graves for burial. Otherwise corpses just lay along the road. Eventually they were carted away. A pit was dug and they were dumped into it. Everybody into one pit.

The worst of the famine was in 1933. And who was to blame? It was the rulers that were to blame.

Recorded by Iryna Sevostianova, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Maria Trokhymivna Bolba remembers.

Born in 1913. Village of Hanzhalivka, Lysiansk district.

I remember that terrible famine of 1932–1933 well. *Komsomol* members, women and boys, came around to conduct searches. They've died since. They searched in the oven; people hid grain in pots. This happened at my house, at my father's house.

Who did the searching? Khvedko Bolba, Hania Bisazhykha's father. Informing on your neighbor was rewarded. Some people buried grain in wooden boxes in the garden.

They drove us from our house. Father was sent away. Afterwards he went to the Donbas region on his own, abandoning us. Then the village *komenzams* or whoever they were, came around and resettled us in an old house. We moved into a strange house, and there we sat. There was Mother and the three of us, children. After the famine, Father returned and took all of us to Donbas.

The stool pigeon was Aliosha Horobchenko. And the woman, Lida, and Bolbenko—he was the leader in the village. So they'd come: to catch the chickens, to take Father's thresher and straw cutter away to the collective farm, and to dismantle the barn. They took everything. The collective farm storehouse was built out of our dismantled barn.

They cooked some kind of gruel at the collective farm. Folks would go there to get some gruel.

My mother went to the Orliansk field to get some wheat ears. She picked a sackful and a guard on horseback came up to her, took her sack away, stripped her naked, and let her go. He took her clothes to the village soviet at Orly. Poor Mother scrambled through ravines and thickets to get home without being seen.

Those who didn't want to join the collective joined anyway, because there was no place else to go. Many women who had no husbands joined.

In the spring of 1933 people began dying of starvation. They were carted away to the cemetery and buried in pits. At Smilchentsi (the neighboring village), a man climbed out of the pit, still alive, and I believe that he's still around. Yashka was his name . . .

What happened to the orphans? There was a shelter. Nannies worked there, they cooked and cared for them. Local girls. That Tanasko Shuliaka, the one who died, he was the leader here. He came from the shelter; he was an orphan.

Those who had relatives in Donbas sometimes got packages from them: dried bread, cereals. That's how they survived.

We ate the leaves of linden trees. We scooped out the cores of corn stalks and ground them up and ate them. Acacia blossoms, those white ones we used them a lot.

One hundred people, more or less, starved to death in our village. Families were large with lots of children; children died, old people died, young people.

Cannibalism? People talked about it. They said there was a girl, she was so feeble, sickly, and they say her mother ate her. Nobody saw her, she wasn't buried, and nobody knew where she had vanished. So they said the mother ate her.

Some kind of food was given to those who did the burying. Not much, though.

When spring came in 1933, as soon as the soil had thawed out, people took hoes in hand and went digging for potatoes in gardens, in their own gardens and in neighbors' gardens. They made flat-cakes out of rotten potatoes and linden leaves. No salt—there wasn't any. My aunt would bake bread out of flour and beets, half-and-half. She grated the beets with a fine grater and mixed them into the flour. She gave me some of that bread. People shared.

Recorded by Yana Ivashchenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Yakiv Petrovych Pasichnyk,
born in 1924. City of Horodyshche, Horodyshche district.

I remember the famine well. They started to take the land from the peasants. All the land went to the collective. The famine was especially bad in 1933; I know that well, because I went to school all swollen.

All those drunks and do-nothings who didn't want to work. It was them that Lenin used to create a revolution and collectivization. They were given weapons and sent out to poke around everywhere, to search for any supplies folks might have. They searched in sheds, in barns, wherever people might have something. I remember my mother hid lentils in the oven and they found them. They wrung the peasants dry.

And they had other politics—the leaders they sent came from other villages or districts, not local people. Strangers were authorized to carry out the plan in every

village; the heads of the village soviets were strangers from other places. Proletarians were sent out to seize all the grain from people and to starve them to death.

My father had a couple of horses. He was a good farmer. He didn't own much land, two hectares, but his horses were the best in the area. So his name was put on the list of peasants to be *dekurkulized.* One of Father's relatives was the secretary of the village soviet and he secretly let Father know that he was on the list of those to be *dekurkulized.* "Uncle Petro," he said, "join the collective or they'll *dekurkulize* you." This was back in 1928. Father handed his horses over to the collective farm. He handed over his entire farm inventory and became a stable hand at the collective farm, feeding the horses. In 1931 Father left the collective farm, sold his cow, bought another horse, and began farming independently. Those beggars kept tormenting him; every day they came and searched and cleaned him out, and Father died of starvation.

Folks hid things in ravines in the steppe.

What did they call them—the proletariat—they gave people five years for five wheat ears.

People did not want to join the collective and resisted as much as they could, but that made the famine get worse. Because they forced people into the collective by taking everything away so that folks had nowhere to turn, and if they still resisted, they were either deported or shot. There was a boy, he was my age, Sashko Tiutiunnyk. His father was well off. They were hard working people, and they owned a windmill. So they were evicted and they lived in the wilderness in the steppe. They dug out a shelter for themselves and lived in it until the war.

People were arrested. They were summoned to the village soviet and held there for one, two nights—sign here and join the collective. The agents came at night, too. The more they drank, the more often they came. They hit you, dragging you to the village soviet over and over again. Of course, their orders came from the village soviet: Bring that one in. And they wouldn't leave you alone until they brought you in.

Yes, there were instances where people helped one another. Otherwise we'd all be dead. We had a large family; at the time of the famine, three of us remained with Mother. All the others had left. There had been nine of us in the family. Two served in the army, some worked at the collective farm, and one of my sisters married the head of the collective farm.

It was in 1933 that she married him, and it's true that things got a bit easier after that. But Father had died already. When Father died, a fellow who lived near us slaughtered his cow and gave us the cowhide. With her own hands, Mother pulled the hair out of the hide, singed it, and salted it. And that saved us. That's how people helped. Neighbors became like your own.

I had a brother born in 1932, and he swelled up. We ate flowers, leaves, we even mixed in clay. We dried and grated the leaves. The mills weren't working; they were broken. The millstones were homemade, but having millstones was forbidden, milling was prohibited. People ate tree bark. They ate whatever they could.

A woman ate her child. Nobody did anything about it. She was left alone although people harassed her for it. She said the child was already dead before she ate it.

There was famine in the towns, but in larger cities (so my brothers told us), things were better.

In our village, about 100 people starved to death, out of a population of 1,800.

The dead were buried at the cemetery, without caskets, without anything. Nobody memorializes them there.

In my opinion, Russia wanted to settle Ukraine with Russians. Why? I don't know. Even the Znamiansk region, here, alongside Chyhyryn, even there they suffered a dreadful, dreadful famine. Entire villages starved to death. Fishing saved those who lived near the river. But my cousin was fishing and was so exhausted, he keeled over and drowned. People who lived in remote prairie villages had no means of survival. There, entire villages starved to death. Russian people moved into those villages and settled there. That's why there was talk among people that it was a secret plan to kill off the Ukrainians with hunger and to resettle the country with Russians. It was all planned. Grain was confiscated. There was grain, but it was exported across the borders, especially to Germany, and traded for tools and machinery to make weapons with.

The grain was exported. They knew people were starving to death. Stalin knew. The Ukrainian people were simply wiped out—it was horrible. The population of Ukraine was probably more than three times what it is today. My brothers tell me that it was all planned, forced, premeditated—extermination of Ukrainians.

Recorded by Aliona Turlo, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Recollection of Yakiv Stepanovych Chaban, born in 1930. Village of Kharkivka, Mankiv district.

My parents told me that the home of Yavdokym Chushenko or maybe it was Mykhailo Chushenko had served as a headquarters. The chief at headquarters

was Herasym Hnatiuk, and there was a team of young people under his command, the ones who conducted the searches.

I don't know, but according to my parents, they weren't armed. They had metal spikes. They poked everywhere they thought something might be hidden. They'd poke somewhere and feel something there; that's how they discovered the hidden grain and take it away. People with nice houses were evicted, and their houses were taken over and dismantled.

"They are here," people would say, meaning that four or five of them had come to search.

A gruel was cooked for those who worked at the collective farm (my parents did, at harvest time, or hoeing beets). For children, there was the Red Cross, which took care of children with no parents. Sviren, for example, was such a place. The shelter was located right here where Volodia Sinichenko lives. Earlier, it was home of a *kurkul,* and then it became a children's home. There were many children there.

The famine peaked between the winter of 1932 and the spring of 1933. With the arrival of spring, buds began to grow on trees and bushes. Those who ate their fill of linden or cherry buds, especially children, swelled up and died.

They say that the officials took clothing from those who were better off and sold it. They took fur coats, woolen coats, embroidered linens.

People who lived independently were known as *indusy.*[36] There was Baba Zina, her father remained an *indus* for a long time, which is to say, he didn't join the collective. He owned a horse and a piece of land; later, the land was confiscated and so voluntarily or involuntarily he was forced to join. There weren't many of those *indusy* in the village. The *indusy* were independent and were pressured to join—some did, some didn't. My father did. He handed over his horse, his wagon, his farming tools, and joined.

People ate linden leaves, cherry leaves, nettles. They caught sparrows and crows; they ate gophers, the ones in the field, those little spotted gophers.

We had a church, but the priests ran off. The church stood empty and then grain was stored there and it became a storehouse.

The state is to blame. Stalin himself, or who else was there, Kosior[37]—they issued orders and grain was taken from Kharkivka. A command was given from on high to the authorities below.

Recorded by Kateryna Halaidenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Palashka Pylypivna Kharyna,
born in 1908. Village of Pishchane, Zolotonis district.

We endured such misery! There was nothing to eat, nothing to eat. Many people perished. Mother, Father, there were eight of us children. You walked about hungry, someone might give you something . . .

Everything was taken away. They even searched on rooftops.

The dead were buried at the cemetery, in the garden, wherever.

If they caught you picking wheat, they put you on trial.

When you're starving, do you care about that skirt? You go and you trade it for whatever you can get. But you couldn't get more than a cup of flour for a skirt.

Three of our relatives were buried in one grave. They were stripped and their clothing was sold. I remember that.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Halyna Hryhorivna Kovtun,
born in 1918. Village of Pishchane, Zolotonis district.

We survived the famine of 1932 because we had gold. But other people went to work in the field—they went alive and someone would bring them back from the field dead.

The more prosperous ones were *dekurkulized*. Quotas were issued, and grain had to be handed over by the next morning.

If people had nothing to give, they took their scarves, their skirts, and went to town to sell them. They sold everything. The land was untilled in the spring. The horses died. What saved us was the gold I had. I was an orphan. I lived at my uncle's.

Uncle had a chick. He had a gold cross, and Auntie did, too, so they'd go to Kyiv to the *torgsin*. I had a cow; but they didn't take it away because I was an

orphan. The cow calved. That's how we survived. There were folks who got all swollen; the skin on their legs cracked and water seeped out of them.

A wagon drives through the village, and you hear a voice say, "Don't take me, I'm still alive." I'm telling you the truth.

He's still moving, but they throw him into the pit. "By tomorrow you'll be dead." Such horror! And the grain was taken away and sent somewhere.

They seized the grain and sent it somewhere. My neighbor, his uncle was *dekurkulized*, and everything was taken from him because he didn't want to join the collective. They took his horse, his cow, everything that was in the house. He left the village.

The dead were buried or carted out to the field. Those agents walking around, poking around for hidden things, would find the dead bodies.

Potatoes rotted in the field. We'd go dig them up. We'd add dried linden leaves and bare corn cobs to the rotten potatoes and make flat-cakes.

I lived with my grandparents. Grandfather died in 1930 and Grandmother died in 1929, and after they died I lived with my uncle and aunt. And when they set up the collective, I was taken to the *patronat*. That's what they called the home for orphans. Some of the children worked weeding the garden and some worked at the collective farm.

Those whose parents had died of starvation were housed at the *patronat*. They were given twelve rubles a month. What could you buy for twelve rubles? But families lived on twelve rubles. My uncle's family survived on my twelve rubles a month.

When my mother got married, she had a *desiatyn* [2.7 acres] and three-quarters of land; the land and the horse were taken by the collective farm. But they left us the cow because I was an orphan.

There were cases where people ate their children. Some people in Novoselytsia ate their son and daughter.

If a horse died, it was drenched in carbide. Even then, people lined up to get some horse flesh.

Such misery, there was such misery! So many people died!

If people lived long enough to see the wheat ripen, once there was grain, they mashed it up and ate it. There were some black sprouts in the rye field, so we ground them up, but that gave us sores on our feet.

If you were caught picking wheat, it meant prison. Those trials, those verdicts, it was terrible! The collective had already been organized, threshing had begun, and the KGB (or somebody) came at night and took my uncle. The village testified that my uncle hadn't stolen anything and he was released.

If you worked at the collective farm, you got a piece of poppy seed cake . . .

Who had weddings then? Who celebrated anything? Over there, next to the green tree, that's where the troughs were, the mourners stood and drank liquor. We didn't hear anyone singing anywhere.

The famine of 1933 was all Stalin's work.

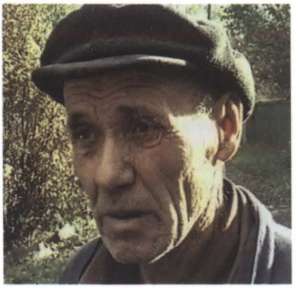
I ate crane meat. One man caught a fish. He caught it, scraped the scales off, and ate it. Raw. And he and all his brothers—six of them—survived.

Try to resist those brigades, try not handing things over to them—the next day you would be gone. You couldn't say a word.

Some folks were so weak they couldn't dig a grave, so they buried their loved ones in their orchard or garden. Later, the bodies were re-buried at the cemetery.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Viktor Petrovych Mykhalevsky, born in 1930. Village of Lytvynivka, Zhashkiv district.



It was a manmade famine. Beria,[38] Stalin, Kaganovich. They created it. They swept everything out of people's homes. People were left with nothing. But in Leningrad, there was grain everywhere, mounds of it. The famine was artificially created. Some five hundred people starved to death in our village. In the neighboring village, about seven hundred and fifty people starved to death.

One minute the person is walking, and the next he's down . . . still alive, he's loaded onto a wagon and thrown into a pit. Everybody was emaciated, who will do the digging?

People ate pigweed, bulrushes. Everybody's legs were swollen. They ate the flesh of dead cattle.

People ate their children. There was one family . . . they all starved to death. The father was the head of the village soviet. The collective farm still had a ton of buckwheat. The father issued an order that a half cup to a cup of buckwheat was to be handed out to people. It was handed out. The next day, the father was arrested.

Hide what? What grain? There wasn't any. The collective had already been established, and the collective didn't give anything to anyone.

People were starving, emaciated, how could they resist? What was there to steal when there was nothing? Storehouses were empty. People were chased out of the fields.

Father survived. Someone he knew, a KGB agent, saved him. Mother died.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Motria Hryhorivna Slipachuk, born in 1918. Village of Vyshenky, Zhashkiv district.

There were three of us children: me, my older sister, and my brother. Father died in 1925. My brother was still little. It would have been better if none of us had lived through that famine.

In the spring we gathered leaves. We dried them and crumpled them up. Picking wheat was forbidden. When summer came, things improved a little, but the winter . . . Lord, Lord, what a terrible famine it was.

You'd go to the canteen at the collective farm and all they'd cook was that vetch that had been sown for fodder for the animals. I'd go with my two-liter jug to get some.

Once our neighbor said to Mother, "Take your girl to the collective farm with you; the two of you can weed together, and you'll get 100 grams of bread."

Who buried them? A wagon would go by, someone who still had strength would go into a house . . . they took away people who were still living. They carted them away and threw them into a pit.

Many people died. In other villages, too. Hide what? There wasn't anything. The potato crop failed. If you worked, you could eat at the collective farm. If you didn't work . . .

People ate whatever they could catch, whatever they could pick up. When spring came, we'd go into the field, and we'd dig up some potatoes. We survived eating whatever we had, whatever we could find.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Maria Yosypivna Kucha,

born in 1923. Village of Zhytnyky village, Zhashkiv district.

There were four of us: a boy and three girls. Mama starved to death in 1933 during the famine. Father remarried; we had a stepmother.

We ate whatever we saw: nettles, linden leaves, grain husks, rotten potatoes. We ground up the rotten potatoes, baked them like dough balls, and ate them. We had a cow. We survived only because of the cow.

Who knows how all this happened. I was only a child. Mother dropped dead walking along the road. My brother was at the nursery and died of starvation there.

People were buried at the cemetery without caskets. I saw dead people lying along the road. Once I was walking along and came upon a beautiful girl lying there. She was still breathing. The poor girl just collapsed and then died.

My father worked as a stable hand. What could he bring home from the stables? Nothing.

Picking wheat was prohibited. People were fined and sent to prison for picking ears of wheat. Nothing could be picked.

People went to Kyiv to trade for food, those who had gold. But how many had gold?

I remember that the famine in 1933 was terrible.

When Mother died, my younger sister was three years old, and my older sister was seven.

Everyone was starving. There was nothing to share with anyone. Many people died.

They didn't pay for work at the collective farm; they checked off work days in their records, and that was it. There wasn't any money. So they didn't pay.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Maria Oleksiivna Tytarchuk remembers.

Born in 1927, village of Zhytnyky, Zhashkiv district.

My parents died in 1933. I wasn't accepted at the children's home. I survived by begging until 1935 and then they let me into the village shelter. I walked among the houses, begging for bread, and some people gave it to me, but on the sly so that no one else would see.

They had cleaned us out completely. They *dekurkulized* us. Father was left with just the clothes on his back. That's why nobody wanted to take me, because I was the child of a *kurkul.*

Everything we owned was seized for the collective farm: our heifer, our milk cow, ten sheep . . . it's a miracle I survived. Nobody would let me into their house; they were afraid. And my parents had died.

We ate nettles and whatever people gave us. I swelled up, just like other people—swelled up from hunger. People lay under fences like beaten dogs. It was terrible to see. This is what I remember.

A man made the rounds picking up the dead; they were unloaded, like dogs. They took those who were still alive, too. One man begged, "Don't take me, don't put me on the bottom, leave me at the edge, maybe I'll climb out to eat something." He did. He climbed out and he sucked the sap from wheat grains and he survived.

For picking wheat ears people were put on trial. For two, three ears of wheat people were sent to prison.

At the shelter they fed us soup and rotten potatoes baked like dough balls. They took me in, in 1935. There were twenty-two children in the village shelter, more at the district shelter.

What can I say? We were starving. In 1933 they came, they swept everything out, and we had a famine.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Vasyl Hryhorovych Kovbasiuk,
born in 1914. Village of Zhytnyky, Zhashkiv district.

My parents died in 1918, and three of us children remained. Our grandfather took care of us and fed us. When I got a little older, I hired myself out as a shepherd and herded cattle to pasture.

When I was still older, in 1923, we had a famine so I went to Mariupol. I didn't last long there because I wasn't cared for there; I ended up working in construction and I was still a small boy. It was hard.

The famine began in 1932, after I had returned home. So I took all my money and fled with an empty sack to Leningrad. There was plenty to each and drink there, and cheap too. There, I worked in construction, made some money, and bought millet for my sister who was starving. When I came home, I found our house so overgrown with weeds that it was hard to get to.

I saw that my sister would not survive, and I left all the millet with her. Because I still had money left, someone helped me get a ticket and I went back to Leningrad. I stayed there through the famine. I was a good worker, and there was plenty of food.

There was a change in party leadership—Beria, Molotov.

Many people in Ukraine died. Many of my relatives starved to death, including our grandfather, the one who had looked after us.

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Account of Antonina Zalevska,
born in 1922. Village of Lytvynivka, Zhashkiv district.

In 1932–1933, there was a terrible famine. This was under Stalin. My mother survived because we had a cow. Without the cow we couldn't have lasted. We were all swollen. We worked hard. There were potatoes and a good harvest, but they didn't give us any.

My father and mother worked very hard but got only crumbs for this, and some millet. Mother would grind the millet, add a little milk . . . that's how she saved us.

But there were mean, spiteful people. . . . Everything was taken from people and shared with others. Mother had buried some millet. The head of the village soviet found it, and for that, he deported Father to work in the mines in Siberia.

Mother was left with the three of us, and we were so poor we didn't even have a piece of bread. When Mother earned a chunk of bread for work she had done the whole day, she tucked it away under her blouse, saving it for us children.

When I got bigger, I helped Mother weed beets in the field and haul sheaves of wheat.

In 1935, a new leader of the village soviet took over. He asked Mother what Father had been deported for. Mother told him, and he brought Father back from Siberia.

By the time Father returned, I had started working already, not only weeding beets but doing everything. We worked hard.

Mother hid the garden beets. One day she put a pot of borshch in the oven and our neighbors climbed in through the window and stole it. They stole! Neighbors stole from neighbors! It was a terrible famine.

People swelled up and starved to death. Even the swollen ones were forced to work in the field. They worked in the field and died.

Burial? What kind of burial could they have? The dead were wrapped in linen sheets.

Nobody gave anyone anything. What money? Maybe you got a handful of millet for working; Father was exiled to Siberia for that . . . they came and took him away. Mama had hidden it, that millet that Father had earned at the collective farm. They found the pot of millet Mama had buried in the house. They confiscated all of it and sent Father to Siberia for it.

In the spring of 1933 people worked however they could. When the beets ripened, people were brought to the field to pick them. Already swollen, people lay on their sides and picked beets—they knew they would get a piece of bread for picking those beets.

Or, once a day, they brought some watery soup out into the field. So people went; they worked for that soup and for that piece of bread. Mothers saved that bread for their children. And they worked hungry all day long.

The famine was hard to endure.

Who remembered those that died? They were buried and that was it. Nobody memorialized anybody; there was no way to memorialize.

Nobody starved to death in our family. The cows saved us.

There was no cannibalism in our village. People ate frogs. One of our neighbors cooked frogs . . .

Recorded by V. K. Borysenko in 2005.

Memorial of the victims of the Famine of 1932–1933, Cherkasy Oblast.

Chernihiv Oblast

Recollections of Nadia Yetymiivna Mitsuk,
born in 1924. Village of Mryn, Nosiv district.

The famine was terrible. By spring in 1933 people were eating anything they found: rotten potatoes, plants . . . they added clover to flour to make some kind of dough. We would try to make some kind of flat-cakes out of it, fry it up, and eat it. But clover made us swell up. We picked leaves from linden trees, grated and dried them. The trees were half-bare because people ate the leaves.

Only a few joined the collective voluntarily, but there were those who did. Most didn't want to join, so their houses were burned down for spite. Their barns were burned down. Life was terrible then.

In 1933 things were so bad that people were lying in the streets. On the way to school we saw two men lying under a fence, lice crawling over them; they were all swollen. Going to school we saw them, looked at them. On the way home, we saw that they were already gone. They were carted away, barely alive, and buried.

People said that a mother had eaten her child. That happened about two kilometers from here.

In those days, people said that it was Kaganovich who came and organized the famine and confiscated food from the peasants.

Relatives of the head of the village soviet didn't go hungry. In our village it was Vasyl Yolovych Kompanets. So his family didn't go without. Everybody else was starving. His people lived in our corner of the village. This was all done in secret, but we could tell they weren't suffering.

Recorded by M. Novodvorska, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Yevdokiia Stepanivna Stryhun,
born in 1914. Village of Yevmynka, Kozelets district.

The famine of 1933 was created. It was the government that took everything, following Stalin's orders. The more prosperous peasants, those who were very good farmers and who had brains and worked hard had more than others did—they were all sent to the Solovky. Many of them were taken from our village.

People were afraid to speak. Some fled into the woods. We would say, "into the sands." Mother's father went into the woods. He built himself a shelter and died there.

People were forced to join the collective. In 1932, or maybe it was 1933, Mother and Father wanted to build a house for themselves. They had all the lumber and everything, and they did not have any desire to join the collective. So our neighbor, Zachar Helevets, came to them and said, "Join the collective because they're coming to take away all your building materials today. Write a declaration to say you will join, or you'll have nothing to build your house with." So they quickly wrote a declaration and submitted it to the collective. They had barely returned from the collective office when wagons arrived to haul the building material away. My parents said that they had submitted their declaration, to leave their things alone. And so the building materials were left and they were able to build. It was very difficult for them to build; they were always in debt because there was nothing to pay with. It was difficult.

It wasn't the activists who starved. It was the farmers who worked hard, who grew the grain and then reaped the grain with their families, those who were good managers, good farmers, and good proprietors. And those who were against the farmers, those who had nothing, they were the one ones who became the big shots.

Our village had no market and we had no way of getting to Oster. Most likely only the stronger folks walked to Oster to trade some clothing for food.

Recorded by Viktoria Soroka, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Paraskovia Vasylivna Kolos,
born in 1923. Village of Kruty, Nizhyn district.

I remember the famine of 1933 well. It was a brutal famine. Food and clothing were confiscated. They took pillows, all kinds of things. Whatever there was, they took. Linen cloth, skirts, coats, shirts—they took them and sold them at the market, in the village. People recognized their things.

They said, "If you don't join the collective, we'll deport you." People resisted: "I won't sign up." But if they didn't sign up, they were deported.

To survive, people sold clothing, shoes, whatever they had . . . tablecloths, towels, shirts. If you had a cow, you had to take the thatched roof off the barn to feed it because cutting grass at the collective farm was prohibited. The straw off the roof was chopped up for the cow. If the cow was a milk cow, folks would have a cup of milk. That's how we survived. And if you didn't have a cow—that's how seven children died in one house.

Families buried their own at the cemetery. Those with no family were buried in the field. If cowherds found a dead person, they wrapped the body in something and buried it. Then they let people know about it but nobody did anything about it.

Recorded by Oksana Kariieva, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Account of Natalia Stepanivna Kuzhel,
born in 1926. Village of Kozelets, Kozelets district.

They came. Sometimes men walked into our house as we were sitting at the table having a meal . . . and if there was bread on the table, they took the bread. There was half a loaf on the table, and they took it. Just like that.

Mama used to sing me a song about Solovky—those who were unable to pay taxes were arrested and deported and those who didn't want to join the collective were exiled there, to Solovky: "Solovky, Solovky, a long, long way away; My heart faints, my bosom aches; Fear grips my soul."

Recorded by Iryna Oryshchenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

Testimony of Maria Myronivna Kozhedub,

born in 1922. Village of Akilnia, Dobrianska district, Chernihiv Oblast; at the time of this interview resided in the town of Horodyshche, Horodyshchenskyi district, Cherkasy Oblast.

Oh that famine! That was indeed a famine. The government confiscated milk, eggs, potatoes, chickens. Oh, oh, oh, how we suffered . . .

They came like horse thieves and seized our food. They searched in the oven. They found a pot of buckwheat soup there and took that, with the pot.

No, they had no documents. They just took things and went away.

Where could you hide anything? Maybe you buried something underground. But they had spikes; they poked around with spikes. If they found something, they dug it up and took it, everything to the last gram. Nothing left.

People buried things in the yard. Some hid things in the woods, those who were smarter. Inside people's houses they would find everything . . .

They put people in prison. For picking ears of wheat. I got beaten for it. I had taken the pigs out to graze and the guards lashed me with a whip for a wheat ear . . .

Those who saw there was no way out joined the collective. Those who joined voluntarily had it better. They weren't watched as closely. For those who resisted even a little, it was bad. They took everything they owned, so it was useless anyway.

There was a thick sap in the trees in the woods, a good thick sap. In the spring, berries grew in the woods: red bilberries. Wild mushrooms grew in early spring, too. That's what people ate. They picked them, steamed them, fried them in oil, that is, those who had oil. White acacia blossoms . . .

We hunted rabbits. We made slingshots and hunted woodpeckers, cranes . . .

. . . The Mamokha woman ate two girls. Her own two children. She lost her mind. The Induk woman did, too. She chopped the flesh up and hid it in a barrel. Nobody punished them for that. Who had it any better?

People were buried together in a large pit. I saw it myself. Even those who were still breathing. It happened.

The government is to blame! The government!

Recorded by Iryna Oryshchenko, a student at Taras Shevchenko University in Kyiv.

NOTES

1. *Babusia[iu]* is the diminutive form of baba, which means grandmother; dear grandmother.
2. One *desiatyn* of land equals 2.7 acres.
3. A large clay stove/oven, which has thick walls that retain heat. A distinct feature of Ukrainian village homes, the pich had flat shelf-like places to sit or lie on. Children and old people often slept on the pich in winter to stay warm.
4. The word "pot" (*horshchyk* in Ukrainian) refers here to clay or earthenware storage pots, not cooking pots.
5. A weed with a strong garlic taste.
6. The relationship between Ukrainian peasants and Jews was complex. It was, at times, acrimonious, with differences deliberately fueled by Soviet propaganda and Soviet agents who benefited from promoting divisiveness. Stalin, for example, made a point of appointing Ukrainians of Jewish descent to powerful positions that were created to destroy the Ukrainian intelligentsia as well as the Ukrainian peasantry. One of the most notorious members of this group was Lazar Kaganovich, whose agents were responsible for carrying out Moscow's plans for the liquidation of the Ukrainian farmers. At other times, particularly at the height of the famine, Ukrainians and their Jewish neighbors worked together and helped each other survive, joining forces against a common threat and a common enemy.
7. A day-unit of work on a collective farm; periodically some form of compensation was paid, but workers were expected to give their time willingly for the good of the collective.
8. The Whites opposed the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution of 1917; they wanted to restore the monarchy in Russia.
9. A kind of jellied loaf or sausage made from chopped up pieces of animal feet, head, tongue, or heart.
10. The Solovets Islands. A penal colony in the White Sea in the Arkhangelsk region in Russia. Once a home for Russian monks, the islands were turned into a "special purpose camp" by the Bolsheviks. During the Famine, many Ukrainian peasants who refused to join the collective farms or otherwise resisted collectivization were exiled to the islands, along with clergy and members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia.
11. Grandfather.
12. A *khutir* was a separate settlement built on privately owned land. *Khutory* (plural form) were farmed, leased, and sold as the owner pleased. After the October Revolution, khutir land was redistributed among poorer peasants; during the Soviet collectivization drive, the victims of dekurkulization were first and foremost khutir owners. Part of the population continued living on khutory while working on collective farms. [*Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, University of Toronto Press, 1988.]
13. Most likely a collective farm.
14. Celebrated on January 7 in Ukraine.
15. Familiar term for Father, akin to Daddy.
16. The coup of 1917 during which Lenin and the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government created after the Tsar was deposed and assumed power in Russia and Russian-ruled territories.
17. A den of *kurkuls*.
18. A variant of *torgsin*.
19. The reference to nursing another baby here is ambiguous, but one can speculate that the mother may have found work as a nursemaid and sacrificed her own child so that she herself could survive.
20. P. Postyshev was the second secretary of the Communist Party in Ukraine from 1933–1937. Known as "the hangman of Ukraine," Postyshev was sent to Ukraine by Stalin for the express

purpose of eliminating all opposition to collectivization and destroying the Ukrainian intelligentsia. Arriving in Ukraine with a cadre of thousands of Russian political agents, he initiated a brutal policy of russification.

21. An infamous prison in Kyiv. Built in 1863, the prison became a symbol of Soviet repression. During the Stalin era, its inmates included members of the intelligentsia and other "enemies of the people."
22. Forced labor camps in the eastern part of Soviet Yakut, where winter temperatures sometimes reached –70 degrees Fahrenheit.
23. Viacheslav Molotov. As chairman of the USSR Council of People's Commissars, he played a leading role in orchestrating and enforcing grain requisition during the Great Famine. Later, as Russia's foreign minister, he was co-signatory of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Hitler and Stalin.
24. N. Yezhov served as head of the NKVD during the purges of the late 1930s when more than 150,000 Ukrainian communists were executed or sent to labor camps.
25. A monetary unit; a coin of very low value.
26. The reference to Supreme Soviet here is anachronistic. By 2005, the year Harashchenko's testimony was transcribed, Ukraine was already independent and no longer governed by the Supreme Soviet, an administrative entity that had, in fact, also disappeared from Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Symonenko referred to here is most likely Rem Symonenko, a pro-Soviet revisionist historian, who steadfastly denied Moscow's involvement in the Great Famine. The reference to Salamatin is unclear.
27. Lazar Kaganovich. A Ukrainian of Jewish ancestry, Kaganovich was one of Stalin's most notorious henchmen. A member of the Soviet Politburo and director of agriculture of the USSR, he was among those who masterminded the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine through forced collectivization and expropriation of grain.
28. The "pioneers" were members of a communist youth organization similar to scouts but with a party agenda; analogous to Germany's Hitler Jugend.
29. A land-measurement unit.
30. The currency unit adopted after Ukraine became independent.
31. Under the Soviet regime, everyone was required to register with local authorities and carry papers showing place of residence. Unless specifically authorized to travel or move, no one was permitted to go elsewhere. Without official papers, it was impossible to get work or attend school.
32. Loosely, "food collectors."
33. *Liknep* was a term created from the Russian words for "liquidation" and "illiteracy." In this context, the re-education of those resisting collectivization.
34. *Kutia* is a traditional dish made of wheat, honey, poppy seeds, and nuts, and served on Christmas Eve.
35. The witness is the mother of Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko.
36. A derogatory term for individualists. Plural form *indusy*, singular form *indus*.
37. An ardent supporter of the underground Bolshevik movement before the Revolution of 1917, Kosior served as general secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine during the Famine.
38. Lavrentii Beria was the much feared and hated head of the Soviet secret police under Stalin.

A Candle in Remembrance

Along with many other peoples on Earth, Ukrainians conceptualized a worldview that included celestial, terrestrial, and otherworldly elements. This philosophical model of the world was reflected in how deceased family members were perceived—as beneficent entities capable of caring for the happiness and well-being of the living. Thus, treating the dead with honor and respect promoted good fortune for their descendants and consistency in seasonal changes in a manner that supported bountiful harvests from the fields and orchards.

Traditionally, and in accordance with the church calendar, Ukrainians honored their deceased relatives four times a year: on Christmas Eve, in the spring during what is known as "seeing-off" week (St. Thomas Sunday), in the summer at Pentecost, and on three Saturdays in the fall: Dmytrivska, Kuzmo-Demianivska, and Mykhailivska.[1] Spring and summer are particularly active seasons for paying respect to deceased ancestors. Relatives are remembered on the Feast of the Transfiguration, the Feast of St. Mary Protectress, and on other church holy days.

During the tragic 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide, all customary rites associated with burial and veneration of the dead were violated. Entire families died out, and there was no one left to honor loved ones or to pray for the innocent souls that perished. Common pits in village cemeteries, in orchards, in gardens, near houses, in ravines, in forests, and even in potato mounds became the final resting places for millions of peasants who had starved to death. Under the Soviet regime, all the burial sites were leveled, and any mention of them was forbidden. For a long time, the common graves of the Ukrainian peasants remained unmarked. Only recently have crosses and memorials to the Ukrainian peasants killed by starvation in 1932–1933 been erected.

Rites for venerating the dead are an integral part of the spiritual culture of every nation. For Ukrainians, certain symbolic items play a key role in memorial customs honoring the dead: linen embroidered ritual cloths, candles, and ritual dishes that include honey, braided bread, crepes, dyed eggs, apples, *kutia*, and other items that reflected local or regional customs.

Fire, often in the form of a candle flame, is one of the most ancient elements used in rites for venerating dead ancestors. It is worth noting that the belief in fire as one of the creative forces at Earth's genesis has been part of Ukraine lore since antiquity; fire is mentioned frequently in folk carols and other holiday music.

Memorial wreathed bread, Ukrainian tradition.

In Ukrainian mythology, the world was created and came to be from primordial fire and primordial water.

The custom of lighting a candle for the dead is very old. References to this custom can be found in sources from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Wills and testaments provide instructions for distribution of property and include bequests to the church, for a candle, and for holy bread.

In many world cultures, fire symbolizes purification, unity, and remembrance. A lighted candle is a symbol also known and understood by people in various cultures. Ukrainians light a candle for the dying, believing that if the rite is ignored for whatever reason, the soul of the deceased will be unable to find safe harbor in the other world and will wander forever. That rite was not performed for millions of those who died of starvation, and their souls have grown weary of roaming in the dark. Let each of us light a candle in remembrance and help them find their way to the world beyond.

We hope that people of different faiths and different nationalities who live in Ukraine will remember and pray for the countless innocent victims of the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine during their own traditional memorial rites.

Each year, during the traditional holy days celebrated in the spring, we can all honor those who starved to death in 1932–1933. But the profound sorrow and heartache we feel for those martyred during the Famine-Genocide requires its own special day of commemoration, and the day designated as the official Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Famines in Ukraine is the fourth Saturday in November.

On that day, people living in all cities and villages across Ukraine will light commemorative candles in their windows, as a symbol of sorrow honoring the dead. Recognizing the tragic events in our history and mourning together will help us, as a society, in building our nation. And the act of remembering will be our guarantee that genocide, the deliberate destruction of a people—any people—will never again be sanctioned.

The Charitable Fund "Ukraine 3000" has undertaken the creation of "The Book of Gratitude," dedicated to all who tried to save people from the famine in Ukraine and to those who strived to bring the truth about the artificially created 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide in Ukraine to the world.

NOTES

1. Church holy days named for saints.

The Book of Gratitude

In the twentieth century, the totalitarian Bolshevik regime tried to annihilate the Ukrainian people through repressions and the Famine-Genocide. Under Stalin, the regime sought to bring the freedom-loving Ukrainians to submission, to break their spirit in their struggle for their own nation, for liberty and dignity, for the right to develop their own traditions and culture. On November 31, 2005, Ukraine's Parliament (the Verkhovna Rada) adopted Law of Ukraine No. 376-V Concerning the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide:

> *In recognition of the moral obligation to the past and future generations of Ukrainians and in recognition of the necessity for the rebirth of historical justice and in avowing intolerance toward any expression of any form of violent coercion in our nation, the Verkhovna Rada has recognized the 1932–1933 Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people, a consequence of deliberate actions of the Stalinist totalitarian regime directed at the mass destruction of an entire segment of the Ukrainian nation.*

In those years of horror, when people were dying in the streets and in their homes or while laboring in the fields, anyone who dared to write or speak about the famine was severely punished by the Soviet authorities. In official documents, this crime against humanity and civilization was referred to by the regime as "provision procurement difficulties." But it was impossible to keep this tragedy of the Ukrainian people hidden. Searching for food, people streamed to cities, trying to break through barricades and closed borders, often dying, exhausted and spent, at train stations or along railroad tracks.

The Book of Gratitude is being launched on the initiative of the Institute of National Memory and the International Charitable Fund "Ukraine 3000." In this book, the Ukrainian nation intends to express gratitude to all those who gave a starving person a bit of bread, saving a life; to all who dared to speak the truth about the Famine-Genocide in Ukrainian villages; to all who informed the world about the martyring of peasants and their children; to those who later investigated this countrywide crime against humanity and who first raised the issue of recognizing the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide as a genocide against the Ukrainian people before international organizations; to those who are currently

gathering unedited and irrefutable proof of this tragedy; and to those world communities that have condemned the crime committed by the Bolshevik regime against Ukrainians.

[In this book], Ukraine will remember the names of those who extended a hand to help the starving as well as the thousands of nameless people who, in a moment of terrible need, shared with a neighbor a last potato, a last bit of bread, or a last glass of milk. Thousands of heads of collective farms will be remembered, those who tried to save the villagers and paid for their attempts with their lives—arrested and shot as saboteurs of "provision procurement." Gratitude is also owed to thousands of doctors who recorded the true cause of death among the peasants.

With great appreciation, the Ukrainian people always remember Italian diplomat Sergio Gradenigo, who in 1933, sent a dispatch to Rome about the Bolshevik plan for the destruction of the Ukrainian people. They will also remember passionate and courageous Milena Rudnytska, the head of the Ukrainian Women's League, who, writing from Lviv in September 1933, appealed "To the women of the civilized world," sharing with them information about the Famine-Genocide.

The Ukrainian people will remember Canadian attorney Volodymyr Yurii Danyliv, who in 1983, raised the matter of creation of an independent commission charged with convening an international tribunal for condemning those guilty of the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide; Dmytro Solovei, the eyewitness who researched the era and who was one of the first to analyze, in his publications, those tragic events and to record the recollections of the peasants who survived the horror. Dmytro Solovei's works were not seen in Ukraine until 2005, but as those who have compiled and edited those works note: "In one way or another, with the relentless passage of time, the testimonies of the witnesses about the all-encompassing tragedy are becoming ever more significant and there is no substitute for them. Moreover, without such subjective and personal reflections, it is very unlikely that an objective, more or less impartial view of those events can be reached."

Ukraine will always gratefully remember the contribution of foreign scholars of the Famine-Genocide: James Mace, Robert Conquest, Ukrainian writer Volodymyr Maniak and his wife, journalist Lidia Kovalenko, who dared to record the recollections of witnesses of the tragedy and who gathered countless testimonies about the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide; the founders and members of the Association of Researchers of the Famines in Ukraine; the teachers and students who collected thousands of accounts about the tragedy in Ukrainian villages and who continue to record eyewitness recollections of this evil time.

We express our special appreciation to the Mohyla Academy Society in the United States and to its president, Professor Ivan Fizer, whose financial support made this publication possible.

The author of this book and the International Charitable Fund "Ukraine 3000" express their heartfelt appreciation to Oksana and Yaroslav Sokolyk, civic leaders and philanthropists who are well known in the diaspora and in Ukraine, who have, on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary, donated funds to support publication of this work.

Oksana Sokolyk has earned a reputation as a gifted organizer of art events. For thirteen years, she headed the Arts Council of the Committee of Ukrainians in Toronto, Canada. She is also widely known for her many years of service in the World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUWO). After serving as WFUWO's education coordinator, Mrs. Sokolyk later became vice president, and eventually served as WFUWO's president for ten years. She is currently the Honorary President of this international organization and serves

Monument of the victims of the Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine erected and unveiled in Winnipeg, Canada on June 24, 1984. Sculptor: Roman Koval.

as second vice president of the World Congress of Ukrainians as well as one of the vice presidents of the Ukrainian World Coordinating Council.[1]

Yaroslav Sokolyk is also a well-known public figure. For ten years he was president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress and was elected as general secretary of the World Congress of Ukrainians. He is the author of many articles. . . . Today, Oksana and Yaroslav Sokolyk have extended their support, both moral and financial, to the publication of *Svicha Pamiaty* [the Ukrainian-language edition of this book]. The Ukrainian people gratefully salute them.

NOTES

1. Information provided here about Oksana and Yaroslav Sokolyk relates to the time frame during which this work was being published in Ukraine.

About the Author

Valentyna Kyrylivna Borysenko (nee Ilchenko) is an ethnologist and professor. She holds a doctorate in history and has been honored by Ukraine as a distinguished scholar and academician.

Professor Borysenko was born on July 7, 1945 in the village of Khyzhyntsi, Vinnytsia district, of Ukraine's Vinnytsia oblast. Her mother worked at the regional collective farm, passing away in 1974. Her father died during World War II, at Breslau (today's Vroclau), Poland); he is buried in "fraternal grave" No. 100 at Lark's Mount, a Soviet military cemetery. Father and daughter were not destined to meet in this life.

Valentyna Borysenko graduated from the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv with a degree in history in 1968. From 1968 to 1971, she pursued postgraduate studies in the department of ethnography at the M. Rylsky Institute of Fine Art, Folklore, and Ethnology, National Academy of Sciences, Ukrainian SSR.

In 1974, under the direction of Dr. V. F. Horlenko, Borysenko successfully defended her dissertation on "Cross-cultural Influences in the Cultures and Customs of Ukrainians and Poles in Podillia at the End of the 19th and Beginning of the 20th Centuries." Dr. Borysenko completed her postdoctoral dissertation "Marriage Customs and Rites in Ukraine" in 1992. One of the founders of Ukraine's first Chair in Ethnology and Folklore at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Dr. Borysenko served as its director from 1995 through 2002.

Professor Borysenko is the author of some 170 scholarly works. Among theses are *Modern Marriage Rites in the Contemporary Village (Based On Materials From South-Eastern Districts in Ukraine)*, published in Kyiv, 1979; *Wedding Rituals and Rites in Ukraine*, Kyiv, 1988; *Sketches From the History of Ukrainian Ethnology, 1920–1930*, Kyiv, 2002; chapters in the anthology *Podillia*, Kyiv, 1994; and *The Ukrainians: An Historical-Ethnographic Investigation* (Vol. I, Opishnia, 1999).

Dr. Borysenko has also served as academic editor and author of chapters in a collection of works by several authors/researchers, *Kholmshchyna and Pidliashshia* (Kyiv, 1997). She is, in addition, editor and author of several chapters in the scholarly work *Ukrainian Women in History* (Kyiv, 2004, 2006). The author of a textbook entitled *The Traditions and Life of An Ethnos. Based on Materials of Holiday Ritual Customs of the Ukrainians*, Kyiv, 2000, Dr. Borysenko has also

served as academic editor and author of chapters in a textbook entitled *Ukrainian Ethnology* (Kyiv, 2007). She was founder and chief editor of the scholarly anthology *An Ethnic History of the Peoples of Europe* (issues 1–23, 1994–2007). Since July, 2006, Dr. Borysenko has served as senior research fellow in the Department of National Culture at the Scientific Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine.

Valentyna Kyrylivna Borysenko began collecting oral testimonies about the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide in 1994. During the initial phase of the project, she recorded many eyewitness accounts of the tragedy in the Polissia district of Kyiv oblast, which currently lies under zone two of radioactive contamination resulting from the Chornobyl nuclear disaster [April 1986]. She presented material based on those oral testimonies at international symposia (Kyiv, 2005) and published an article, "La famine en Ukraine (1932–1933)" in the French journal, *Ethologie française* (Paris, 2004, 2). A documentary film, "To Live Is Forbidden" (2005), was based on testimonies personally collected by Dr. Borysenko. The film's screenwriter and producer was Viktor Pidlisny.

Today, Valentyna Borysenko is concentrating her efforts on preparing a new, enlightened cadre of Ukrainian scholars. Under her stewardship, many masters' and doctoral dissertations have been successfully defended. She is a member of two special academic advisory boards that oversee awarding of advanced academic degrees.

Valentyna K. Borysenko was born in the Vynnytsia oblast of Ukraine in 1945. She graduated from the Taras Shevchenko National University in Kyiv with a degree in history in 1968 and pursued postgraduate studies at the M. Rylsky Institute of Fine Art, Folklore, and Ethnology, National Academy of Sciences, Ukrainian SSR. One of the founders of Ukraine's first Chair in Ethnology and Folklore at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Dr. Borysenko served as its director from 1995 through 2002. Since July, 2006, Dr. Borysenko has served as senior research fellow in the Department of National Culture at the Scientific Research Institute of Ukrainian Studies at the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine. She is a member of two special academic advisory boards that oversee awarding of advanced academic degrees. The author of some 170 scholarly works, Borysenko began collecting oral testimonies about the 1932–1933 Famine-Genocide in 1994. The end product of this intensive research was *Svicha Pamiaty*, which was published in Ukraine in 2007.

"This powerful collection of oral histories of the 1932–33 famine in Ukraine writes a heartrending chronicle of cruelty and suffering together with remarkable stories of survival, bravery, and resilience. The histories were collected by Ukrainian historians in an independent Ukraine; nonetheless, they reveal the traces of decades of enforced silence about this tragedy unleashed on the peasants of Ukraine by the Stalinist dictatorship. Thereby the volume is also a fascinating portrait of the contemporary state of awareness and understanding of Ukrainian citizens about their twentieth-century history."

—Mark von Hagen, Professor of History and Director
The School of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, Arizona State University

Professor Von Hagen, is a former president of the International Association for Ukrainian Studies, and is currently president of the Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies. He is a prolific writer, and his latest book, which deals with Ukrainian history, is *Ukraine: War in a European Borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914–1918* (Seattle, U. of Washington Press, 2007).

"As I remember fragments of stories that emerged while conversing with Babtsia Nadia (Бабця Надя) throughout my life, I am overwhelmed with sentiment. Born in 1925, she survived experiences in her native homeland of Ukraine that no child should endure. The legacy that she leaves our family is defined by her name—"hope"; hope that steals our hearts and teaches us that there is truly a choice in life to overcome evil with good. As this uniquely published work goes into print, our family has the highest hope that those who read these words will share our feelings. We give our undying gratefulness to those like Babtsia Nadia (Бабця Надя), who in their own way, managed to transform everything evil that touched life into a legacy—living proof that there is a lesson and some shred of good that can be uncovered and learned from whatever we may face."

—Vera Farmiga, actress, 2010 Oscar nominee

Established in 1925, the Ukrainian National Women's League of America, Inc. (UNWLA) has always focused on three interrelated goals: promoting and preserving Ukrainian national identity, cultural heritage, and ethnic traditions in the United States; informing the free world about events in Ukraine; and supporting Ukraine spiritually and through charitable aid.

Less than a decade after the UNWLA was founded, Ukrainians living in the diaspora learned that a terrible famine was devastating their homeland, a deliberately engineered famine that was aimed at the destruction of an entire nation. As the Holodomor raged, UNWLA members were among the first to come to the aid of its victims. In 1933, they worked tirelessly to inform political leaders, charitable organizations, and the media in the United States and other countries of the free world about the brutal terror that was decimating Ukraine, urging these leaders and organizations to come to Ukraine's aid.

It is only recently that scholars in Ukraine have begun researching and writing about the Holodomor. Even in the West, many people are still unaware that this tragedy occurred. Lack of information, suppressed information, and misinformation have all played a part in this. Thus, in undertaking the task of translating and publishing Professor Borysenko's *Svicha Pamiaty*, the UNWLA is continuing an educational mission that began 85 years ago as well as keeping the memory alive of the victims of the Holodomor.