

# THE GREAT FAMINE IN UKRAINE 1932-1933



ST. VOLODYMYR BROTHERHOOD

TORONTO

1988

CANADA

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**THE GREAT FAMINE IN UKRAINE**  
**1932-33**

A Collection of Memoirs, Speeches and Essays  
Prepared in 1983 in Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary  
of the Famine in Ukraine During 1932-33

The Ukrainian Orthodox Brotherhood  
of St. Volodymyr

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The Ukrainian Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Volodymyr in Toronto dedicates this volume to our descendents, in eternal memory of those who were killed by the man-made famine in Ukraine, perpetrated by Russian Communist rule against the Ukrainian nation.

We also commemorate this publication to the Millenium of Christianity in Ukraine.





## Preface

*We, the Ukrainian Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Volodymyr in Toronto, are the publisher of this volume, entitled "The Great Famine in Ukraine of 1932-33." In publishing it, we did not expect to uncover some novel secret, nor did we expect to add anything new or unknown to the chronicles of that terrible event in Ukraine. We did not wish to discuss with the world whether this famine was an elemental, natural misfortune, or whether it was consciously created by men, who had unlimited power in a huge country they came to call the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and which includes Ukraine as a sovereign Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. All of this is now evident to the world. We are certain that the time will come when the world will awake from its psychosis; when it will come out from under the spell of Marxist Communism; and will bring down the rightful condemnation of the criminals who engineered this famine, exactly as it justly condemned the more recent criminals — the Nazi Hitlerites.*

*1983 marked the passing of fifty years since the great famine in Ukraine, and the Ukrainian emigre community commemorated the anniversary of this tragic event. During that year, a number of lectures were delivered, and a number of articles were published on the subject, not only in the Ukrainian press, but also in the media of the countries where Ukrainians have settled, countries of which they have become citizens. These addresses and articles are the testimonies of the people who survived the famine. These are the words of the people who lost their sisters, brothers, fathers, mothers, relatives, neighbours, and co-villagers. However, all of these articles and addresses are ephemeral. They were heard or read and then passed into oblivion.*

*Nevertheless, we must not forget everything. Sometimes we can and must forget injuries or insults of a personal nature, committed perhaps unconsciously or inadvertently, but a conscious and deliberate crime committed against a whole people, such as that famine, should not only not be forgotten, but should be remembered from generation to generation, in order that anything similar does not occur in their future.*

*Therefore, the Ukrainian Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Volodymyr in Toronto decided to bring these materials together and publish them as a collection, and thus preserve them.*

*None of the authors are masters of the literary word. They are simple people who speak as they write. They set out their memories of events in simple narrative, just as they had seen and experienced them.*

*Do some of the authors express their opinions about the reasons for the famine? To a simple question, there must be a simple answer: the famine was caused by the communist Muscovite rulers who inhumanely stole absolutely all grain from Ukrainian farmers, and left them nothing for either food or seed. This occurred because the government demanded more grain from these farmers than they could produce. This was an incomprehensible and barbaric act that cannot be mitigated by any explanation.*

*The communist press (there was no other) released reports abroad, and for self-gratification, at home, to the effect that the productivity of agriculture increased dramatically with the introduction of collectivization. However, this was a bluff and a boast that the communists mislead even themselves with. How could agricultural production increase if the transfer from individual control to collective was experimental? Aside from this, the "dekulakization" campaign eliminated more than two hundred thousand of the most prosperous and most productive farms. Over one million, two hundred thousand of the ablest farmers were torn from their jobs (figures given in Vasyl' Hryshko's "Attempt on the Life of a Nation"). Those given control of the collective farms were incompetent and inexperienced in administering large agricultural operations, but they were members of the Communist Party. They directed the work exclusively according to the dictates of the Party, sent "from above."*

*Some of the authors attempt to examine the "reason" for the famine. They try to find out what motives led the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) to decide to commit this crime, and then carry it out in Ukraine. One of these motives was the Party's constant fear of a renaissance of the Ukrainian nation, a nation that had shown its heroism and character during the years of the revolution and rebirth of 1917-20. It was then that a Ukrainian Sovereign State had been established. This crime was also a punishment for the armed resistance of the Ukrainian people against Russian communist colonialism during these years, and for the unwillingness of the Ukrainian people to accept the communist ideology. The Soviet rulers called this unwillingness "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism" — the ostensible "antithesis" of communist "internationalism," that was simply Russian chauvinism in disguise.*

*The efforts to combat not only nationalism, but even patriotism in Ukraine has continued to be part of the daily agenda of the CPSU throughout the years that Ukraine has been part of the USSR. This is*

*an obvious, and even unconcealed policy of the Central Committee.*

*However, there are conspiratorial policies about which we can only speculate. It is obvious that almost 75% of the Central Committee of the CPSU was of Jewish descent, and with their majority in this body, they could, from a concealed vantage point, exact revenge on the Ukrainian people for the pogroms carried out by roving bands of undetermined nationality on the territory of Ukraine. This theory is grounded on the actions of Jewish extremists, who shot the President of the Ukrainian People's Republic, Symon Petliura, in the streets of Paris in 1926, and who continue to take hostile actions against the Ukrainian people.*

*Another factor that could have prompted the communist clique to commit the crime of murder by famine, was international trade. As everyone must know, in those days, the main exports of the USSR were timber, various other raw materials and grain. This was written about by Bernard F. Lancaster of the New York Herald Tribune. In his article he wrote that the Soviet Union sold its commodities on the international market at grossly deflated prices in order to dump them, and thereby deepen the economic crisis in the world at the time, and particularly in America. Lancaster claimed that the Soviets also wanted to demonstrate to the world that their communist fatherland had become wealthy simply because they had taken power. Lancaster also explained that they also sought foreign currency for the purchase of machines and weapons for its communist empire.*

*Stalin himself discussed the famine with Churchill when the latter raised the matter of the incredible losses of human life during the years of collectivization and famine. He said: "But of course. Truly, it was horrific... But it had been absolutely necessary in order that new machines be produced in our factories, and that new tractors appear in our fields." (Winston Churchill, The Second World War vol. 4, chap. 25.)*

*Stalin's words suffice to give an adequate understanding of communist estimation of the worth of the individual. Stalin slightly raised the curtain behind which the great secret lay hidden. Obviously, the Central Committee of the CPSU planned the industrialization and militarization of its communist empire, but in so doing it assumed responsibilities upon which its further existence depended. Thus, in order to save itself, they despoiled the Ukrainian poor and middle peasantry, left them without a crust of bread to starve to death, and deported the wealthier, so-called "kulaks" into the northern taiga to fell timber for export.*

*Without a doubt, bringing the famine in Ukraine of 1932-33 to light is dangerous to the communists now in power. Regardless of the passage*

*of fifty years, and the fact that almost none of those (except Lazar Kaganovich) who carried it out are alive, the leaders of the Soviet Union have never been able to publicly admit the guilt of their predecessors, and that of Stalin in particular. Despite the fact that the Party itself has condemned him for his barbarities, they are still afraid to mention that famine and try to act as if it never happened.*

*Some of the authors express bitterness about the Western world's indifference to the tragedy of the Ukrainian people. This indifference truly was and is very strange, although at the time, there were reasons for it. As everyone must know, it was strictly forbidden to write about the famine, or even to mention it in conversation. The leaders of the Soviet Union made every effort to conceal the famine in Ukraine from the outside world.*

*The Soviet Union also invited only those journalists who were communist sympathizers. These journalists wrote misleading reports in the Western press based on data they received from the Soviet rulers. For this they might have even received compensation from the government of the USSR. This was definitely the case with Walter Duranty. The New York Times, a widely circulated and authoritative newspaper, published articles that were based only on data given Duranty by Soviet officials. When he was confronted by his colleagues about his dishonesty, he flippantly replied: "But they were only Russians..." ( Paul Polovetsky The Fiery Hyena p. 213) Thus Duranty spoke of those who died of famine in Ukraine and in other areas of the USSR.*

*It should be kept in mind that in the 1920s and 1930s, the psychosis of socialism was swaying the minds of virtually all politicians of the Western world. They all watched the new, yet unheard of socialist system, about which they only wanted to hear praise and the positive, as the new is always met. Therefore all true, albeit negative, if not terrifying reports from "over there" seemed to bounce off the consciousness of people as if it was granite.*

*Whatever the world events, and however news of them was received, the famine in Ukraine of 1932-33, artificially induced by people with limitless power was a most horrifying event, about which we cannot and dare not be silent. The dead can no longer speak of their terrible agonies, but it is our duty to speak on their behalf, and preserve the truth for the coming generations of the earth. This we are doing.*

*Without a doubt, this book is not the only testimony about the famine in Ukraine. In the emigre world, various publications on the subject have appeared, as has the most famous one published for the English speaking world, The Harvest of Sorrow, by Robert Conquest, an English academic.*

*However, the Ukrainian Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Volodymyr in Toronto, believing in the triumph of truth, has decided to assist this triumph by preserving and publishing the materials and testimonies contained in this book.*

*The Publishing Committee  
Ukrainian Orthodox Brotherhood of St. Volodymyr  
Toronto*

## **The Scar**

Ihor Vytvyts'kyi

One sometimes hears from strangers, and even from one's own, that there is too much ado about the recent fifty year anniversary of the famine in Ukraine. They say that half a century has passed, that much has happened in the world, and that the significance of the event should not be exaggerated. Truly, quite a lot has happened and we intend to exaggerate none of it. For us, the famine in Ukraine of 1932-33 remains as the gravest tragedy in the history of our people. The famine and the terror that engendered it destroyed almost one quarter of our population, and with it, the majority of our national potential. We have yet to recongize the magnitude of the scar that this pogrom left on our national organism, and what a major factor it will continue to prove to be in the further development of our history.

Of course, the Soviet Union remains mute about all of these events. There, no one either speaks or writes about them, as if nothing had ever happened. Those events are usually covered up with glib phrases about the difficulties encountered by collectivization. It is, therefore, not at all strange that the younger generation knows little about the nature of these "difficulties." What is less easy to understand is that, until recently, the free world was also mute about this genocide. There were, obviously, some reasons for this. First of all, there was a lack of interest on the part of the general media and information centres, and second, our own lack of vigour in combatting this.

Now that the general level of interest has been raised, the number of researchers in the field has also increased, both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian. Some basic academic studies about this apocalyptic era have been published and will be published in the near future. Since the approach to a subject usually has an important bearing on the conclusions reached by a study, researchers of the famine in Ukraine should bear in mind that it was not an isolated phenomenon that arose unexpectedly as a result of the policy of collectivization, but was a direct result of the nationalities policy of the Bolshevik regime in Ukraine. We know that three famines occurred under this regime: in 1921-22; in 1932-33 and in 1946-47. Of these, the famine in the 1930s, which raged in Ukraine, the Kuban, and the lower Volga valley region was the most destructive.

Around seven million Ukrainian people perished in it.

Inasmuch as we are dealing with a state system in which everything proceeds “according to plan,” the question arises: on what level was this famine operation carried out. It is generally associated with a restructuring of society according to communist principle. This plan included the wholesale collectivization of agriculture and the liquidation of the kulaks (wealthier landowners) as a class. In the official history of the Communist Party it is described as follows: “toward the end of 1929, together with the policy of expansion of local and soviet (county) collective farms, Soviet authorities adopted an abrupt shift in policy to liquidation”. The following slogan was to serve as a guide: “On the basis of a general collectivization, we liquidate the kulak as a class.”

It should be added that the kulaks were liquidated, not through inclusion in the collective farms, but literally eliminated by deportation and execution. In early 1932 there were none left in Ukraine. The survivors were living out their lives in exile. Those who were dying of hunger were the middle income-farmers and small-holding peasants — both private operators and members of collective farms. These, obviously, were not liquidated “as a class,” but as Ukrainian farmers. The official propaganda completely ignored this fact and continuously attacked them for being kulak lackeys and class enemies.

Meanwhile, collectivization progressed at an increased tempo and was arrived at according to schedule. This we learn from the official history of the Communist Party: “1931 saw a new growth in the collective farm movement. In the main grain producing districts, more than 80% of farms had been collectivized. Collectivization here had basically been completed.” Thus, collectivization was being successfully implemented.

But if this is the case, then who were the people who were dying of hunger in Ukraine in 1932 and 1933? Could it have been the kulaks who had somehow survived? Where had the millions of them come from, if dekulakization and collectivization had been completed? Thus, it is apparent that in Ukraine, although collectivization and the famine appear to be connected, in fact they are two completely separate phenomena. In Ukraine, collectivization was merely a cover for a pogrom by famine. Who would believe that to collectivize the countryside it was necessary to starve millions of proletarian peasantry?

The reasons for collectivization are widely known. It was an element of the Party’s social and economic policy. However, there was one single cause for the famine, and it was, so to speak, outside of the ideological programme. The cause of the famine was the decision to destroy a basic stratum of a nation that the Kremlin considered an enemy.

In terms of a general policy, this famine can be considered to be one of the central achievements of the Bolshevik regime's nationality policy. It would have been difficult to plan for assimilation and merger of peoples if, fifty years ago, this essential "preparation" had not been carried out. In an article published in November 1929, Stalin called 1929 the year of "the great breakthrough." So it certainly was. It was in that year that the experimental New Economic Policy (NEP) agricultural policies were rolled back; the year that the provisions of the first Five Year Plan (adopted in mid-1928); the year that the policy of wholesale collectivization and dekulakization was adopted; the year that rationing cards for food were introduced, despite a lack of any apparent reason to do so.

The preparation for this breakthrough had occurred two years previously at the 15th Communist Party Congress, at which a resolution was adopted to step up collectivization and to attack the kulaks. Two years later, a campaign was launched that was called "the socialist advance on the village." This campaign had the following objectives: 1. the liquidation of kulaks; 2. general collectivization; and 3. requisitioning of grain, (which amounted to the stealing of grain). Let us examine each of these in turn.

A hatred of the peasantry is a general characteristic of all theoreticians and practitioners of communism. The peasantry, one of the most conservative of social classes, simply does not fit into their idea of a "progressive" society. The Kremlin leadership felt a particular detestation for the Ukrainian peasantry. The *Proletars'ka Pravda* of 22 January 1930, wrote that collectivization had two goals: "The destruction of Ukrainian nationalism and of private farms." On the subject of kulaks, Lenin pronounced them to be rabid enemies of Soviet rule and threatened to deal with them.

However, it should be mentioned that even in 1929 there was no obvious class of kulaks in Ukraine. This term was simply attached to those middle-income farmers who had retained the so-called working norm of 8 to 10 *desiatyny* (21.3 to 26.7 acres) of land. Some of them used parts of the estates of landowners distributed by the Soviet authorities. The deciding factor for persecution was their independence. They were farmers who produced more than for their own needs.

In accordance with Stalin's directives, they were divided up into three categories, not according to possessions, but political orientation. The first category included all active opponents of the regime; the second included the less active; third category included all others. They were all subject to expropriation and deportation, but those of the first category were simply to be executed. Practically speaking, who belonged to which

category depended on the decision of the organs of the OGPU, and the cadres who took part in the dekulakization actions. In this instance, Russia gave Ukraine some “brotherly assistance” and sent some 25,000 “official” cadres of the Party. In cooperation with local *komnezams* (committees of landless peasants), they often “outperformed” the norms of the plan to the point that many “sub-kulaks,” were included in the first category. This was the fate of those who were seen to abet the kulaks in some fashion, or attempted to shelter them. They occasionally included the politically suspect, be they middle-income farmers or simple paupers.

Since it had been decided to liquidate the kulaks as a class, their status as class enemy was confirmed. Propaganda levelled a campaign of intense hatred against them. The press and other propaganda organs spared no black ink in their efforts to portray them as some sort of vampire. “The cursed kulak” was the usual epithet hurled at those destined for elimination. In 1930, dekulakization began, “according to plan,” with forced expropriations. The official Party history describes how this expropriation and material ruination of the kulaks was effected. After the financial came the physical. Shootings, arrests and deportations began. First to go were the men, followed by the women and children. They were taken north and transported like cattle in freight cars. Those who did not die on the way were left in the barren wastelands of the north and were instructed to set up “special work colonies.” The figure arrived at by various researchers for the number of deportees from Ukraine ranges from half to two million. How many died during this operation was obviously not arrived at, but the many victims included, of course, children.

In his book *Ave Diktator*, Iu. Horlis-Hors’kyi writes: “During the winter of 1929-30 in Vologda, Arkhangelsk, Kotlas, Murmansk, Kem and in their peripheries, almost all children deported from Ukraine aged from 8 to 9 years old, died of cold and starvation.” He goes on to write that “The total number of women and children reached two million four hundred thousand.”

In January of 1933, in his address to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the results of the first Five Year Plan, Stalin said:

“The Party has fought to the point that the kulaks as a class have been decimated, although not completely eradicated, and the peasantry has been freed from the kulak cabal and exploitation. The rule of the Soviets has been bolstered by a solid rural economic base, the base of collectivized agriculture.”

This was said at a time when the famine in Ukraine had reached

its worst extremes. The obvious inference in this speech is, that because the kulaks had not been completely killed off, this remained to be done. And thus, the killing proceeded. However, those being killed off at this point were no longer the kulaks, but simple peasants and a majority of collective farm workers.

Right alongside dekulakization came collectivization. Initially, a collective farm was seen only as a farmers' cooperative. It now became a landholding collective, that is, an actual state-run business. As long as creation of these collective farms proceeded according to the principle of voluntary membership, their number increased very slowly, and in 1928, constituted a very small percentage of the total number of farms.

In 1929, it was decided to speed the process and "in accordance with the advice of comrade Stalin," wholesale collectivization began. In the ensuing months, millions of private farms were included in the collective farm system through various methods of coercion. Obviously, thus kind of haste not only created opposition among the peasantry, it also caused considerable losses in agricultural production. This forced the regime to slow down the pace of collectivization. The blame for excessive haste and for pressure exerted on the unwilling was placed squarely on the shoulders of the lower echelon, which, so to speak, had been "overly zealous."

In March 1930, Stalin wrote an article, entitled *Dizzy with Success*, in which he underlined the importance of voluntary participation in collectives and called for a more gradual transition from farmers' collectives to full communal and collective farms. In April of that year, Stalin wrote another article, entitled "An answer to the comrades in collective farms," in which he again chided those who violated the "Leninist principle of voluntary participation". In addition, the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted a resolution concerning "The struggle against the warping of the Party line in the collective farm movement." This resolution demanded that forcible inclusion in collective farms be brought to a halt and that those individuals who wished to leave collective farms be allowed to do so.

Obviously, these pronouncements brought about a rapid exodus from the hastily assembled collective farms. It also brought collectivization to a standstill, and caused a fair degree of chaos in agricultural production. This convinced the regime to make another about-face and to get back on the old track. As a result, the break in collectivization lasted only a short while, but the confusion continued.

In late June 1930, the 16th Party Congress took place. According to Stalin, this Congress went down in history as the "congress of increased

socialist advance on the entire front, the liquidation of kulaks as a class, and the institution of total collectivization.” Thus one phase of collectivization came to an end, and the second began. In this second phase, there was no further mention of infringements against voluntary participation. Collectivization was brought into effect with crass coercion and outright participation of the organs of the OGPU, in direct contravention to various principles.

Dekulakization and collectivization were only indirectly related to the emergence of famine. The direct cause of the famine was the stealing of grain from the peasants who produced it. This robbery continued until it ate into the last stores of food. It bears mentioning, that famine struck those who produced the food, those who had the entire product of their labour confiscated. The urban population did not die of hunger.

This robbery was officially known as “grain consignment” (*khlibozahotivlia*). During various stages of Bolshevik rule it varied in magnitude and sported various names. During the revolution it had been known as *prodrzv’orstka*, then as *prodnaloh* and finally as *khlibozahotivlia*. The norms for these consignments were set in Moscow under the watchful eye of “the father of all workers.”

In 1931 and 1932 production norms were set without regard to the actual conditions of agricultural production, and without regard to the chaos and losses caused by dekulakization and collectivization. They were set as if agriculture was proceeding normally. Conditions were such, that much of arable land lay fallow and often, grain would stand and dry out in the fields because there was no one to harvest it.

The memoirs of the Soviet author Vasili Grossman entitled *Vs’o techot* (Forever Flowing) and published outside the Soviet Union, include a character who reminisces about the past and says: “After the dekulakization, the seeded fields diminished as did the yield. But reports of new norms were issued as if life without kulaks was in full bloom.” Later, the character says: And the village received news of the new consignment, one that you could not fulfil in ten years. In the village council, even those who never drank a drop of liquor now overdrank out of fear. Maybe Moscow staked its greatest hopes on Ukraine. But for Ukraine it also harboured the greatest malice. The word going around was quite simple — if you didn’t produce, you were a kulak they hadn’t killed off.

The rapid growth of this larceny began back in 1931. From a speech delivered in February 1933, by the general secretary of the Ukrainian CP, Stanislav Kossior, we learn that, in the four months of the main harvest in 1931, almost two and a half times as much grain was collected as had

been for the harvest in 1930. As a result of this kind of “policy”, a famine began in 1932. Regardless of this, the robbery did not cease.

The general quantity of the harvest and the relevant quotas for grain consignment were set in true Bolshevik fashion. The numbers were set so high that they bore no relation to the reality of agricultural potential. And thus, although the harvest of 1932 in Ukraine was satisfactory, the general norm was set at 50% higher than the expected yield. And so, the norms for grain requisition were set according to this figure. Two thirds of the harvested grain was collected by the state organs themselves. The rest, which had to be set aside for seed left an amount insufficient to feed the hungry peasants. However, in order to fulfil the norms, the organs began stealing even the remaining seed grain, leaving the victims with literally nothing at all.

Obviously, this shock campaign was carried out under direct pressure from above. Already in early July 1932, Molotov and Kaganovich arrived in Kharkiv for a special conference. They informed the Ukrainian CP leadership that Moscow considered the fulfilment of the grain consignment plan to be of the gravest importance, and gave the necessary warnings. Thus, the final phase of the “socialist advance on the village” began. It was carried out under the watchful eye of the armies of the OGPU. Another 25,000 activists arrived from the brotherly RSFSR to assist the locals in this action, perhaps because Moscow could not entirely trust the latter.

And so it happened that bands of robbers, calling themselves “shock brigades,” went from village to village and raked out the last remnants of food the hungry peasants had hidden as if they were stolen goods. In his article, “Tritsatiletie goloda” (The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Famine), published in *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* on 29 March 1963, Yuri Mishalov writes:

The grain consignment brigades went from house to house for four months looking for grain hidden by the collective farmers. With sharpened metal prods they searched the ground, the walls, the trunks. In small sacks and parcels they collected single kilograms of grain in the village square, then loaded up the wagons with all of the tidbits torn from the lips of the hungry and took it “by Red transport” to the state silos bursting with grain.

The reader will notice, that Mishalov speaks of collective farm members in this instance.

Throughout all of this, strict legality was observed. In the summer of 1932 the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of the People’s Commissars of the USSR issued a proclamation on 7 August,

under which everything on a collective farm was designated as socialist property, and theft of anything therefrom could be punished by “the highest measure of state punishment,” which included shooting. In order to ensure a full and practical enforcement of this law, surveillance towers were erected in the fields of collective farms whence armed guards made certain that no heedless “thieves” could make off with anything edible. However, driven to the edge, the people paid no heed; such “thieving” occurred. Then came the punishment foretold.

The directives from the centre were followed by those of the government of the Ukrainian SSR and of the Ukrainian CP. Such was the resolution of 20 November 1932, which ordered the cessation of distribution of rewards to collective farmers in the form of grain for the performance of workdays, until the grain consignment norms were met. A similar resolution of 6 December 1932, involved the “black slate,” according to which 86 grain producing districts in Ukraine were cited as districts that did not meet the norms of grain consignment. In order to make the position of the government quite clear, the introduction made reference to the necessity of such measures “in the face of the disgraceful disruption of the grain consignment campaign by counter-revolutionary elements.” The punishment for these crimes was a whole series of repressive measures, which basically created a cordon of famine around these districts. In this same resolution it was ordered that “all supply of foodstuffs to this districts is to be halted; state and cooperative stores are to be closed and the goods from them to be shipped out. Trade, heretofore carried on by collective and private farms, in goods of general necessity is to be prohibited...” This, so to speak, dots the “i”.

For a person accustomed to thinking in normal human terms, these “punitive ukases” will appear completely incomprehensible, for there was already a famine in the villages. These measures did not concern increasing the consignment of grain, but simply intensified the famine. They inflicted a punishment by hunger on the starving collective farmers. However, it is futile to look for explanations in the framework of some form of social or economic plan. This was a planned pogrom by famine.

At the outset of 1933, the inevitable came about — famine permeated the countryside. Obviously, the norms for grain consignment for 1932 had not been met, because it was impossible to meet them under the prevailing conditions. Firstly, because they had been set inordinately high; secondly, because the disorder brought about by the campaigns of dekulakization and collectivization remained; and thirdly, because a starving collective farm worker is not a very good worker.

However, the “leader of the toilers” and his advisors acted as if they

neither saw nor heard anything. In his speech at the Plenum of the CC of the CPSU, 11 January 1933, Stalin said:

Thus there was more grain produced in 1932 than in 1931. However, regardless of this fact, the collection of grain consignments encountered greater difficulties 1932 than in the previous year.

Kossior, appearing before the Plenum of the CC of the Ukrainian CP in February 1933, cried:

How are we to explain this incredible and unheard of fact in all of Ukrainian history — a failure in delivery of a grain consignment? In recent years we had never reached such low levels in grain consignment.

There you have it. Famine raged in the countryside, chaos ruled agriculture, and the First Secretary of the Ukrainian CP was at a loss to explain it all.

And yet, a reason was found. “The wise Party” and its leadership found the necessary explanations and the culpable. The guilty, obviously, had to be “enemy counter-revolutionary elements” outside of the Party, and those who had managed to infiltrate it. This had already been discussed in the resolution of the CC Ukrainian CP of 20 November 1932. It had also been discussed in the resolutions of the CC CPSU of 14 December 1932, and of 24 January 1933, in which it was stated that “Petliurite and other bourgeois nationalistic elements” were involved. And so the next campaign was launched against “Petliurite and bourgeois nationalist elements.” This time they were considered guilty of disrupting grain consignments.

The man sent to Ukraine to lead this campaign was Pavel Petrovich Postyshev, a proven Party man and a trusty of “the father of the toilers.” Despite the fact that he was only given the posts of second secretary of the Ukrainian CP and secretary of the Kharkiv provincial commissariat, his powers were far-reaching. His special mission was to liquidate the threat of “bourgeois nationalism” engendered by the interval of “Ukrainianization,” or national rebirth, that had taken place in the 1920s. Postyshev engaged himself in his task immediately after arriving in Ukraine with his staff of assistants. Under his direction, a full-scale purge of the Party apparatus, administration, and collective farm system took place. Exhaustive details of the scale of these repressions have been provided by various researchers of this field. Suffice it to say that most of the membership of the basic cadres of the regime, the Ukrainian Communist Party, were purged, and two-thirds of the Ukrainian Komsomol were expelled.

Alongside the purges came arrests and executions. Particular pressure was focussed on the Minister of Education, Mykola Skrypnyk, whom

Moscow considered to be the patron of the nationalist diversion. Removed from his post a month after the arrival of Postyshev and hounded continuously, he committed suicide in July 1933. In that same year, the famous writer Mykola Khvyl'ovyi, considered as one of the more striking figures of this brief period of renaissance, also committed suicide.

In his public appearances, Postyshev did not mince words: "Beat them down, this nationalist rabble who have grown so loose and insolent here, and have felt so good about themselves." The general secretary Kossior also did not relent. In his aforementioned speech of February 1933, he threatened:

Flush out from all collective farms, Machine and Tractor Stations (MTS), and *zemorhany* country political organs all kulak, Petliurite, Makhnovite and other counter-revolutionary elements...

Two years later, Postyshev would claim: "In 1933, we demolished the class enemy who attempted to exploit the collective farms for his anti-Soviet ends and to blow them up from within."

As an aside, both of them, Postyshev and Kossior met the same fate their victims did. After a few years, both of them were demoted and liquidated according to all of the practices of mob rule. Postyshev was transferred to a lesser post in the RSFSR in 1937 and then disappeared without a trace, while Kossior was executed in 1939 after he "confessed" of having spied for Poland.

The pogrom that passed over Ukraine under Postyshev had a two-fold objective. The first was a pogrom of the upper echelons of society through various overt methods, and the second was the covert one, the pogrom of the lower echelon by famine in the countryside.

In the winter and spring of 1933, when the famine in Ukraine was reaching its severest extremes, the Party-aces remained mute about it. They were obviously maintaining the Party line, which still holds on this subject to this day. The lone exception was the speech delivered by Postyshev's predecessor, R. Terekhov, who dared raise the subject of the famine with Stalin. As a result, Stalin ridiculed him, then demoted him and had him sent into exile.

It was difficult not to notice the peasants who were starving to death. Everyone who lived or passed through Ukraine at the time noticed them. This includes those witnesses who had come from abroad. Quite a number of testimonies of eyewitnesses of this horror, both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian, have been preserved. The following are but a few examples of the testimonies of non-Ukrainians.

In the aforementioned article by Iurii Mishalov in the *Novoe Russkoe Slovo*, we find:

Some travelled to border towns in Ukraine, and from there they walked some distance until they reached the RSFSR, where they could survive on potatoes. Those originally in the RSFSR travelled to get closer to Moscow and then, either on foot or by tram, made it into the city itself. Here, there lay piles of grain and bread, and of whatever sort you could wish for, obtainable without lining up for them. It was simply difficult to believe, amidst the wealth of Moscow, that somewhere entire families, homesteads and villages were dying of starvation. Hundreds and thousands of corpses began piling up in the cities and near railway lines.

In his autobiographical novel *Smert'* (Death) the Russian writer V. Tendriakov wrote:

In the Vokhrov district centre, in the large square near the station, the dekulakized peasants, run out of Ukraine, lay down and died. You would get used to seeing corpses there in the morning. The wagon would arrive, and Abram, a worker from the hospital stables, would be loading up the corpses. Not all of them died. Many of them wandered through the dusty streets, dragging their bloodless blue feet, swollen with dropsy and stared at every passerby with pleading eyes.

To the above it should be added that the peasants were run out of Ukraine by nothing other than the famine.

The Polish newspaper, *Gwiazda Polarna* published a memoir of Ludwika ed *Genocide in Ukraine*. The author concludes her memoir as follows:

I saw corpses that lay in the city streets. I saw women and children dying. I saw the famine that was killing the people like flies, in a country famous for the arability of its land; a country that had been the breadbasket of Europe. This tragedy of the Ukrainian people had been planned from above and had been carried out with precision. Will the guilty be punished? When?

An interesting commentary is provided by the English journalist Whiting Williams, whose report, entitled "My trip through a Russia devastated by famine," was published in the journal *Answers* in 24 July 1934. He wrote in reference to the fall of 1933:

I saw with my own eyes in Soviet Ukraine, arable land, and field upon field of unharvested crops that had been left to rot. There were some districts in which you could travel for an entire day through a field of blackened wheat, and only find small oases of places where it had been harvested. This because of the great number of farmers who had either died of starvation or had been deported the previous year, as I was continuously told when I asked about the incredible waste.

To this might be added that workers and soldiers were sent to the

countryside to harvest the crops, but they obviously could not cope with a harvest of such size.

A large number of similar testimonies have been preserved, and on the basis of these, one can begin to imagine the barbarity of murder on such a massive scale. The phenomenon of artificially induced famine is rare in the history of the human race. In ancient times, it was used in war, during sieges. But for this to be carried out in one's own country, against one's own population — this had never happened before. The uniqueness of this phenomenon is the reason why many researchers have been unable to fully grasp it, and have offered various interpretations of it that do not always square with reality. Some researchers, unable to arrive at a convincing explanation, provide only conjecture.

There are many theories about the causes of the famine. The most widely accepted is the theory of opposition. That is, that the famine came as a result of repressions instituted by the authorities in response to peasant opposition to collectivization. In various publications and pronouncements, the fanatical and rabid opposition of the peasantry is dwelled upon. In 1932-33 there was no longer any fanatical opposition because there was nobody left to offer it. In 1932, and more so in 1933, collectivization had been virtually completed. Those who could have presented some opposition had been repressed and starved into submission. They were no longer capable of doing so.

Opposition, if there was any at the time, came against the stealing of the last stores and remnants of grain, not against collectivization. Resistance to collectivization had come earlier. Here and there it had become extreme, but for the most part it had remained passive. Obviously, no one was eager to hand over their property to an irresponsible collective headed by a pauper who had had little managerial experience. It is almost redundant to say that such opposition was futile in the face of the repression unleashed by the Soviet authorities.

The phenomenon of mass murder by famine, although not entirely unique in history, will lead some to wonder: on what values do the culture and civilization of the human race rest? When such events are examined on this level, questions inevitably arise that are impossible to answer. In terms of direct causation, one can say that the Ukrainian peasantry met the fate it did because it fell to the talons of a ruthless predator and had no one to defend it. To find an answer to the questions of how and why they found themselves in these talons, and how it was that they were defenceless and disarmed, one must look into history.

What is particularly strange is that this genocide was carried out on the territory of the formally sovereign Ukrainian SSR. Can one imagine

such an occurrence in a truly sovereign state? Those who survived this pogrom by famine and ended up in the free world, consider it to be a matter of honour and conscience to speak of this famine and submit their testimony. They initiated the research which continues, and will continue, in order that the scars of those horrific years are not lost in our memories, and in order that our memories are not choked with weeds.

**Memoir of an Eyewitness of the Great Famine in Ukraine, 1932-33**  
Reverend Volodymyr Bazylevs'kyi

*(Delivered at a conference of the Association of Ukrainian Engineers of America, 14 November 1983)*

My esteemed colleagues, who delivered lectures earlier during today's conference, have clarified the political motivations of the famine; the agricultural policy in Ukraine up to and following collectivization; the human tragedy of the aftermath of the famine; and the suffering of the Ukrainian people. Thus, my task is simply to provide the testimony of an eyewitness of this, the greatest tragedy that has befallen our greatly suffering nation.

However, before I begin my personal memoirs, allow me to make a brief introduction.

We must remember that the spreading and practical application of communism is ensured exclusively by mass coercion and terror. This coercion is invariably accompanied by limitless falsehood, endless promises about the radiant future, and a whip and lash.

Communism was brought into the Russian empire by coercion, as it was in Russia's satellite nations. We have only to remember the armed interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and to watch as communism has been implemented, for the last five years, in Afghanistan.

However, different peoples accept communism differently. The Ukrainian people offered the greatest mass resistance to communism, collectivization in particular, and was decimated for it in 1932-33. Now, a spirited resistance is being offered by the Islamic Afghani people in the East, and by the Christian Poles in the West.

The Russian people accepted communism without protest, particularly the collectivization of agriculture. The question arises: why? The answer is simply that the Russian farmer was almost ready-made material for communo-collective farming. In Russia, there was no individual ownership of land, only *obshchiny* (communes) that administered it. In such a commune, individualism dies, and has no rights in the face of the majority.

Under the Russian communal system, a field that an individual works on belongs to that individual for only a short time, and can be given to

someone else on the very next day. Today, an individual chances upon a forest that he/she clears with great difficulty and prepares for plowing; tomorrow it is handed over to some lazy oaf. The commune was responsible for taxes, for laws, and for enforcement of those laws. In short, everything was done by the commune, and the individual amounted to nothing. This is comparable to the status of today's member of a collective farm. This could not have failed to influence the development of the Russian farmer's worldview.

Thus, the famous Russian writer Evgeni Solovev wrote: "... in this commune-farmer's worldview we can detect the beginnings of communism and the basis for true Christian brotherhood." This union of two ideas — of the beginnings of communism and the basis of Christian brotherhood — seems very strange and difficult to understand. And yet, it was not at all strange and fully understandable to the Russian literary elite.

As a further example, let us look at three modern Russian poets, one of whom is almost considered to be a classic in Russian literature; the two others had their place in the parthenon until they committed suicide. All three believed, as did the Russian farmer, in the Communo-Bolshevik revolution and praised it in their works. They depicted the revolution with allusions to Biblical stories and characters. Among comparisons to Christianity were Alexander Blok's poem *The Twelve*, Sergei Esenin's cycle *Transfiguration*, and Vladimir Maiakovski's play *Misteriia-Buf* that was staged on the first anniversary of the October revolution. Maiakovski's play was divided into acts entitled as follows: The Universe, The Ark, Hell, Heaven, The Promised Land; the latter being the world-wide revolution in which a modernized, transfigured, and communist-adjusted Christ appears.

Maiakovski summoned Christ to help the communist ideal, while Blok, in his poem *The Twelve*, managed the following blasphemy: "*My na gore vsem burzhuaiam Myrovoi pozhar rozduem, Myrovoi pozhar v krovi, Gospody blagoslovy.*" Is this not hard to believe? He asks for God's blessing for world wide slaughter in the name of the communist revolution.

The Ukrainian people, with its deeply rooted religion; its deeply meaningful traditions and customs; its wonderful songs and carols; with its strong ties to its holy land, washed by sweat and cossack blood; with its respect for elders — could not accept the slavery of the communist collective farms. It therefore offered determined, massive, and in some instances, armed resistance.

In order to compare Ukrainian and Russian culture, I will relate the following. In the mid-1930s I was working as a construction foreman in the district collective in Piatygor'ske, Balakliiv district of the Kharkiv

region. I travelled to the neighbouring village of Melovai to look for construction workers. This was an entirely Russian village, as were other towns in the surrounding area. It had perhaps first been settled under Catherine II. The Russians had preserved their language, customs and traditional dress for over two hundred years.

I walked into the house of a certain mason that I had previously met. The entire family of about ten people was seated at the table. Suddenly, the mason, the father of the family, began screaming at one of his relatives and cursing in such a filthy Russian slang that my ears wilted. He knew no shame before his family, his children (of whom some were grown up), nor before me, a stranger and potential prospective employer.

On the other hand, the characteristic image of our Ukrainian people is the following. A father goes to see his married son, who is already living on his own; who owns his own farm; who has children. At work on his grounds, the son has lit up a cigarette. Suddenly, he notices the father approaching and quickly throws it down, thinking, "Father is coming, I can't smoke around him."

In addressing their parents and elders, Ukrainians always show the greatest respect. They always use the third person polite form. Russians, on the other hand, are always familiar with their families and all elders.

It is not easy to bind the Ukrainian farmer in a collective farm because of his deep belief in God; his elevated national culture; his attachment to his own. He is attached to his own neat little house, his own land, inherited from his forefathers, enclosed by a fence and a grange gate.

No, the Ukrainian farmer is not material for a collective farm, and from this springs his great opposition. This, in turn has provoked such repression, punishment, terror, and famine.

I have allowed myself this introduction in order to show that the Russian farmer accepted communism and the collective farm system as an extension of the system of communes, and thus did not provoke the repression and terror used against the Ukrainian farmer. The aim of the introduction was to demonstrate that the Russian bourgeois intelligentsia (through their spokesmen Lenin, Lunacharsky, Bakunin), aristocracy (such as prince Kropotkin — although he was an anarchist, not a communist — and other bearers of title), and literary elite (through the aforementioned poets, Blok, Esenin and Maiakovski), accepted the Communo-Bolshevik revolution as their own, and assisted, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, in spreading and imposing the communist order.

Through my introduction, I hoped to draw attention to the way Evgenii Solovev tied the image of the communist *obshchina* to Christianity; to

show how the poets I mentioned tied the bloody Bolshevik revolution and communism to religion; to show how the Communist leadership in the Kremlin has set up the Russian Church as its servant, so that even its highest officials act as the willing or unwilling accomplice of the anti-Christ. In their bishop's hoods, they assist the establishment of communism from their pulpits and high tribunes of world church organizations. They spread propaganda about the full freedom of the USSR and the total absence of persecution of religion, church, spirituality, and the faithful therein. And they are praised voluntarily by naive, (to put it mildly) supporters such as Billy Graham.

The experience of more than sixty years of existence of Russian communism has demonstrated that the great majority of the Russian people, driven by an imperialist itch, has served and will serve, with a few exceptions, the Red Satan. This proves that there was no need to adopt repressive measures against Russians, such as terror and famine. Thus, the full force of these repressions and famine was brought to bear on the Ukrainian people, in order to break its opposition to communization and collectivization. To destroy it as a nation, and to hitch it to the wagon of the Soviet, or actually the Russian, people. After the armed seizure of Ukraine, material and economic repressions began. These included the confiscation of land and outrageous taxation on produce and other forms of tax, including the monetary.

Later, still more persecutions and terror were to come. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, headed by Vasyl' Lypkivs'kyi, was destroyed; the leading intelligentsia was decimated; and a general forced collectivization was mounted that included the confiscation of all land, livestock, farm implements: in short, all agricultural property.

Next came a terrible wave of banditry, the so-called de-kulakization action, during which food and all other means of sustenance were confiscated and entire families, including the old, infirm, and children, were thrown out into the snows and cruel cold of winter. Their neighbours were forbidden, under threat of punishment, of taking these unfortunates in, because they were enemies of the people. A great many of the "de-kulakized" were deported, in freezing freight cars, to Siberia, where they died from hunger and cold.

In the initial phases of the action, the authorities continued the comedies of court proceedings, as all the property of individuals was confiscated and their families were thrown out of their houses. I witnessed this kind of humiliation of the Ukrainian farmer. This happened in the early 1930s, in Barvinkovo, a town in the Iziurns'k district, of the Kharkiv region, where I worked as a teacher in the seven-grade school. On one

autumn day, all teachers were told to go to another school in the Horianska district of town, where a court was in session again: "enemies of the people — kulaks." They brought a weak old man before them, Ivan Medvid'. Soon, the so-called judge arrived, a semi-literate former worker in the local "Krasnyi Luch" factory, who had been chosen by the Party committee. He was now also the supervisor of the grade school, and his name was Ivan Shul'ha. He took a blank piece of paper out of his briefcase and began "reading" out the verdict: Ivan Medvid' was under arrest and subject to further prosecution for not handing over the requisite amount of grain. His house was to be confiscated and would be sold immediately by auction.

Medvid' was immediately arrested by the policeman Pazushko and taken to the district police station, while we, the witnesses of this farce, were led to Medvid's house. Here, an auction began. Everything was sold at comically low prices: kopiiky. The bedding, clothing, dishes, and all other household wares were actually in fairly sad shape. His family was large and consisted mainly of small children and women. He was the only man, and ailing at that. His land amounted to maybe 15 desiatyny (41.5 acres).

With no heed to their poverty, the farm was ruined to frighten the others, while the family was run out of its home to face tribulations without any means of survival and no place to live. It was difficult to watch this kind of torture of poor people, and many in attendance had tears in their eyes.

The next day, "yesterday's judge" laughingly told us, the teachers, how he had read sentences to kulaks from a blank piece of paper because there had been no time to write them out. There were many such court actions throughout Barvinkovo and he had had to hurry to make it to every one.

A few months later, in the dead of a cruel winter, all of the teachers were summoned to the Party commissariat in the middle of the night, and ordered to carry out the directive of the Party and the government: the liquidation of the kulak as a class. We were to disperse to the surrounding villages and there, with local activists, to arrest kulaks and their entire families according to a list compiled by the village councils. They were then to be taken to a small railway station in Iazykovo. However, at the last moment, this order was countermanded, and the entire action of arresting the kulaks was to be performed by communists and Komsomol members, and we, the non-Party element, were sent home.

Those teachers who were in the Party later described to us how they, along with the rest of the Party faithful of the area, had arrested hundreds

of “kulaks” and their families, including small children and elders, taken them to the station in Iazykovo, and loaded them onto cattle cars without allowing them to take more than a small bundle each. After packing them forty to fifty to a car, they shipped them off to Siberia without food or drink. Apparently these people died en masse during these trips, and the rest died of starvation and cold soon after arriving.

When these repressions did not break the peasant opposition, the decision was made in the Kremlin to physically destroy a section of the peasantry, in order to finally destroy opposition to collectivization. Twenty five thousand workers from larger cities were mobilized and sent into Ukraine to “coax” grain out of the peasants. In carrying out the order of grain consignment, these messengers, mostly from Moscow and Leningrad, organized the local communists, Komsomol members and Komnezam (Committee of Landless Peasants) brigades, and took them from homestead to homestead. At each, they took all of the grain, including corn, beans, peas, and groats. They went from house to house and broke open stoves and walls, prodded clay floors with steel bars, as if they were looking for grain. They took everything edible from the stoves — potatoes and cabbage, even cups of cooked oats — and then went looking in the cellars to confiscate pickles and sauerkraut.

Earlier, slaves were branded on their chests or backs so they would not escape from their masters. The contemporary slaves of collective farms were not given passports or other personal identification, and were thus confined to their villages. No tickets were sold anywhere without papers, and on the roads, the police were there to arrest them. Thus, the peasants, deprived of the means to either travel or walk to larger cities to buy bread, had to sit at home and wait for a terrible death by starvation.

As people began to die en masse, corpses lay in the streets, in backyards. At times, the authorities were forced to send trucks around to collect all of the bodies of the dead; or of the half-dead in order not to have to come for them a second time.

There is no language in the world that contains words adequate to describe the terrible agonies of the starving. The state of Ukraine can be described by the prophetic words of T. Shevchenko:

The poor people in the village  
like frightened lambs  
have locked themselves in at home/and are dying...  
The chimneys grieve without smoke  
and beyond the cities, outside the fences  
black graves grow.  
The gravediggers in the village

drag bodies with their chains  
and cover them with earth without markings

The days pass

The months pass. The village  
is silent now forever, mute

and overgrown with briars. (from the poem, "The Plague")

I saw such a village, Khrushchova Mykytivka in the Bohodukhiv district, Kharkiv region, because I walked through it in the spring of 1933. I also saw the dead or dying villagers at the railway stations, on the roads, in forest clearings.

Here again, I witnessed the humiliation of the hapless collective farmers. It was spring sowing season. Some, who were still alive, were working in the fields. One of them was barely walking, holding on to the grain spreader, and the other was walking with equal difficulty, leading the horses tied to the grain spreader, and supporting himself with the bridle in order not to fall. Then, an airplane appeared that was scattering leaflets on the fields. I picked one up and read: "Comrades of collective farms. Don't lag behind your fellow workers in signing up for loans." More agitation, directed at the barely living, starving people to get them to sign a loan.

In Kharkiv, I saw the largest number of peasants dying of starvation. I worked in the city at the time, and lived on the outskirts. When I arrived every morning at the Southern railway station, I could see the dead and half-dead starving peasants. Soon, trucks would arrive and took them all twenty to twenty five kilometres away from the city and dumped them in ravines.

## **The Siege of Famine in Ukraine**

Dr. Dmytro Mirshuk

This year, in 1983, we are commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of a crime unheard of in human history. It was a crime committed by communist Moscow against the Ukrainian people, the famine of 1932-33. Moscow cannot be forgiven for this crime because the famine was artificially created at a time when climactic and agricultural conditions were perfectly normal.

In order to grasp the genocidal policy of Moscow against the Ukrainian people, we will embark upon an excursion into the past. Thus, on the background of history, we will be better able to study the conditions under which Moscow organized the famine in Ukraine.

Imperialist Russia has been destroying non-Russian people, seizing foreign territories and despoiling nations throughout its history. In its historical literature, however, it has always cynically proclaimed itself to be the liberator of peoples, who were endangered by their evil neighbours. Thus it always appears that Russia was liberating them or annexing them with their interests in mind.

During the Second World War, because of the appeasement of the Western nations, and the USA in particular, Russia has seized the eastern European nations. Today, it is waging a destructive war with the Afghan people, who did not threaten it in the least. In Asia, Africa and Latin America, Russia has organized and is controlling a number of civil wars in order to divide and destroy the countries of the Free World. Obviously, historical fate is repaying the West for the systematic economic and technical assistance it has provided Moscow.

From history, we know that revolutions in eastern Europe in 1917 shook Russia to its foundations, and on its ruins, the various nations, who had been enslaved by Russian tsars during the growth of that genocidal empire, were then reborn. The Ukrainian state was one of those reborn at the time, in the form of the Ukrainian People's Republic; although it did not have enough strength to claim full sovereignty until 22 January 1918. Until that date it was still federated with Russia. On that day however, the government proclaimed the Fourth Universal, and Ukraine broke ties with Russian and began to build an independent state.

The great economic and cultural expansion in Ukraine, the growth

of the ideal of autonomy frightened bourgeois Russia. The Moscow mafia rejected the idea born of those revolutionary times — national self determination and instead, mobilized all of the forces of reaction of the empire and attacked the “petty bourgeois” elements of the Ukrainian people. This campaign paralyzed the scientific, technical, cultural and artistic forces in Ukraine, destroyed them, and replaced them with Russian and unprincipled “Little-Russian” elements.

This policy is reflected in a resolution of the 15th congress of the CPSU, held in 1927: “Agriculture is to be collectivized, and this is to be considered the Party’s main goal in the villages.” The Party thus moved from a policy of confining and squeezing out the kulak, to a policy of “liquidating the kulak as a class.”

In 1929, the Bolshevik government imposed an unrealistic plan of grain consignment to the state. In order to more effectively rob the Ukrainian peasantry, the communists organized shock brigades, to which they attracted members of the Komsomol and the Komnezam organizations. These brigades “kneaded out,” that is, stole, grain from the peasants to satisfy the impossible norms set by the government. If the peasant no longer had anything to give, he was declared an enemy of the Soviet authorities. He would then be deported, alone or with his entire family, and his property would be taken over by the collective farm (confiscated).

In 1929, the attacks on the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the trials of the SVU and SUM members began, as did massive arrests of all Ukrainian clergy, members of the intelligentsia, and students. All of them were deported to Siberia.

1932 and 1933 were years of total spoliation of the the peasantry. Moscow mobilized the degenerated Party cadres throughout Ukraine. The secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk Party provincial commissariat, Khataiev, said in a speech to his cadres:

Comrades It is absolutely essential that we carry out the plan of grain consignment. The kulak, and even the middle-holding and poor peasants are not handing over their grain. They are sabotaging Party policy, and the local authorities are at a loss what to do — they are showing their weakness. Your task is to collect the harvest in any way possible. Choke it out of them, wherever they may have hidden it — in ovens, under bedding, in basements, in backyards. You, members of the communist brigades, must teach the village the meaning of Bolshevik resolve is... Do not worry about using the most extreme measures, the Party stands behind you.

The examples of this “kneading out” of grain is described by V.

### Kravchenko in his book **I Chose Freedom**:

One could hear the screams of a peasant and the curses of Arshikov at the entrance of the village council ground. "What are people doing at this time of day?" I asked a policeman. "What they always do," he answered. "Comrade Arshikov is kneading grain out of someone and is having a little talk with them about their reticence in joining a collective farm." Suddenly, Arshikov's screams reached a hysterical pitch. Something heavy fell to the floor and I heard a groan. "What are you beating me for? You have no right to beat me... Arshikov screamed an order: "Officer, throw this carrion into the holding cell. I'm going to teach you, you kulak mug.

In the same book, Kravchenko writes:

I stayed at a peasant's house. His wife was ill, his five children were hungry because there wasn't a single piece of bread left in the house. Poverty and despair hung in the air. The children are dressed in rags. They had only a few boiled potatoes to eat.

It was thus that Moscow entrenched itself in Ukraine. Terrorizing and robbing the peasants, arrests, forcible inclusion in collective farms, deportations to Siberia — these were the methods of the communist commissars. A resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukrainian SSR, dated 14 December 1932, reads: "Serious attention must be paid to the leaders of Ukrainianization. This artificial leadership must be removed. Petliurites, and other bourgeois nationalist elements, must be expelled from the Party and from Soviet organs."

On the subject of the Ukrainian peasantry, Stalin said the following, at a Plenum of the CC CPSU in January 1931: "The collective method of agriculture has destroyed poverty in rural areas. Tens of millions of poor peasants are now secure. Until the time of the revolution, peasants worked for the benefit of the bourgeois, kulaks and speculators. They worked, starved, and enriched others. But in the new society, in collectives, the peasants work for themselves." As we can see, Stalin's brutal cynicism had no bounds, and the first harvest of collectivization was death.

At this point, I will recount an episode from my own experience in Stara Pryluka, a village in the Vinnytsia province. It was June 1933. I arrived at the village council to settle some matter. As I approached the gate, I saw a man lying, hunched with pain, on the ground. A closer look made it apparent that this was Vasyl' Lepetun, my neighbour and activist, who was my age. He had been the *komsorh* in our village. His piteous appearance, that of a starving, already swollen man, aroused my pity and surprise.

I asked the secretary of the village council, Luka Petruk:

“How is it that the authorities have allowed its main supporter, a komsohr, to swell up and lie on the verge of death?”

“He is no longer needed by the authorities,” explained the secretary. “You think that our leadership didn’t know what it was doing? With the hands of this rabble, it destroyed both the industrious, and those who offered opposition.”

“Have many died this spring?” I asked the secretary.

“860 were registered, but around 160 have simply disappeared from the village. The law requires that I file a cause of death, but what else could I put down, other than starvation. For this, government officials have come up with a new term: *bilkove pererodzhennia* (protein overproduction).

There were some highly placed Ukrainian Party officials, such as Mykola Skrypnyk, the Minister of Education of the Ukrainian SSR, who expressed reservations about the pressure brought to bear on the Ukrainian peasantry during collectivization and the grain consignment campaign. The peasantry, he said, grew the grain, therefore it has priority in the right to use it. Stalin’s representative in Ukraine, P. Postyshev, reacted sharply: “Counterrevolutionary elements have built their nest under the Soviet Ukrainian flag. These counterrevolutionaries are nesting in the Commissariat of Education, of Justice, of Land Affairs; in educational institutions, the Academy of Sciences, the Agricultural Academy, the Shevchenko Institute and in its provincial affiliates.”

This meant that the CC of the CPSU was openly attacking Ukrainian educational institutions, the intelligentsia that worked in them, and even communist leaders. This produced a dawning awareness in some, while in others it aroused a terror of their impending fate in the cells of the OGPU, and they, in order to clear their conscience before their people, committed suicide. So did the outstanding Ukrainian proletarian writer, Mykola Khvylovyi, and two months later, Mykola Skrypnyk himself.

A few foreign journalists wrote about the famine in Ukraine in the Western media, including the American, William Henry Chamberlin of the *Christian Science Monitor*, who travelled to Ukraine. The English newspaper, *The British Daily Telegraph* published an article about it in its 9 September 1933 issue. The Premier of Norway, Mowinckel, raised the subject of the famine before the council of the League of Nations in Geneva on 22 September 1933, but none of this had any effect on the Western nations. Worse, the Premier of France, Edouard Herriot, having visited a number of Ukrainian cities at the personal invitation of Stalin, returned home to boast to journalists that he had been in the USSR; that

he had been very well received; that everything there was wonderful; and that the things that some bourgeois nationalists were writing about a famine in Ukraine were merely their own fabrications.

That same year, *Pravda* reprinted a letter from an Englishman about his impressions of his visit to Kiev: "I was at a track and field event in which twenty thousand people participated. All of the workers wore sport clothes. I did not hear a single word about a famine."

The Ukrainian Women's League in the USA addressed a letter to congressman Herman Kopelmann, asking him to draw attention to the famine in Ukraine. Congressman Kopelmann submitted a special memorandum to the Soviet Foreign Minister Litvinov, to which the latter cynically replied: "I received your letter of the 14th, and I thank you for drawing my attention to the Ukrainian pamphlet. There are many such pamphlets published over there (USA) circulated by counterrevolutionary organizations, who specialize in slander."

As is obvious from the above, the Moscow mafia had a wide base of sympathy with international politicians, who ignored the tragedy of the Ukrainian people. Nevertheless, some foreign journalists did mention that many had died in a famine in Ukraine. Some wrote that three million, others that five million had died.

The most reliable figures were arrived at by Ukrainian statisticians, who used Soviet government census figures for years previous to and following the famine. According to these figures, Ukrainian population rose by 2.36% from 1924-27. The population of Ukraine on 17 December 1926 stood at 29,042,924. If a constant rate of growth had been maintained, then the total population on 1 January 1939 should have been 38,426,000. According to government census figures released on 17 January 1939, however, it came to 30,960,221. This means that Ukraine lost 7,455,779 people in the period of 1926-39.

Of course, Moscow is continuing its genocidal policies by other means. For instance, it systematically arrests and deports Ukrainian youths to Asian republics and remote areas in the Russian republic. If one is to speak of holocausts that the world has seen, then Moscow has destroyed a larger number of the Ukrainian population than Hitlerism did Jews during the Second World War. However, Jews have large information resources, and during the last 38 years, have been reminding everyone of their holocaust throughout the world. We have almost done nothing, apart from the effort of a small number of Soviet Ukrainians published *The White Book about the Black Deeds of the Kremlin*, in 1955. True, a number of works by emigre authors about the famine in Ukraine in 1932-33 have appeared in recent years.

It is not only the responsibility of those whose relatives died in the famine of 1933 not to forget the great crime committed by Moscow, but that of all Ukrainians living in the Free world. We must also to inform those amidst whom we live.

March 1983  
California, USA

## **The Famine as a Specific Form of Bolshevik Terror in Ukraine.**

Ievhen Sloniv's'kyi

*(An address to the Ivan Mazepa Golden Age Club in London, Ontario, during the activities commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Great Famine in Ukraine, 1932-33)*

### *The Historical Background of the Famine in Ukraine*

Dear audience, to start off this address, allow me to quote a brief excerpt from a poem by the Russian poet Alexei Tolstoi:

Do you know the country, where everything breathes with plenty,  
Where the rivers flow cleaner than silver,  
Where steppe breezes rock feather grass,  
And Homesteads list in cherry blossoms

In this poem, the love that the Russian poet feels for our country is plainly evident, even though the author was never a Ukrainophile, but simply a Russian full of ideals who considered Ukraine to be "Southern Russia." He was enraptured by nature in Ukraine, by the life of the people, but most of all he was impressed, as all Russians are, by the riches of Ukraine.

I presented this example in verse, not because I wanted to demonstrate the poetic mastery of Tolstoi, nor to highlight his idealistic Russian patriotism. I included this excerpt as an example because it contains the seed of contention and jealousy of all of our neighbours, particularly of Russia: the "country, where everything breathes with plenty", the riches of Ukraine. This country became the apple of perpetual discord between the Ukrainian and Russian people, the main reason for the insatiable Russian imperialism, and for the development of an inhuman hatred by the Russian people of Ukrainians.

If one examines the three hundred year history of our common life with Russia, we can say that Moscow always strove to control our fertile land, a land so generously gifted with the qualities of gentleness and beauty; to make it a colony. Russia always wished to enslave our people. However, the most courageous sons of the Ukrainian nation often beat back the Muscovite invaders.

The Treaty of Pereiaslav of 1654 was an irredeemable mistake of our great Hetman, Bohdan Khmelnyts'kyi, and it allowed Moscow to solidify

its grip on Ukraine for many centuries. The efforts of his successors to tear Ukraine out of slavery under Moscow did not meet with success.

When the Russian empire was destroyed in 1917, the Ukrainian people fought the Russian occupier and gained independence for itself, and set up the Ukrainian People's Republic. However, a series of internal and external factors crippled our nation's ability to maintain its independence. Ukraine was divided among four states. The administrator of the greatest of these four sections of Ukrainian territory was the Russian-Bolshevik occupier, and it was on this territory that the famine was induced.

This famine can be approached with a number of varying definitions if one examines it as a historical phenomenon. Some, who remember tsarist times under Russia, claimed that there had been famines in those days, but they, for the most part, had been the result of natural or elemental conditions, such as drought, flood, or fire. These would cause either destruction of crops, or a general crop failure, and thus, these famines came to be known as elemental famines.

Mindful of this approach, we must nevertheless apply the question of how to define the famine of 1932-33. As eyewitnesses, we know that millions of peasants died in the famine while under the political and legal supervision of the "workers' and peasants' authority." And yet, silos and railway storage depots were full to bursting with Ukrainian grain. From contemporary statistical literature, we have ascertained that Ukraine lost, in various areas, fifteen, thirty, fifty per cent of its rural population, while in some areas, villages and towns simply disappeared off the face of the earth. These figures include only the deaths of those who were caught by the famine while still in the villages, but we can only speculate how many died of forced starvation in transit, while they were deported north, while they suffered in exile, in prison, in labour camps, and various isolation cells, and only God knows for certain.

Various sources give various figures for the total casualties of the famine of 1932-33. These data swing widely from three to ten million, but at this point, I can draw upon numerical data that I have culled from the published material of academics, publicists and politicians. For instance, the Ukrainian academic, S. Solovei, studied the Agricultural Economic Statistics yearbook of Ukraine, published in Kharkiv in 1939.

According to his calculations, the famine of 1932-33 reduced the population of Ukraine by 7,500,000. In other words, in the eight to nine months of the tragic famine Ukraine lost 19% of its population. If we were to add the casualties from the Kuban and Don regions, then the total losses of the Ukrainian people for that period can be put at eight to nine million.

Another Ukrainian academic, Dmytro Solovei, claims, in his published articles on the famine in Ukraine, that 6,500,000 people died of starvation.

Otto Schiller, a former German agricultural attache in Moscow, estimated that 7,500,000 died in the famine.

V. A. Balitski, the former head of the OGPU in Ukraine, stated that the number of dead from during the famine stood at 8,500,000.

Stalin himself, in a conversation with Churchill at Yalta, admitted that the forced implementation of collectivization in agriculture in the period of 1929-1933 claimed over 10,000,000 lives. It appears obvious that the majority of those were the victims of the famine in 1932-33.

Soviet-Russian statistics, published in Soviet statistical yearbooks of 1932 and 1934, show that the actual number of deaths during the period in question is not less than 5,800,000. The official Soviet census of 1939 indicates that, since the previous census, held in 1926, the population of the Ukrainian SSR declined by 10%.

Obviously, the exact number of casualties will continue to be impossible to establish, most probably because Red Moscow has always concealed, and continues to conceal, the statistical data that could shed some light on this deliberately organized famine. However, using the method of medial and proportional calculation on the basis of the data supplied by the abovementioned four authors, we can state that the most realistic figure for total casualties of the famine would be 7,500,000, or approximately 18.8% of the total population of Ukraine.

The fact that this number is so high, is one form of proof that the famine of that period was not elemental, but the result of a planned and organized action of the Soviet government and of the Communist Party under the leadership of Stalin. Their aim was to exhaust, weaken, and physically destroy the Ukrainian people, in order to make it incapable of fighting for its independence. *The name for such an action is genocide.* Its goal: to finally break the nationalist and independantist tendency of the Ukrainian people in order to appropriate and intensively exploit the economic wealth of Ukraine for the future prosperity of the Russian nation and for the perpetuation of its insatiable imperialism.

Thus, if we speak of the destruction of one nation by another, we have the following in mind: the use of physical terror that comprehends a policy of genocide; or a specific form of physical terror, which rests on a wide-ranging program of so-called intermediate and corollary policies of physical terror. The policy of famine, adopted by Soviet Moscow in 1932-33, was nothing other than a terrible revenge for the opposition presented by the Ukrainian people to Russian imperialism under Soviet

guise.

The tragic extent of the famine of 1932-33 is unparalleled in Ukrainian history. The only event that approaches it in scope, is the tragedy of the capital of Hetman Mazepa, Baturyn. During the Russo-Swedish war of the early 18th century, Hetman Ivan Mazepa changed allegiances and joined the forces of the Swedish King, Charles XII, against Moscow. During this campaign, Peter the Great sent General Menshikov's army to slaughter the population of Baturyn, including women, children, and the elderly. He then had the capital burned and razed to the ground. However, this was a time of war, and this form of military attack could be more readily excusable than an attack on a defenceless population in peacetime.

The famine of 1932-33 was historically rooted in the long-standing chauvinistic antagonism of Russians, which I have already mentioned.

The main goal of the Russian communist authorities was: (with the assistance of the Ukrainian Communist Party) to bring a collectivized peasantry under control, and to place it exclusively under the direction of its political administration. Another overall objective was the plan of intensive grain consignment according to norms set and dictated by Moscow. A slogan was adopted as a guiding principle: "The struggle for grain is the struggle for socialism." This slogan was used to incite the use of extreme measures during grain collection. The grain consignment norms for Ukraine, set in Moscow, were completely unrealistic and were specially designed to destroy the economic and agricultural standard of the Ukrainian people.

The sheer numbers of the quotas in Moscow's plans amply demonstrates these intentions. The norms were set at double, or even triple, the levels demanded in years when the crop yield had been greater than those during collectivization. For instance, in 1930, 7.7 million tons of grain had been exported from Ukraine, that is, 33% of the total harvest of 23 million tons, while in 1929, a year of higher yield, only 3.3 million tons were exported to Russia, or 21% of the total harvest. During the collectivization period, more grain was exported from the Ukrainian SSR, in terms of percentage, than from Russia and all of the other republics of the USSR. At a time when the total crop yield of Ukraine was only 27% of that of the USSR, grain consignments from Ukraine constituted 38% of the total. An added misfortune was that the seeded fields and resulting harvests were decreasing every year, but the norms were maintained at the high levels of previous years. For example, the planned norm for grain consignment for 1931 was 7.7 million tons, that is, the same as the 33% of the 23 million ton yield of 1930. However, in 1931,

the total yield stood at 18.3 million tons. Of course, this statistic had no meaning for Moscow, because it simply aimed to seize all grain from Ukraine, without regard to the casualties suffered by the Ukrainian peasantry.

The grain consignments of 1931 were gathered with extreme cruelty by local communist activists, and they included all grain reserves from all members of collective farms. In 1932, only 91% of the grain consignment norms had been collected. By then, in the spring of 1932, some villages in Ukraine had plunged into starvation. Implacably, Moscow set the norms at the same level as for the preceding year.

Ukrainian communists, who had until then so diligently assisted Moscow in herding their own peasantry into the slavery of the collective farms by terror and coercion, finally understood the menacing plans Moscow had in store for Ukraine. They began polite negotiations with Moscow to attempt to alleviate the extremity of the agricultural policy in Ukraine. However, Moscow did not consider the Ukrainian communists to be advisers or collaborators on equal footing, but only as subordinates and functionaries who were to blindly carry out Moscow's orders.

Therefore, Stalin's reaction to the messages Ukrainian communists sent him about the pitiful condition of the Ukrainian village was very slow in coming. Perhaps he delayed any reply because he was waiting for the damage to Ukrainian agriculture and administration reach more greivous proportions. Then, when agriculture in Ukraine had reached a crisis, Moscow changed the norms for grain consignment for Ukraine from 7.7 million tons to 6.6 million tons.

Soon after, Stalin appeared before the joint session of the Politburo of the Ukrainian and All-Union Central Committees of the Party, and harshly criticized the peasants of the collective farms for sabotage and for disruption of grain collection and he proposed a purge. Obviously, Stalin considered the organization of the artificially created famine to be the purge that was needed, because, soon after the session, measures to starve the collective farm workers were undertaken.

By the end of 1932, 4.7 million tons of grain had been "kneaded out" of Ukrainian collective farms, which constituted 71.8% of Moscow's planned 6.6 million. The authorities in Moscow continued to demand that "the plan be carried out, without exception," with the result, of course, the complete destruction of all Ukrainian opposition. The other result of the criminally larcenous policy was that, in late 1932, the famine began in earnest. By winter of 1932-33, it was assuming catastrophic dimensions in some villages, but by spring and summer of 1933, it was pandemic — a total catastrophe that caused the complete depopulation of entire rural

districts.

Moscow blamed the conditions in Ukraine on the Ukrainian Communist Party. It blamed the Ukrainian communists for everything from disruption of grain consignments to a failure of Bolshevik vigilance. It attacked the Party leadership in Ukraine, and issued it a formal vote of non-confidence for its failure to meet the norms of the plan. This edict of non-confidence is recorded and documented in the special resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU. In connection with this resolution, a special staff of government and Party officials and political police leaders, headed by P. Postyshev, was despatched to Ukraine.

Postyshev received extraordinary powers as Stalin's direct representative in Ukraine. He was to complete the collection of grain to the levels of the norms set; to ensure that the effect famine was the one desired by Moscow; and to engage in a fierce struggle with "Ukrainian nationalism," that is, to bring the policy of genocide in Ukraine to its logical conclusion. This he did.

The Bolsheviks spared no effort in concealing the famine from the outside world. They denied all reports of the famine in Ukraine and called mentions of it the propaganda of counterrevolutionary elements. They officially refused all foreign aid. Soviet radio, press, literature and all other means of communication were censored for any mention or thematic reference to the famine. The organs of the OGPU forced everyone who received a parcel from abroad to reply that they did not need them. All parcels, particularly food parcels, were immediately sent back.

A special campaign was put in motion to immediately remove the dead and still-living swollen people from public places in cities, all main roads, and railways. This was done in order to conceal all evidence of the mass murder of the rural population by famine. This concealment of evidence is concrete proof that the famine was maliciously and deliberately induced. If the famine had occurred because of natural causes, there would have been no need to conceal it, and efforts would have been made to relieve its effects. All of the facts available demonstrate that the Soviet government not only concealed the famine, but also took pains to escalate its impact, in order to destroy the population that presented a force of opposition. Perhaps it was also only out of concern for concealing the famine that Stalin's deputy in Ukraine refused to talk about it, saying that "I have come to Ukraine, not to save the Ukrainians from famine, but to save them from the Ukrainian language." Stalin severely punished, and even liquidated, those who tried to talk to him of the famine in Ukraine.

By concealing the famine, the Kremlin could continue its genocidal

policy without facing the protests of the outside world, and could gain the recognition in the world diplomatic arena it always craved. It is not at all strange that, after his visit to a gloriously “decorated” Kharkiv, the French Premier Herriot had to declare publicly that there was no famine in Ukraine and that, on the contrary, he saw only happiness and *joie de vivre* everywhere. France renewed cordial relations with the USSR immediately after his visit. The United States, perhaps acting on Herriot’s statements about the happy and joyful life in the USSR, also formally recognized it established diplomatic relations, breaking with its policy up to 1933.

The contention that the famine was artificially induced is supported by irrefutable facts. The unbelievable banditry of the Bolsheviks is patently obvious in the exaggerated grain consignment norms and in the methods used to collect them. In order to ensure the efficacy of the planned famine, in 1933, the Bolshevik authorities confiscated all food products from the starving who were travelling from Ukraine to Russia. At each railway station on the border between them, there was a detachment of OGPU who did not allow starving Ukrainian peasants passage into Russia, and did not allow any food to come into Ukraine. In the summer of 1932, when the crops were beginning to ripen, watchtowers were erected in the fields, in which armed Komsomol, Komnezam, and Communist Party activists would stand on armed guard to “protect” the grain on the stalks from starving peasants.

On 7 August 1932, acting on Moscow’s orders, the puppet government of Ukraine was forced to issue a law that made all lands of the collective farms and cooperatives state property, and which made provisions for greater security measures to protect this newly designated state property. Theft was to be punished by summary execution on the spot, or by special deportation to northern regions of the USSR. This law was used to punish starving peasants who looked for ears of grain to feed themselves at harvest time.

In order to impede travel out of Ukraine to areas of the USSR not affected by the drastic governmental measures, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party decreed that the purchase of railway tickets required written permission. Those who attempted to travel without such permission would be taken off trains, and any food item found on their person would be confiscated.

To add to the suffering the Ukrainian peasantry endured, a governmental decree of 22 August 1932 stated that carrying bread on one’s person was considered an attempt to engage in speculation, and was thus an offense.

The anti-agricultural policy of the government led to the wastage of huge piles of grain. The harvest lay in the fields and rotted under the open sky as peasants starved, who were prevented from taking, or even approaching it, by law. This meant that Moscow preferred to let food rot than to give it to a starving population.

The deliberately organized famine was only a component of a general genocidal policy, planned by Stalin and his communist clique, against the entire Ukrainian nation. Therefore, if we speak of the famine as a specific form of terror, aimed at the Ukrainian peasantry, then we are led to examine a whole pattern of terrorist actions of Muscovite Bolshevism, that constituted a genocidal attempt on the life of the Ukrainian people as a whole.

Already in the initial stages of preparation for the famine, Stalin was also planning the destruction of the national and ideological leadership of the peasants, that is, the Ukrainian intelligentsia. First of all, they were responsible for the Ukrainian national gains achieved during the NEP period, and began to eclipse Russian culture in Ukraine. Thus, just as Stalin wanted to reverse the conditions fostered by the NEP, he also wanted to liquidate all of the advances in the areas of Ukrainian nationality and culture, and the nationally conscious intelligentsia that had obtained them with the support of the peasantry.

It was this line of reasoning that led Moscow to join a policy of massive physical terror against the Ukrainian nationally conscious intelligentsia with a similar terror against the Ukrainian peasantry. This imparted a particular character to the forced collectivization drive. At the behest of Stalin, the OGPU took matters into its own hands. In July 1929, there was a massive wave of arrests of so-called suspicious members of the SVU and SUM. Some 5,000 people were arrested outright on false charges in the affair, but only 45, the so-called ringleaders, were legally prosecuted, in the notorious SVU show trials held in Kharkiv from 9 to 19 April 1930. Many of the defendants were outstanding academics, pedagogues, writers, and others. The more prominent were such figures as S. Iefremov, M. Slabchenko, Durdukivs'kyi, Nikovs'kyi, Chekhivs'kyi, Hermaize, Staryts'ka-Chernikhivs'ka, and professor Hantsov. They were all sentenced to long terms in the concentration camps of the Solovky Islands and Siberia. They all disappeared without a trace. The fate of some, such as M. Slabchenko, Io. Hermaize, and M. Pavlushkiv is described in "The Ukrainian intelligentsia on the Solovky Islands, the memoirs of S.O. Pidhainyi, an historian who had faced the grim realities of the Solovky concentration camps with them.

Many of the others arrested in connection with the SVU-SUM affair

were leading members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, university students and certain peasant elements. Many of them were summarily shot, others shipped directly to concentration camps without trial, all at the direct command of the OGPU. According to Pidhainyi's book, the terror, directed at those who purportedly once belonged to the SVU, never abated. In fact, during the famine,

when the terror in Ukraine had reached unheard of proportions, after only one trial of an SVU member would fill not only the prisons, but even cellars with Ukrainian peasants and members of the intelligentsia. They shot not hundreds but thousands, both educated students and illiterate peasants. Those who were sent to the Solovky, all received terms of no less than ten years.

This quote can serve as documentary evidence of the insane scope of the Bolshevik terror during the famine in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, a source of national, educational and religious leadership, was also accused of bourgeois nationalism and was officially liquidated. Its assets were confiscated, churches were closed or destroyed, and thousands of clergymen, including Metropolitan Lypkiv's'kyi, forty bishops and 20,000 priests and monks were exterminated by the OGPU-NKVD.

1933 was the year when Bolshevik chauvinist attacks from Moscow, directed at the advances and gains of the Ukrainian people obtained in the decade preceding the famine, were most frequent. It was also the year of the ruthless rout of the leaders and activists of this renaissance. In the spring of that year of famine, at the time when peasant mortality was at its highest, another massive wave of arrests and shootings began. It decimated the leaders of Ukrainian national, cultural, economic, administrative, and political life. This was done without trial and without any regard to legality.

The arrests and executions of nationally conscious Ukrainian communists, particularly those who formerly belonged to other Ukrainian parties, and almost all of those who originated in Western Ukraine. 1933 is noteworthy for the wholesale executions of the leaders, and then the rank and file members of the Ukrainian Communist Borotbists and of the Ukrainian Communist Party. Many of them were shot without trial, or secretly tortured to death in prisons and concentration camps — all victims of Moscow's terror. They included O. Shums'kyi, K. Maksymovych, A. Richyts'kyi, M. Avdiienko, M. Poloz, O. Volokh, I. Lyzans'kyi, M. Lozyns'kyi, S. Vityk, Slipans'kyi, Vikul, Sirko, Tur, and others.

That year, all those who had participated in the Ukrainian national

revolution and had remained in Ukraine, were executed. They included general Iu. Tiutiunyk, V. Holubovych, P. Khrystiuk, M. Chechel, H. Kosak, Io. Bukshovanyi, and others.

In March 1933, by order of the OGPU, 35 officials of the People's Commissariat for Land Affairs of Ukraine. F. Konar-Palashchuk was falsely accused of aiding and abetting a secret Ukrainian military organization. He was shot immediately, while 40 others were condemned and executed later.

In May 1933, virtually the entire population of Soviet Ukraine was living under the threat of OGPU terror, and a large segment was facing the fatal famine. It was then that the author of the slogan, "Away from Moscow"; one of the more prominent figures of the Ukrainian national and cultural renaissance; one of the more active and creative individuals in the Soviet literary and political world, Mykola Khvyly'ovyi, committed suicide on May 13, in protest against Moscow's policy of genocide. His death marked the nadir of the Ukrainian national and cultural resurgence under the Soviet regime, since he had been one of its leaders.

Of even greater impact was the suicide of the Minister of Education of the Ukrainian SSR, Mykola Skrypnyk. He shot himself on 7 July 1933. He had received a directive from Moscow ordering him to renounce his nationalist leanings and capitulate before the chauvinistic terrorist course of the Soviet "nationalities policy."

Both suicides were intended to be warnings, or alarums, to those Ukrainians whose consciousness had been molded by the mendacious propaganda extolling the communist justice of Moscow. Without a doubt, they had no influence whatsoever on the further development of Moscow's policy, because it never deviated from its criminal course.

In fact, the very opposite came to pass. P. Postyshev initiated a massive purge of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and called on the organs of the OGPU to renew their attacks on the "enemies of the state." In the period of the purge, 75% of the heads of the local soviets, and 80% of the secretaries of the local Party committees were expelled from their positions. Most of them were arrested, and the total number of members of the Communist Party of Ukraine was reduced from 520,000 in June 1932, to 470,000 in October 1933. Those removed from their posts were either shot, or deported to concentration camps.

From everything I have said, it becomes quite obvious that 1933 was not only the year of death for a massive amount of Ukrainian peasantry. It was the year that saw a whole program of Bolshevik terror in Ukraine, which, in concert with the planned and induced starving of the peasantry, produced a truly total national catastrophe. This was a year of tragedy

for the entire Ukrainian people. A year of the joining of genocidal famine with various forms of anti-Ukrainian terror.

1933 was year of the union of a specific form of terror instituted against the peasantry, in the form of an induced famine, and of a national and political terror directed at the majority of Ukrainians, regardless of their social or class origins, their participation in the revolution, their activism in Soviet social life, or even their membership in the Communist Party. Terror was used against every Ukrainian who disagreed with the national and social, or the national and political programme of the Bolshevik-Muscovite authorities. It was directed at anyone who considered himself to be Ukrainian, and particularly, at those who were of the nationally conscious intelligentsia that had done so much to construct a Ukrainian national culture. This included writers; those active in Ukrainian education; specialists in Ukrainian art; lecturers in Ukrainian linguistics, language and history; librarians; and all those who collaborated with the above in any way.

In other words, 1933 was a year of a direct attack, by the chauvinist Bolshevik authorities in Moscow, on all fronts. It was an attack that aimed to eliminate all cultural, economic, and national advances made in the decade preceding the famine. When it was complete, Moscow could claim that it had destroyed the nucleus of the national movement — the peasantry; and its potential leaders — the nationally conscious Ukrainian intelligentsia. Moscow could claim that it had routed nationalism, and could make it a crime against the state, punishable, as treason was, by death.

1933 was the year of the rout of Ukrainian nationalism, and so it became the year of the beginning of a wide-ranging campaign of Russification. This campaign is being continued, with a large measure of success and with the same methods, even today. Moscow continues to destroy the Ukrainian nation and uses the gains of this destruction to build the Russian nation.

## **The Reactions and Protests of the Ukrainian Emigre Community During the Famine-Holocaust in Ukraine.**

Dr. Volodymyr Dushnyk

*(An expanded version of an address, delivered on 19 November 1983, at a conference of the Association of Ukrainian Engineers of America, on the subject of the artificial famine in Ukraine of 1932-33.)*

Although rumours about a famine began circulating in late 1932 in Western Ukraine, broader news of it, and massive reaction to it, did not come until 1933. It came as a result of foreign news reports of the thousands of Ukrainians dying in the “Soviet paradise.”

On July 14 1933, The Citizen’s Committee for Relief for the Dying in Soviet Ukraine was formed in L’viv. On 24 August 1933, on St. Ol’ha’s day, the Ukrainian Catholic Bishopric of L’viv published a letter of protest, entitled *Ukraine in her death throes*, in the Ukrainian Catholic journal *Nyva*. In this article, various church officials called upon the “civilized world” to denounce the barbaric Soviet regime and to provide physical relief to those dying in Ukraine. The letter was signed by Metropolitan Andrei Sheptyts’kyi of L’viv; Bishop Hryhorii Khomyshyn of Stanyslaviv; Iosafat Kotsylovs’kyi of Peremyshl’; Nykyta Budka, the titular bishop of Patar; Hryhorii Lakota of Peremyshl’; Ivan Buchko of L’viv; and Ivan Liatyshevs’kyi of Stanyslaviv.

The Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Theodor Innitzer founded the International Relief Committee, and Dr. Ewald Ammende, the General Secretary of the Congress of European Minorities, was made the honorary secretary. Ammende called upon all European countries to provide assistance to the starving Ukrainians. He also sent a special petition to the League of Nations in Geneva, asking that the matter of the massive famine in Ukraine fostered by the Soviet regime be put on the agenda.

As a result of Ammende’s campaign, on 29 September 1933, the Premier and Foreign Policy Minister of Norway, Johann Ludvig Movinkel (see Mirshuk), raised the matter of the famine in Ukraine during a session of the League of Nations. Lengthy discussions and a condemnation of Moscow followed.

Without a doubt, the free European and American press played an instrumental role in spreading the news about the artificial famine in

Ukraine. In Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania, there were a few refugees from Ukraine who told horrifying stories about the famine, but, as usual, very little attention was paid to them. There were also some Ukrainian tourists from America and Canada, who also told of the horrors they had seen in Ukraine. A Ukrainian American, Marta Stebelo, was among those who managed to be heard by the foreign press. She was interviewed about what she had seen by American and English journalists.

The following report was published in the Belgian daily, *La Flandre Liberale* on 2 September 1933:

Ukraine is dying. Ukrainians are dying of hunger. This is not only a tragedy for Ukraine and for Ukrainians. It is a tragedy of Russian, European, and even world civilization, because this country was once one of the greatest producers of agricultural products. Where people are dying, emaciated by starvation, there were once bountiful harvests that fed not only the people of Ukraine, but all of those of Central Europe. The earth underneath the people has not changed, but the people ruling it have. It is among them that we must look for the reason for this immense drama, in which an entire nation becomes the sacrificial lamb...

The French daily, *Le Matin* published the report of Suzanne Berthion, who had travelled in Ukraine:

The current conditions in Ukraine are as follows: ruin, famine, and a deathly silence. Entire villages are dying. In one village, where there had been 800 inhabitants, 150 have died since the spring. The famine in Ukraine was created artificially by Moscow, because of political reasons. In order to completely destroy all Ukrainian aspirations for independence, the Soviet government has organized an artificial famine with the goal of destroying a people whose only sin is the desire for freedom...

Perhaps the most famous, and still living, eyewitness of the terrible famine in Ukraine is the English journalist, Malcolm Muggeridge. In one of his reports in the *Manchester Guardian*, published in March 1933, he wrote:

You travel through Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, once the largest provinces of the Russian empire. Today, they look like deserts: the fields are overgrown with grasses, the people are swollen with hunger and lie waiting for a slow death. You speak to these people and find out how many of them have died in the famine, and how many have been shot by the Soviet government, or simply deported, because they tried to hide a few grains from the crop in order to silence their hunger...

Ewald Ammende, the General Secretary of the International Relief Committee for the Starving in Ukraine, and the General Secretary of the

Congress of European Minorities, wrote a report entitled *Must Russia Starve?* in which the following appears:

The nationality factor plays an important part in the problem of this famine. In the USSR there is, as there had been in the times of Imperial Russia, a state nationality (Russian) that is conducting a war against the others in the empire, particularly against Ukrainians and Byelorussians. The aim of this struggle is to destroy the latter's independence movements. I must affirm with all due conviction, clearly and forthrightly, that on the basis of the current significant differences and antagonisms between it and Ukraine, Russia is attempting to destroy a large section of the current generation in Ukraine...

Of all American correspondents, the man who wrote the most about the famine was the *Christian Science Monitor's* William Henry Chamberlin. Later, during the Second World War, Chamberlin was to write a very important book, entitled *Ukraine, the Enslaved Nation*. Another American reporter, Eugene Lyons, wrote a revolutionary book about the USSR in 1936, entitled *Assignment in Utopia*.

Countless reports about the famine in Ukraine appeared in the English daily, the *Manchester Guardian*, written by their correspondent Malcolm Muggeridge. The *Daily Express* carried articles on the subject written by Garret Jones, Secretary of State Lloyd George, and others.

Two American journalists with pro-Soviet leanings, Walter Duranty and Maurice Hindus openly denied the existence of a famine in Ukraine, although they conceded that there were "food shortages."

In the summer of 1933, the Ukrainian diaspora organized protests against the artificial famine in Ukraine. In Galicia, under Polish rule, the Ukrainian citizenry turned out in mass demonstrations, marches, and religious ceremonies against the famine as well as publishing articles on the subject. The outrage prompted a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, (OUN), Mykola Lemyk, to assassinate the Soviet consul in Lviv.

In Warsaw, the UNR (Ukrainian People's Republic) centre and its organizations, such as the Ukrainian Scientific Institute, protested the famine through various addresses to the free world and through petitions to the League of Nations in Geneva.

In Prague, the capital of Czechoslovakia, was a large Ukrainian emigre centre. Such institutions as the Ukrainian Free University (UVU), the Ukrainian Museum of the Liberation Struggle (whose director was Vyrovyi), Ukrainian political parties and organizations, including the revolutionary OUN and others, all protested against the artificial famine in Ukraine. The regime looked askance at the activities of the Ukrainian minority in Bukovyna and Bessarabia, but demonstrations against

Moscow's genocide by famine did take place.

In Austria, one of the more active organizations was the Ukrainian Student Association *Sich*, which had the blessing of Cardinal Innitzer to conduct its protests.

In Berlin, the Ukrainian emigre community grouped around the Ukrainian Scientific Institute in Wansee, whose directors were professors Zenon Kuzelia and Ivan Mirchuk. Despite Hitler's accession to power in late January of 1933, Ukrainians were free to protest against Moscow in the press and at various German assemblies.

In Rome, professor Ievhen Onats'kyi, and the famous Italian academic Enrico Insabato, also coordinated a wide ranging protests in the press, in various Italian institutions, and were met with sympathy from large sections of the Italian society.

In Brussels, the capital of Belgium, protests were led by the Ukrainian Relief Committee, headed by Dmytro Andriievskyy. The National Union of Ukrainian Students (NASUS) at the Catholic University of Leuven worked under the leadership of Andrii Kishka. The author of this article published a number of articles on the famine in Ukraine in the student daily *L'Avant-Garde* and in the student monthly *L'Universitaire Belge*.

In Geneva, the capital of Switzerland, the Central Union of Ukrainian Students (*TsESUS*) also conducted an information campaign directed at Swiss students and press. The Swiss press, particularly the francophone *Le Journal de Geneve* and *La Gazette de Lausanne*, published articles on the famine written by American and English correspondents.

In France, the Ukrainian National Association led the protests, and the weekly, *Ukrainske Slovo*, edited by Oleksa Boiko, provided coverage.

The Ukrainian Information Bureau in London was very active in disseminating information about the famine in Ukraine. It was headed by Dr. V. Kysilevs'kyi, the son of the representative in the Polish Senate, Olena Kysilevs'ka. Colonel Iakiv Makohin, a Ukrainian American, was the founder of such Bureaus in London, Geneva, and Chernivtsi (Cernauti). *The Times* carried an article that dealt with Lord Charwood's submission of a special resolution condemning Moscow for the planned famine in Ukraine to the House of Lords.

In Canada, the Ukrainian National Association organized a number of demonstrations and protest actions, with the support of the hierarchs of the Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches.

In America, protests against the famine were led by the Union of Ukrainian Organizations of America, and the Organization for State Revival (*ODVU*). More than 10,000 people took part in an anti-Soviet demonstration in New York on 18 November 1933. During the course of the demonstration there was a clash between communists and the

Ukrainian participants of the protest. The *New York Times*, *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York Journal-American*, *The Sun*, *The Daily News*, and the *Sunday Mirror* all carried extensive reports about this protest march in their 19 November 1933 editions.

Despite the fact that the artificial famine in Ukraine of 1932-33 was widely documented in the European and American press, and despite the fact that virtually all foreign correspondents wrote that the famine in Ukraine was deliberately caused in order to defeat Ukrainian opposition to Moscow's Bolshevik occupation, on 16 November 1933, Franklin Delano Roosevelt recognized the Soviet government. A year later, on 18 September 1934, the Soviet Union was admitted into the League of Nations in Geneva. At the same time, the USSR signed a number of treaties with various countries of the world, by means of which they increased their stature and influence in the world.

In conclusion, we can affirm that the famine in Ukraine in 1932-33 was a political, and not a socio-economic phenomenon because:

1. The famine was concentrated in Ukraine and in the Northern Caucasus, and Ukraine suffered the greatest number of casualties.

2. The declarations and pronouncements of Soviet leaders such as Joseph Stalin, Viacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, Maksim Litvinov, Pavel Postyshev, Stanislav Kossior, Mendel Khataievich, and even Nikita Khrushchev have clearly shown that Ukrainian nationalism, that is, opposition to Bolshevism, was considered to be a great threat — a threat that occasioned the physical destruction of Ukrainian people.

3. A large number of academics and public figures of various nationalities have almost unanimously determined that the famine in Ukraine was a result of a political decision to destroy the Ukrainian people as a force of opposition, as an “enemy” of the Soviet regime. They include: William Chamberlin, Eugene Lyons, Viktor Kravchenko, Dmytro Solovii, Merle Fainsode, W.E.D. Allen, Fedor Belov, Hryhorii Kostiuk, Ralph W. Barnes, E. Sablin, Clarence A. Manning, Nicholas S. Timashev, Robert Conquest, Isaac Mazepa, Mykola Halii, Naum Jasny, Fred E. Bill, M.V. Ptukha, Walter Kryvicky, S.O. Pidhainyi, Dana G. Darliple, Mykola Prykhodko, F. Birchell, John S. Reshetar, Winston Churchill, H.H. Fisher, Arthur E. Adams, Roland Gawcher, Ronald Hingley, Robert Magidow, Vasyl' I. Hryshko, Adam Ulam, George Vernadsky, Thomas P. Whitney, and others.

Three generations of Ukrainians and other nationalities of the USSR were destroyed by the inhuman tyrants of Moscow, in order that their despotic successors could rule, continue to plan further atrocities, and carry them out.

## **From Experience**

Pavlo Makohon

Today, we mark the fiftieth anniversary of the great famine in Ukraine, a famine that was artificially produced by Communist Moscow in 1932-33. During those years I was a fourteen year old boy. I was one of my family's survivors, for initially it numbered eight people; by 1933 it had been reduced to three.

We lived in Troiets'ke, a prosperous village in the Dnipro valley region, and it consisted of three thousand households. My father belonged to the lowest class of poor peasants, and yet he did not want to join the collective farm. For this, he was classified as a sub-kulak and severely persecuted.

The drive for total collectivization began in 1929, but the forcible inductions into collective farms did not begin in our district until 1930. The only ones who joined them voluntarily were the members of the Committees of Landless Peasants, or *Komnezams*; the rest refused. This kind of reticence did not last long, because when fall arrived that year, so did the members of the Party and district representatives with official accreditation. The latter set up village brigades of local Party members and imported activists, whose job it was to enforce collectivization and to "liquidate the kulaks as a class."

Thus the terror, initially directed at the wealthier peasants, began. These peasants were dekulakized, that is, had their property confiscated, their families arrested and led off under armed OGPU and activist guard to the local railway station and taken straight to Siberia. The rest of the peasants, terrified and hungry, were run down to the collective farms, together with their hard gotten property. The campaign of collectivization and physical liquidation of the wealthier rural workers proceeded exactly along these lines in our village.

My father, who refused to join the collective farm voluntarily, faced the horrifying methods of the authorities. One day, in the winter of 1932, a man came into our house — a man who lived in our village, was my father's age, and whose name was Ivan Zaiets'. At first, the conversation was friendly. We children, of whom I was the eldest, lay on the bench and listened to our father as he talked to this activist, Zaiets'. The latter demanded that my father join the collective, upbraiding him, saying: "You,

Mykyta Ivanovych, are one of the poorest, the source of our strength. You should have been the first to join. It is our very own authority that has come to take power; our very own that we must help. And yet you are not yet a member. What is it with you, Mykyta Ivanovych?" My father simply hung his head and said: "I don't want to do anything against the authorities and their laws, and my decision to join the collective or not is safeguarded by the directive that says that joining should be voluntary. So I'm not joining. Besides, I like to work on my own." The activist changed his tone and said, angrily and loudly: "All right, if you don't want to join the collective farm voluntarily, then obviously you're listening to the kulaks. In that case, we will deal with you differently." With those words, the conversation ended, and Zaiets' the activist walked out and slammed the door.

This conversation left us all very alarmed. My father sat at the table, angered and deeply troubled. We children sat around like frightened sparrows and did not take our eyes off him. As the eldest, I vaguely understood what all of this could mean. We did not have to wait long for the consequences of the activist's visit and his threats. My father was summoned to the staff house, day and night, where he was asked to sign a declaration about joining the collective farm. If anyone refused, as my father did, then the local activists, goaded by the OGPU officials or the chief of staff, would throw victims to the floor, cover them with a sheepskin or a sackcloth and begin torturing them. At first, they would cover victims with tobacco and prod them with an awl and laugh, asking derisively: "Well? Now are you going to join the collective farm, or not?"

After the candidates for "voluntary" registration in the collective were thus "prepared," they were sent home. But not for long. People were called out again, most frequently at night, and then the ritual of sackcloth or sheepskin accompanied with tobacco in the nose and awls in the side would continue until the victim registered "voluntarily." Then, the newly enslaved would be sent home terrified, humiliated and derided. My father endured these horrors to the fullest, and returned from the staff house tortures exhausted and in a deep despair.

Our family's purgatory, and my father's in particular, did not end at this. One day, the local activist brigade appeared on our property in our home. It was headed by a certain stranger called Klochkov — an official of the district Party committee. I remember as if it was yesterday, the way that he would stand by and watch with sadistic enjoyment as his "shock brigade" plundered everything edible, and carried it out to the carts standing ready in our yard. My father had hung corn cores in the loft for seeding, but the activists threw them down to the ground floor.

Here, a struggle broke out. I rushed up to the attic to get them to stop throwing down the corn cores. Klochkov the official boomed: "What are you doing?" I told him that I did not want to die of hunger. However, the activists ended up taking all of the corn and driving it back to the staff office.

When everyone had been robbed and set on the road to starvation, everyone in the village, our family included, moved about restlessly, seeking some escape from this fate. I will never forget the oppressive mood that gripped our family. Weeks passed in searches for food. Dogs, cats, pigeons, any manner of bird — all were eaten. My father and I brought everything we could find back home, in order to feed the eight hungry people that made up our family.

Winter approached and not one crust of bread remained in the house. Not only bread, but no dogs, cats, sparrows — everything had been eaten. I must emphasize that at one point, our village was a prosperous one. Almost every household in our village had had some livestock, fowl, dogs, (sometimes even two or three) cats, and domestic birds, but everything had been eaten. Of course, horses and other livestock had been confiscated by the collective farms. This proves that our village was deliberately starved by the authorities.

The people were already barely able to move about the village. In our house, my younger siblings and my grandmother had begun to swell with hunger. One winter day, during my snoopings for food, I chanced upon a nest of hedgehogs, and brought them all home for a feast. Joy filled our home as they were prepared and eaten.

Horses began dying at the collective farm because of inadequate feeding. Their bodies were taken to an open pit and left uncovered. When people found out about this pit, they all swept down with sacks and knives to get horse meat. I took part in this as well. When the authorities found out that people were feeding on the horse meat, they ordered that carbolic acid be poured all over it. This daunted no one — they all continued to tear at the horse meat to silence their raging hunger, as did I, to bring my family at least an hour's relief.

The scythe of death descended on our house. The first to go was my maternal grandmother. I will never forget the weak voice of my good old grandmother saying, ever so quietly: "I want to eat..." Then my younger three brothers and my sister died before my eyes.

At the time, the authorities organized a special brigade that was to make its rounds every morning and collect the dead. A pit for a mass grave had already been prepared, into which the dead were simply thrown. They took my grandmother, my three brothers, and my sister there. I

watched it with my own young eyes.

Even today I cannot explain to myself how it was that, starving as I was, I conceived a plan to escape death by going to Donbas. One morning, in March 1933, when the harvest of famine was in full force, I realized that my days were numbered. As the village lay in the final convulsions of starvation, I arose quietly and, telling no one of my intentions, made off for the railway station in Mezhibiv, about thirty kilometres away. Those thirty kilometres seemed endless. Finally, I reached the station, and there I managed to find out which freight train was destined for Donbas. I climbed aboard and hid. I thought that my goal was already half-achieved.

I should explain why I decided to go to Donbas. I had learned from my parents that two of my mother's brothers lived there. They had left the village earlier, before the collectivization drive had begun. I decided to join them. On the way to the railway station I had stopped in on my uncles Roman and Mykola, brothers of my father's. They took me in and helped as best they could, but they were in no better shape than my family back home. They had also begun to swell. However, this only strengthened my resolve to go on the risk-laden journey.

I did not have the addresses of my uncles in Donbas, but once I arrived at the station in Mezhibiv, I concentrated on hiding in the freight cars and overcoming the difficulties of the journey, so I finally did make it there. After considerable searching, I found my uncles and told them about the condition of our village and the state of my parents. They were all very moved and we wept over our grief together.

I stayed with my uncles for only a short while, because I wanted to return to my village. They readied some food for me to take to my family and save my mother and father from starving to death. I slung the food sack on my back and went on my way. I hid on the train to Mezhibiv once again (I had no money for a ticket) and arrived back in my district.

Getting back to the village was a problem, because all of the horses in the area had died and so no carts or wagons passed by on the way. No transport trucks ventured into the area either. Thus, I decided to go the thirty kilometres on foot once again. This was a difficult and dangerous trek, and I was still fairly weak from hunger. What could I do? I knew I could easily fall victim to robbery or murder. This happened regularly on the roads around our village. The starving were everywhere, and here I was with a sackfull of food — my parents' salvation. The image of my dying mother before me, and some other, unknown force drove me to walk on and bring her relief.

Thus, I followed all the hidden paths and byways until I reached our

village. I wanted to arrive at home when it was already dark, in order not to be seen and robbed. When I arrived in our yard, I noticed that the lights were out in the house, and the door and windows open. Slowly, I crept into the house. I was suddenly smitten with the thought that the whole village had died and my parents with it. My heart ached and I stood motionless in the darkness, not knowing what to do. However, the will to live brought me out of my fear and my trouble and I felt around for the oil lamp. I lit it and beheld my mother, lying on the floor. I was thunderstruck with pain and horror. I fell to my mother's breast to listen for the beating of her heart, and heard that the embers of her life were barely burning. Immediately, I lit a fire in the hearth and quickly readied a thin broth out of the food I had brought from my uncles in Donbas. I forced my mother's lips open and slowly, cautiously, spooned the broth into her. By morning I had saved my mother. On the next day, my mother said, almost imperceptibly: "Is it you, Pavle?" She returned to consciousness very slowly, but she did, and she was saved. My father was not home, and I began to think that he had died looking for some escape from starvation.

Thus, the winter and the spring agony of 1933 passed by. Mowing season approached and hope for food grew. Although I was a minor, I worked at the collective farm. Slowly, my mother also got to her feet and was forced to work for the collective. Here, they fed the fieldworkers some kind of gruel, and when threshing began, they began cooking the grain and feeding the people like cattle.

Around that time, my father came home. He was weak, but he also worked on the collective farm and slowly, his strength returned. My father told me that during one of his searches for food, he was conscripted into a labour brigade in some local district collective and was only able to leave during the threshing season. Thus, the three, but not the eight of us, were reunited.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I have come forward with my testimony about this terrible famine, not because I seek recognition or any other personal benefit. I do so only out of a sense of responsibility to the truth, the memory of my family and to the seven million other innocent Ukrainian people who were starved to death. Let their memory live among us forever.

1933

Oleksander O. Verkhivs'kyi

*(Excerpt from the book Dictatorship)*

Having signed a written promise to Alfred the bureaucrat, I am now carrying it out. No politics. I am a specialist in my field and I work, for the most part, with melons. I have brought seeds for them from Switzerland. I make every effort to avoid any promotion, because I know that in the Soviet Union, a man in the shadows is much safer than a man at the centre of attention. I have one driving thought: to live to see the day when I can share my thoughts with my peers about the wicked brutality of dictatorship for the sake of dictatorship. This single ideal keeps me alive. Living in the shadows allows me to observe. I do not see everything, but I do see a fair amount.

The year is 1933. As a specialist, I am assigned (against my will, of course) to the so-called MTS (Machine and Tractor Station) in the town of Tetiive in the Kiev region. I go — it's impossible not to: the OGPU. I arrive at the railway station in Tetiive. From there, it is four kilometres to the MTS, where the local political section is located. It is the administrative centre of the life of the entire district. I step off the train and begin walking toward it. And I walk. It is an early, gentle April morning. The sun has just risen, steam wafts up from the ground. Hundreds of skylarks fly through the air and warble a song to the glory of life. Life is wonderful. Green grass is coming forth; here and there, flowers are joyfully in bloom. A golden dandelion, like a small radiant sun, is almost shouting out its right to live. A violet, an exceptional flower, yet humble like a shy maiden, hides its beauty in the shadows of its own leaves. Its light aroma attracts life — an awakened bee arrives to drink its nectar. Thousands of various insects buzz hither and thither, all carrying something, seeking something, doing something, creating.

I keep walking along the damp but hardening road on this wonderful spring day, and yet... I sense that something is amiss. I have already walked for a whole kilometre, but I have not met a single person. The road is empty, the fields are empty. Nowhere is the merry call of the farmer to be heard, nor are there children to be seen playing, nor girls walking behind the rakes to comb the ground after plowing, nor any youths

bounding about on horseback. For whom then, does the skylark sing? For whom do the flowers bloom? For whom does the sun spread out its warmth? Emptiness. There, under a bush on the hillock, sits a woman with a child: a mother. For her this wonderful day unfolds; for her the birdsong, the smell of flowers; for her the glory of life is poured out under the radiant sun: for the mother with her child, all the joy of life. I walk on, proud of the woman who brought another human into the world to be greeted by nature with open arms.

However, as I pass her, I stop and wonder: why is this woman so motionless under that bush? Is she asleep? A vague emotion grips my heart, and I decide to go back and approach her. The nearer I come, the more I am gripped with fear... because her head leans over too far; her shoulders slump down unnaturally, and the child is unduly quiet. Is it suckling? Perhaps it is sucking in the rays of the sun, so as to grow and speak of radiant wisdom to the world in a clear ringing voice. But no, not here... Here, something else abides. As I approach this pair, mother and child, I notice that the mother is still motionless, and the child also shows no sign of life — they are dead. Like a thief, I come down off the hillock and walk on. Behind me lies the shame whose name is: Stalin.

I walk for another kilometre and I see a man approaching. This is the master of the land: the ploughman and sower of seed. It is a peasant, who loves his arduous yet wonderful labour — to plow the earth, to throw in the seed, to watch it come up, and to harvest the crop. The ploughman and feeder of us all comes nearer still. But, God Almighty, what is the matter with him? He is almost too fat, he is all swollen — as if he had spent all winter on a stove. He is walking so slowly, almost at a crawl. What manner of man is this? His face is all blue, his bare feet are like elephant's trotters, his eyes are wild... he walks up to me and lets out a low, terrifying laugh. He says: "You're ashamed, ashamed" and smiles. Truly, a wave of shame sweeps over me. I feel like a beast because this man is swollen with hunger, and I am getting fat. I feel such shame. I walk by him, and behind me stands the shame whose name is: Stalin.

I walk for another two kilometres and arrive in front of a homestead. A beautiful old grange of the "lords" who fled from the terror we now endured. The main building, the park, the other structures — they were all intact. Obviously, the local peasants were not thieves, they did not take another's property. It was here that the polit-division was located.

I walk up to the gate, expecting to meet some security men, or at least a guard on duty. But no, freedom and democracy reign. There are no bourgeois here. Beside the gate lie two bodies: one, of an older, graying

man; the other of a young man. Both are swollen and awful. The baking sun heats the bodies as thousands of flies circle and sit in clumps in the hollows of their eyes. These people died of hunger because the system of collectivization had no use for them; it considered them “kulaks.” They could not sink so low as to grovel before someone whose name was: Stalin.

I stood before those bodies and could not believe I was looking at reality. I could not believe that it was not some kind of nightmare. If it was a nightmare, how I needed to awake. But what for? What could I do? Put a bullet in my brain? No, I would not give up that easily. The time would come (so I believed, as I believe in the harmony of the world), that I would bring these beasts to account; these beasts who took lives into their own hands to build a monument to their own genius with the deaths of others. That day, it was more difficult to live than to die — but I decided I should live. I had to step over those bodies that screamed for justice and vengeance. And I did step over them, believing in the future.

The political section was in the grange. Here I was met by a group of Jews who sat on the “board;” on whom the life of the entire district depended. For the carrying out of the vile deed of organized famine, “the wise leader” used Trotskyites. They had been implicated as members of the opposition, and now, fearing punishment, tried to save their own skins by serving their enemy and destroying people. Anyone who knows the Stalinist system will not wonder at this. It is unfortunate, however, that those who fell into this trap lacked the intelligence to realize the implications of playing out their role; of carrying out this “action.”

Stalin’s calculations were perfect. His messengers tainted themselves with their direct involvement in the enforcement of the famine, and thus earned the hatred of the people. This, obviously, was part of the plan of the new Stalinist collective farm system. The guilty party would stand to one side and would later be able to claim that his orders had been “misconstrued.” However, I do not wish to dwell on the issue of who “misconstrued” what or whom. I wish to testify about what I saw, heard and survived.

When I entered the main office of the political section, I was met by three Jews and one Ukrainian — an agronomist. This “board” took notice of my unwillingness to work in their area, and for some reason, decided to reassign me to the national centre (Kyiv) immediately. This they did on the grounds that I was a scientific worker, not a practical agronomist. I obtained confirmation of this order in a few minutes. Nevertheless, I had to wait for three days before a pass for my return trip arrived. The things that I saw in those three days defy description.

People swelled up before my eyes and stood as if they were blown up like balloons. It seemed that they would suddenly rise up off the ground and fly away in the wind. But they did not fly, they fell — one, two, three... every day. There was no time to pick them all up.

There were thousands of such polit-divisions across the country; thousands. And so, it is no wonder that Stalin's famine of 1933 claimed millions.

## **A Childhood Without Bread**

Ivan Slobozhanyin

I remember the fall of 1932. I was nine years old at the time, and was not interested in politics, but the things that happened in our village on the Donets' river frightened me.

Activists from the Komsomol, wearing red armbands, would come into people's houses and take all of their grain. They would pour it all into sacks, load it onto their wagons, and move on down the street. The activists "reminded" peasants that the "first commandment" was to hand over the set norm for grain over to the government as soon as possible. However, sometime later that fall, these same "officials of grain consignment" arrived to pry once again, looking for grain. This time, they cleaned everything out, down to the last kernel, including the stores the villagers had put aside for the winter. I remember that they even took a bag of onions that lay on the stovetop from my mother...

Tidings of grief and sadness made rounds in the village, as the poor people took to hiding the food that had not yet been seized. It was buried in the gardens, in ravines, in the forest; anywhere that might ensure that something would be left for winter. Hunger was already staring many in the face.

Children are curious by nature, and so, when the wagons loaded with grain stolen from the villagers passed along the street, they all ran after them. The large and the small were curious: "what's going to happen now?" However, the poor children could not possibly have imagined what a wicked fate would descend on them soon.

It was hard, dealing with the shortages that winter, but somehow, the people in the village survived. By the spring of 1933 however, hardly anyone could move. Many had begun to swell from hunger. People wandered in all directions trying to save themselves and their children from death by starvation. The weakened folk wandered in the forest, raking last year's leaves and picked the burgeoning acorns. They carried such "prizes" heavily back home, dried them, ground them into flour and then made odd "pancakes" out of them, only to get grievously sick to their stomachs. Everyone searched for some kind of food: picking buds off trees, tearing up horse sorrel, then mixing it all in with bare corn cobs. But nothing could help the weakened and swollen people. More

and more fell ill with stomach disorders, and the spectre of death crept ever nearer.

Grief arrived at our door. My mother was visibly emaciated. Our last remnants of food were disappearing. Mother was getting sick all of the time and constantly cast worried looks at me. We were relatively lucky. My mother worked as a forester. She dug holes for the planting of trees. Apart from the miserable wages, she also received a miserable ration of food: 300 grams of black sour bread and six bitterly salty fish, called "tiul'ky" (anchovies), per day. The two of us survived on this for a while. My mother dug holes and I went to school. It wasn't easy to study when one's mind was not on the lesson but on finding but one crust of bread.

Working while half famished, my mother soon lost all strength. Her hands and feet began to thicken, then swell. She had to find some relief. One day, we both travelled to Kharkiv, the capital of Ukraine at the time. My elder sister lived there. She worked in some factory kitchen and somehow managed to make a go of it. My good sister took us in.

What I saw in Kharkiv was unbelievably terrifying. Dirty, ragged, swollen human creatures lurked in the streets — women, men, children. Many of them could no longer walk and simply lay on the stone sidewalks, or sat propped up along the walls of buildings. This horror was everywhere: along Sumy street, Stalins'kyi prospekt, Dzerzhynski square...

It was then that the stores opened with "commercial" bread for sale. Thousands of people stood in line. They took their "places" in the evening, even though the shipment was not to arrive until the next morning. On one such an evening, my sister went to buy some of this bread and took me along. We walked a long way before we reached the end of the line-up. We stood and noticed the people around us: many had no strength left to keep standing and sat hopelessly on the sidewalk. They had sullen, swollen faces, swollen hands and watery eyes.

These were the sights of the streets of Kharkiv. The memory arouses a great sadness in me, even to this day. After half a century I still cannot forget what I saw, or what I lived through during the spring of 1933.

Thousands of unfortunates stood on the breadlines with sullen, almost disinterested faces. Everyone knew that they had little hope of buying any bread in the morning, because only about two hundred to three hundred loaves arrived to be divided among thousands of people. We returned home. When we ventured out again the next morning at dawn, the line had diminished considerably. The exhausted people simply slumped against or sprawled near the walls, or crowded right next to the door, waiting to "leap" right into the store when it opened. "Why are

these people lying on the ground?” I asked my sister naively. “Because they’re too weak to stay on their feet,” answered my sister.

I moved away from the line-up, hoping that my sister would somehow get through the crowd and manage to get some bread for us. Suddenly, a truck pulled up to the curb. “Aha,” I thought, “they’ve brought the bread.” The crowd was thrown into a commotion. I sought out my sister with my eyes. Meanwhile, two men in white suits got out of the truck and went about lifting up the people that lay motionless in the street and throwing them onto the truck. These people were still alive, but were now too weak to move, and were destined to die. The truck moved on through the crowd and the pile on its platform kept growing. The luckless people had fled from the villages to the city to find bread, only to die there of hunger.

Parents, grandparents, all strove to rescue their children from death by starvation. I remember how a grim fate befell my uncle on my father’s side, Kyprian. In his family, there were seven children, my uncle, my aunt, and her old mother. Of this entire family, only three remained alive: my aunt and two of her children. She described the worst of times when, at one point, it had been necessary to bury someone every week. It got so bad that there was no-one left to cover the bodies of the unfortunate children. They buried them all later in a collective grave on my uncle’s homestead.

To this day, I have an image of our lovely village on the Donets’. The whole area around it was renowned for its good harvests, lush gardens and orchards, general wealth and hospitality. Then, suddenly, the famine, maliciously caused by Stalin’s lackeys and local activists, brought about a terrible destruction. It is impossible to calculate the number of people who died in our village that year, but I do know that many families disappeared completely. The famine took both the large and the small. The neat little houses were left desolate, the gardens and orchards were all choked with weeds... I have heard it described how the bodies of the dead were ruthlessly thrown into pits and the earth over them flattened.

A wicked fate also befell many of those local activists who so cruelly carried out Stalin’s crimes of the famine. Some of them, like their victims, died of starvation, while others fell to the bullets of the OGPU-NKVD, which perhaps sought to eliminate all witnesses of the greatest crime perpetrated against Ukrainian farm workers.

## About Punishment by Famine

Nina Strokata

*(Delivered on 22 October 1983 during a commemorative “starvation banquet” at the 9th Conference of the Association of Ukrainian Orthodox Sisterhoods in the USA)*

As all those of the generation that had come into the world in the mid 1920s, I have a memory, either direct or indirect, of the first tragedies of famine of my people. The conscious life of my age group is full of observations about the possible dangers of seeking a further existence for the nation that gave us our roots.

1933 was to be memorable for me personally because it brought about the beginning of my life in school. But it came to pass that I did not go to school that year at all, and my memories of that period have little to do with the typical memories of a child.

My parents suddenly began remembering times when I did not yet exist: the years of 1920-22. Initially they spoke between themselves about the famine then, and about the famine that Odessa was beginning to witness in the spring of 1933. Still later, the distress of my parents rose to such heights that they stopped noticing my presence and recounted the times when my grandmother had barely escaped an attack of a band of the starving in the 1920s. She had gone on a trip, with some other women, to one of the formerly prosperous villages in the Odessa region, hoping to exchange some city trinkets for bread and other food.

Later, I heard that my mother's cousin wandered from village to village in the steppes with his young son in search of food. Both of them returned to Odessa without having found any food, but with such memories that would remain embedded for a lifetime. When they asked for a place to stay the night, people did not know whether to let them in, so they would not be attacked in the streets, or not to, fearing that showing such hospitality might provoke an attack by people driven mad with hunger.

Throughout the winter and spring of 1933, people knocked on city dwellers' doors asking for bread. Only bread. My parents gave to some, but then began to answer “God will provide,” because the number of those who knocked and begged grew from day to day. I felt a chill in

my heart perhaps for the first time in my life when I heard that futile "God will provide." For if God didn't, what would these people eat? My parents obviously sensed that they could lose their parental respect because of that "God will provide," and one day, invited a young man in, who was cold and hungry. They fed and warmed him. The next day the boy went on his way to continue begging, and I fell ill with typhus. My mother cried over me, but she also cried over that youth, who would also surely fall ill, since he had typhus-carrying fleas in his clothes. I got better, but the boy probably died, since he could scarcely have fought off such a deadly disease wandering homeless.

To those who think that the famine in 1933 was caused by a crop failure, I can relate that after my lengthy illness, I noticed that my mother placed a bouquet of flowers on the window sill, a bouquet that I had never seen around the house before. It consisted of luxuriant stalks of wheat from a field in the Odessa district. My mother preserved these stalks until the beginning of the war in 1941. Whoever wondered at it, asking why, my parents, in their urban apartment, kept a sheaf of wheat on their window sill, (and yet it wasn't a sheaf, but merely a slender bouquet of wheat stalks) heard the explanation that such wheat was to be found in the fields when a deadly famine returned to Ukraine.

1946 was the first year after the war. In the summer of that year there was a drought in southern Ukraine and in neighbouring Moldavia. The renewal of collectivization in the post war period produced the same kind of results occasioned by the first phase of it. The result was famine. Again, hungry peasants knocked on our door. Again, there was an outbreak of typhus.

In 1946-47, I was involved in a rural effort to stem an epidemic of typhus that had flared up among the starving. But the government sent the villages, dying of famine and pestilence once again, not only young inexperienced doctors, but special Party commissions and prosecutors as well. Every individual of working age (regardless of state of health) was called before the commission to determine if he/she had performed the yearly norm for workdays. Those who did not, the prosecutor (summarily, without a trial) designated for deportation. Their reasons were the following: the post-war displacement of agriculture, the decrease in manpower, scientific determination of daily work norms, but mainly, hunger among collective farm workers.

Only the working class were issued adequate numbers of ration cards. Therefore, an accountant at a collective farm, a clerk or a collective farm executive's maid obtained bread and other foods by ration card. Collective farm workers were not issued such cards, because they were not

considered to be a member of the working class, and was not a civil servant. These were the kinds of absurdities that the socialist system of administration used to obscure the real causes of the third famine suffered by the Ukrainian nation. The reason for it was that Ukrainians, even though they were exhausted by a larcenous collectivization, hunger, and arbitrary rule, tried to use the events of the Second World war to their advantage to throw off the regimes of two occupying countries.

It bears mentioning that in this instance, I speak only of the lands on the Black Sea coast and the banks of the Danube. In Western Ukraine, armed opposition to Soviet Russian rule continued. During the period of renewed Russian occupation, it was easy to create the conditions for a new famine and a new set of deportations.

The last offensive against the Ukrainian farmer was barely over when Stalin's regime announced the abolition of the ration card system towards the end of 1947. In the first days that provisions were available without ration cards, people feared that this would be temporary and attempted to store bread. But food continued to be sold in the cities every day. Even the line-ups disappeared. Then the question formed on everyone's lips: Where did the government manage to obtain bread if the traditional farming districts were experiencing droughts and grain consignment norms were not being met? The government was silent, and the people were silent, because they had learned to be thus.

But the abovementioned stories of drought, famine and deportation are only the beginning.

In 1947, I obtained my medical degree. The Party administrators of the health system began to instruct us, as young professionals, about the reasons for the drought of 1946. The explanations included the following: because crops had dried down to the roots in 1946, it was impossible to harvest them, and as a consequence, this created a large rise in food available to feed field mice. The sustained by this food surplus, the mouse population exploded, but they all began to get infected with a disease called tularemia. Cats, who ate these mice, also contracted this disease and began to die off. As the feline population diminished, so the mouse population increased still more, and these eventually infected the human population.

To this day I am not quite certain whether the mice in southern Ukraine fell ill because they had a surplus of food, and because the cats that could have eradicated them disappeared. This theory of grain-mice-cats did not seem to be overly plausible at the time, because grain is usually eaten by field mice, not domestic mice. The latter tend to be the mice that cats usually have dealings with. Be that as it may, people fell

ill, and they needed care.

Direct contact with the population gave me ample opportunity to find out that, in the aftermath of a famine in the village of Zhubryiany (today, Prymors'ke, Odessa province), of 800 households, only 300 remained; that, in the town of Vylkovo, the people who starved were those, who had never done so before: fishermen. Apparently, the border patrol of the USSR forbade fishermen to catch fish in the areas where they were most plentiful.

Then came the days when I heard young rural children issue the unnatural challenge to us city-folk, who were less acquainted with poverty: "Me, I ate carrion."

Whatever the case may be, whether it was typhus or some other plague, the deportations continued right up to the death of Stalin. Those who were capable of offering any resistance were deported from Western Ukraine, while in the pacified and collectivized steppe Ukraine, farmers were being deported for their inability to fulfill irrational norms of production.

In 1954, the word rang out: "thaw," and meanwhile, in the rest of the wide world, the scientific and technological revolution was advancing at full speed. Does this mean that the spectre of famine would never return to us? Let us look for the answer in the events of later times. A little more than a decade went by, and in 1964, in the stores of Odessa and other Ukrainian cities, were empty once again. A rationing system was not imposed, but the more essential food items could only be obtained at one's place of work one or two times a month. The purchase of bread and other foods. The citizenry would begin to place orders for bread and other foods with friends who went to Moscow on business for short periods of time. At that time, trains that arrived from Moscow were met with many people hoping to meet those who travelled to the centre. These were people who had acquaintances living in Moscow and hoped that the latter might somehow manage to send them something by way of the train servicemen.

People would ask each other: "Where has all the bread suddenly disappeared to?" or "Have 'they' thought up another 1933?" In the conditions of a Soviet reality, these kind of speculations could only be muttered under one's breath, although at that time, the events of Novocherkassk had already begun.

While the people worried over the new shortages, the spring of 1964 arrived, and with it, the end of Khrushchev's rule. Virtually overnight, the citizens of Odessa saw white bread, groats, and even buckwheat and rice. Out of nowhere, district Party commissariat representatives appeared

to check each store for a guaranteed assortment of food in the stores. The people, hid their malicious smiles that asked the rhetorical question: "Where were you controllers of variety during the times of shortages?"

In the Soviet Union, there is one category of the citizenry that is always destined to starve. The prisoners. The feeding of prisoners is an important subject, that needs to be discussed separately. In this instance I will simply submit facts that demonstrate the legislators of the USSR use famine as an instrument of control of the few millions of inhabitants of its Gulag Archipelago. It is enough, I believe, to simply mention the two daily nutritional norms applied in feeding prisoners: 1400 calories or 900 calories. Nevertheless, in both instances, the prisoner must work. But can he meet the required norm when he is fed at that rate? And thus, the slave of the Gulag is caught in a vicious circle: non-fulfilment of norms, followed by punitive rations, followed by non-fulfilment of norms...

Starvation rations for prisoners are one of the more irrefutable kind of evidence that planned famine is used in the USSR. Someone might object that the entire population of the USSR is not sitting in prison or in camps. Let us then attempt to quickly describe the everyday life of the "free" citizenry. It stands in line for all of the essentials and seeks out rare items that are unobtainable in those line-ups. To be sure, there is a group in society that is never in want of food: the Party elite.

Because it is a powerful and totalitarian state that has an unregulated supply of food, the USSR has become a breeding ground for black markets. This black market actually assists the survival of the people, but its destructive influence is becoming more and more evident. Thus, our fellow countrymen live under the constant threat of physical and moral exhaustion.

In killing the body, the enemy aims to kill the soul. The repressive system in Moscow is constantly perfecting new methods of anti-Ukrainian terrorism. Today the people of Ukraine are not dying of hunger, but the offensive against them is proceeding in another guise. The situation is very complex, particular and constantly claims numerous victims. Let us not forget them, and let us remind others of them.

**Oksana Solovei**

1932-33

*(Delivered at a commemorative evening of mourning, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, 21 August 1983)*

In early spring of 1933, Khoma Semenovych Riabokin received a letter from his ten year old niece, Zina:

Dear Uncle

We have no bread and there is nothing to eat. Father has become exhausted from hunger and lay down on the bench, and now will not get up. Mother has gone blind from the hunger and can see nothing. I lead them outside. I very much want some bread. Take me in, uncle, to live with you in Kharkiv, because otherwise I shall die of hunger. Take me, I am still small and I want to live. Here I will die, because everyone is dying...

It proved impossible to save anyone of the family. Zina's cousin Natalia, who today lives in Philadelphia, also remembers the winter of 1932-33 thus:

Mother often travelled from Lysychi to Kharkiv to visit father and get food. She carried whatever she could on her back. I remember the following incident. My mother came into the house after one such a journey and burst into tears, saying: "Children, I did manage to bring you this sack of food, but I was chased by some unfortunate man who tried to take it away from me." Apparently the man was chasing her on a sleigh. When he approached, she would shout "Vio" at the horse, it would veer off, and the man would run off to catch it. He would catch up with it and then resume chasing mother. It was like this all the way to the village. When mother drew near to the village, she began shouting for help and scared the man away. He was probably emaciated himself because he couldn't overcome my mother. Later, she grew so weak that she could travel to Kharkiv no longer. We wrote to father, asking him to come and save us, but he, obviously, was afraid to come for us. My uncle Tymokha took us to the station himself. There were five of us huddling around my mother. The eldest was thirteen, the youngest was three and a half.

At a homestead near the railway station in Likhachovo, the seven year old Nina Kubyk waited for her mother to return from her search

for food somewhere in the area of Kurs'k. The children came out into the yard thinking that it would somehow make her return the sooner. When her mother finally did appear, the people wouldn't let her into the house. So she pulled out a loaf of bread on the spot, and the young girl ate it down to the last crust in the doorway.

In the spring of 1933, when the snows melted away, the commonage behind the village glared white with skeletons. During the frosts and the snow storms, people would force themselves to get to the station, and often did not make it. Nina often remembers the terrible impression the skeletons, particularly the skulls, made on her. That spring, the peasants, those who could still move, dragged the skeletons into a heap for burial.

Nina's friend Dusia M. lives in Canada. She does not know exactly when she was born. Her identification gives March 1926. How near the truth this is, is difficult to say. During the famine, Dusia's family fled the village, looking for help anywhere they could. Her father died on the way. Her mother stepped off the train with four small children, sat them down near the station, and went off somewhere. Forever. The police found the children and placed them in orphanages: her three brothers in one, Dusia in another. The little girl knew her name and nothing else. She never saw her brothers again. Doctors determined her approximate age and ascribed her birthdate to March, somewhere around the namesday for Ievdokiia.

On 31 August 1932, *Svoboda*, the Ukrainian daily in the USA printed an article based on an interview with an American student who had visited the USSR and spoke the language. This article included the following passage:

One of the American students saw abandoned peasant children on the streets of Kiev. Some of them wore placards on their chests, which explained that the parents had left the child because they could not bear to watch it tormented by hunger.

The number of buildings designated as orphanages grew rapidly. Sometime in early 1933, the People's Commissariat of Education sent a letter to all schools in Kharkiv announcing that, across from the ship-building plant, a "children's village" (the authorities shied from the term "orphans"), would be set up. Teachers were asked to assist in preparing for work with the children. This was to be done, so to speak, as a matter of dealing with social responsibility, without pay. Ievdokiia Tymofiivna Mishchenko volunteered for work in the "village" to get out of the school for the deaf-mute.

Emaciated, ill, terrified by the incomprehensible flow of events, the children, for the most part, remained stubbornly mute, and carried out

the instructions of their educators. Sometimes, however, moved by a gentle word or touch, they would tell their story.

Ivasyk was six years old. He appeared to be less emaciated than most and he still had a flash in his eye. He did not know where his father was, and until recently, he had lived with his mother. One day, his mother called him to her side and told him to dress warmly and to go to the city. "Just watch and, wherever the people go, you follow," she told him. "And if you chance upon an older woman, then hold on to her, do not let her be, she will lead you to where you have to go." The boy returned to the house three times; he did not want to leave his mother, but she scolded him and he listened. Surely enough, some old woman led him to Kharkiv, sat him down in a prominent place, and ordered him not to move until he was picked up by the police. They picked him up.

The eldest of the children in the barracks was a young boy of thirteen who was terribly weak and emaciated. He was very ashamed that he was picked up as a starving child. This, by the way, is characteristic of people who are starving. Until their mental faculties begin to be affected, they are always ashamed of their condition, believing themselves to be responsible for the lack of food. The boy told Ievdokiia Temofiivna the following story: His father had brought him to Kharkiv for an operation. As he recuperated, he wrote his parents to come and get him, but received no reply. At the hospital he was told that they could no longer keep him, and discharged him, saying: "Go, wherever you want." And so, he left and fainted in the street somewhere. Apparently, he lost consciousness for quite some time, because when he awoke, he realized he was lying amidst corpses in a field. He extricated himself from under the bodies and began crawling toward the city. He was picked up again and taken, not to a mass grave, but to the orphanage, or rather the "children's village."

In the late fall of 1932, my good friend Tetiana stepped off a train at the Dolyns'ka station, thirty five miles northwest of Kryvyi Rih. She had to get to a distant collective farm, where a relative of hers worked. No trucks passed on the way. At long last, a tractor driver pulled up and agreed to take her at least part of the way. They approached a large village, or town, of about three thousand inhabitants. Already in the town they noticed that a black flag was flying in the commonage near the main entrance way. In every house they passed, the windows and doors were boarded up. Deathly silence reigned all around. Briars and weeds stood head high. The town had died to a man.

According to the testimony of Marusia Vovk, a black flag was also hung out in the town of Troiits'ka, Petropavlivs'kyi district, Dnipropetrovs'k province. It stands on the river Byk, near the Samara

estuary.

In the houses of the living, there were scenes such as the one described to me in a letter from N. Mohyla. She was nine at the time.

I remember the time they arrived for the cow. A man with a rifle was screaming at my mother: "Hand over the cow" My mother was screaming back, just as loudly: "You kill me first, I won't give you the cow, it's keeping my children alive" We children stood around my mother and cried. The cow was in its pen and the iron ring was hooked in the door. We had already not brought the cow outside for a number of days, tearing grass and bringing it for her to eat, because we were afraid of having her seized. The man went away, but he threatened my mother. I do not remember when it was that they took the cow, but take it they did. I remember how they came and took everything edible. They climbed up the attic, the shed, the cellar. I know that my mother went to the collective farm to work and came home with some sort of thin soup.

This was the fall of 1932, and the worst had yet to come.

Olia Kovalevs'ka's mother would leave for work, whence she brought somecrusts as payment, and lock her daughter in the house and sharply ordered her not to open the door to anyone; not anyone, not even relatives. The little girl also hid under the floorboards, so noone would see that someone was home. They lived in Lokhvyschi.

Parents tried saving their children in any way possible. In despair, some even tried to cross the border into Romania or Poland. On 28 July 1932, the residents of Volovoda on the Bessarabian bank of the Dnister river witnessed how the Bolshevik border guard sank a boat with five people fleeing aboard. None of those shot rose to the surface. A week later, others were lucky: near Makariv Torykov a peasant, his wife and four children crossed over into Bessarabia. I heard my parents saying that the latter had decided rather to die in the Dnister than to die of hunger. Mrs. Pavlyshyn remembers that quite a number of people crossed the Zbruch river near Skala Podil's'ka in the Borshchiv region. She personally knew a family of refugees with two children.

However, more often than not, children died along with their parents. In Kharkiv, I witnessed the following scene: right in front of the building of the Central Committee of the Party, the bodies of an entire family lay in a heap — parents and a few children. It is so early that the streetcars are not yet running — just past dawn. When it becomes lighter out, the police would come to collect them. Meanwhile, only Stalin's portrait on the facade of the building stands guard over them as we cast terrified glances in that direction.

On 30 August 1960, the Belgian queen, Elizabeth, granted an

audience to the young poet, Kuz'ma Dmytryk. The occasion was the publication of a collection of Dmytryk's poetry, written in French. In the poem entitled *Ukraine* are the following lines (translated): "And all around, under the bloody gaze of a barbaric dictator, whole villages die of hunger." Dmytryk was born in a village near Kiev. His parents died and Kuz'ma grew up in an orphanage. He did not forget the horrors of the famine, and told his readers about them.

In the Donets' region, eleven year old Raia looked at all of the empty houses of her grandmother's village, at the emptiness all around, and asked her mother: Why is it like this? Why? A child's impressions were not erased from her memory. Raia's own daughter Liudmyla heard many stories about those terrible years from her mother. Today, through the efforts of Liudmyla a monument to the victims of the famine stands in Edmonton.

Before a battle that was to decide the fate of Ukraine-Rus', prince Sviatoslav turned to his soldiers and said: "Let us not disgrace the lands of Rus', let us lie down with our bones, because the dead have no shame. And yet, neither do the dead speak. In order for the words of manliness and pride to be handed down to us, a living chronicler was needed to write them down. In order that future generations know about this national calamity, every witness of these tragic events must become their chronicler. Neither will we disgrace our land. Let us speak for the dead, as they are unable to speak.

## The Real Motives of the Genocide of 1933

Ivan Lesko

### Part I

Documents in Soviet government archives concerning the reasons and identities of the initiators of the famine of 1933 are still inaccessible to researchers, but it has been possible to ascertain the real motive for causing such a tragedy from the materials that have come to light.

The fact that Soviet authorities have supplied several explanations for this terrible event, indicates that they wished to obscure the actual reason for it. Crop failure, effects of industrialization, the need for mechanization of agriculture, organizational difficulties and other reasons have been given, but few are readily convinced by them. If there had been a crop failure, then the Bolshevik rulers would have had little reason to conceal it. Such crop failures and concomitant famines had occurred in Ukraine in previous centuries, and the tsarist regime did not conceal them at all, the press wrote about them, and historians took note of them. Moscow not only continues to forbid any mention of the famine of 1933, considering it to be a state secret and a taboo subject for the public, it also does not react to publications produced abroad, even though it usually does so promptly and with considerable venom.

The organizers of this genocide took pains to hide it from foreigners (such as tourists or journalists) even as it was taking place, by keeping them out of affected areas. Nevertheless, at the time, quite a number of foreign correspondents wrote that famine was raging in Ukraine and that it was being caused by the pernicious policies of Moscow. Among these were E. Ammende, W.H. Chamberlin, B. Ripley and others. On the basis of their reports, the International Congress of National Minorities in Berne, held in September 1933, "unanimously found the Soviet authorities guilty of having caused this famine." (*Svoboda*, 19 September 1933).

The other reason for the famine, the so-called unavoidable after-effect of industrialization, also does not appear to be plausible, considering the extraordinary use of terror and coercion used in order to implement it. Stalin himself, in a conversation with Churchill, during the Second World War, admitted that his methods of industrialization proved more costly than the war with Hitler, but that in his opinion, they had been

unavoidable. The English author, C.P. Snow, who recorded this conversation, doubted Stalin's sincerity when the latter spoke of the "unavoidable" savagery of his policies, a doubt that would be aroused in any normal person.

For the reasons given above, the other rationalizations and evasions also prove inadequate. The true motivations can be found in statements made by Communist leaders at the time, for instance, P. Postyshev. He stated, at a Communist Party gathering, that "1933 was the year of the rout of Ukrainian nationalist counterrevolution." As we shall see, Stalin's views were very similar.

Researchers of this genocide who are guided by a greater integrity, agree that the main reason for the famine was Russian chauvinism, and more precisely, the decision made in the Kremlin to destroy Ukrainian nationalism and its carrier — the Ukrainian peasantry. This motive was already examined in the 1930s by the abovementioned correspondents, and contemporary Ukrainian public opinion also had no illusions about this. Thus, the German journalist E. Ammende had been to the Soviet Union in 1934-35 and wrote the following in his book, *Muss Russland Hungern* (Must Russia Starve?): "the nationality issue played an important role in the famine. ... Russia is trying to directly destroy a large section of the current generation of Ukrainians." The Parisian daily, *Le Matin* published the declaration of the French delegation that travelled to the Soviet Union in 1933:

The famine in Ukraine has been caused by Moscow artificially; it is politically motivated and is designed to eliminate all efforts to gain independence, and to destroy an entire people whose only sin is its desire for freedom.

So wrote many other correspondents, and thus, on this basis, *Svoboda* wrote, on 5 August 1933: "Moscow has decided to eradicate Ukrainian identity in Ukraine."

Such a decision, as we know, was instituted by Moscow once before, three hundred years previously. Moscow's policy proceeded along these lines, with varying degrees of success, either through a denationalization of the Ukrainian ruling elite, or through Russification of the Ukrainian printed word. When all of these efforts proved futile, and when Ukrainian culture and identity continued to reappear at every opportunity in all of its greatness and strength, the Bolshevik leadership decided to destroy its roots physically, by genocide. It had become evident that Ukrainian spirituality, national character, and culture differed rather too obviously from those of its "elder brother." They had proved themselves too deeply rooted in the face of all efforts at Russification, and thus, neither through

its Marxist-materialist “faith,” nor through their “culture,” would the Bolsheviks be able to either best or destroy Ukrainian identity. The scope and the unbelievable cruelty of this attempt at physical liquidation, serves as evidence of the depth of hatred aroused by Ukrainian spirituality, and of the degree of difference between the two peoples. An American tourist, W. Betcherer wrote: “the wildest human imagination would not be able to conceive of such hell.”

Thus, Ukrainian peasants, the guardians of their culture, became the object of Moscow’s two-fold hatred: that of a hatred of nomads for farmers; and that of Russians of Ukrainians. The Bolsheviks did not liquidate their own peasantry because they had lived for centuries under a semi-nomadic, communistic custom of the *mir* (communal estate). There was no famine in Russia.

Stalin considered his policies to be war against the peasantry, crying the Leninist dictum: *Kto kogo* (Who whom). The hypocrisy, cynicism and perfidy of this executioner are obvious when one examines the way the weakened and ruined peasantry was forced to engage the might of a state, and the Bolshevik machine, armed to its teeth.

## Part II

The Soviets also destroyed the peasantry according to the program of its totalitarian system, which aimed to dehumanize the individual, in order to transform him/her into a mechanical cog of its state machine. This goes in direct opposition to Ukrainian culture, which cultivates the essential in each individual and directs him/her to strive for a higher moral and spiritual plane.

It is the characteristic of every farmer, and therefore, of the the Ukrainian peasant, to be attached to one’s own piece of land; to love one’s labour; to rejoice in one’s creative work and in what it produces. These traits are all inimical to the slothful nomads and their representatives — Russian communists — who derided the work-loving Ukrainian farmers as “kulaks” worthy only of death.

Stalin understood very well that the Ukrainian peasantry was the mainstay and the representative of Ukrainian national identity. At the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1927, he declared that “the village safeguards national values ... the village is the repository of the Ukrainian language.” In his book, *Marxism and the National-Colonial Question*, he wrote: “the peasantry is the basic army of the national movement,” and further: “this is the matter to consider when we say that

*the nationality question is actually the peasant question.*” (my emphasis, I.L.) Stalin’s decision to destroy this peasantry was simply the culmination of his convictions. This decision was made definite by the glorious outburst of development in Ukrainian culture during the 1920s.

To a great extent, Stalin achieved his goal. The threat issued with great fanfare by the Polish rulers of the 17th century, that Rus’-Ukraine “would not even be left to medicine,” was carried out with little ado, in the most insidious fashion imaginable, by “the elder brother” in the 20th century.

Already in September 1933, the *New York Times* wrote that “the Bolsheviks broke the resistance of the Ukrainian peasantry by famine and executions, and forced it to work for them.” Truly, the peasantry as a social class hardly exists in Ukraine in its traditional form. It has been deprived of its right to private ownership and to individual initiative. In other words, it has been deprived of the basis for freedom and human dignity. The Bolsheviks have transformed the peasantry into a collection of “agricultural workers” who are completely dependent on the state. This is the “bizarre class” as A. Amalrik called it — “people who have a double psychology... These are not peasants and they are not workers; and nobody knows whom they consider themselves to be.” The vital members of the former class of farmers have been changed into collective robots, interested only in basic vegetative survival and the improvement of material conditions of life.

The Convention of the United Nations called the destruction of more than six million Ukrainian peasants “one of the most gigantic and heinous of crimes,” and we can examine many of its aspects from a distance of half a century. From the perspective of cultural history, it was probably one of the greatest setbacks in a process of spiralling advances.

From the historical point of view, one might agree with the optimists, who see the contemporary condition of Ukraine not “as a final result of the damnation before the court of history, but rather, a period of purgatory, through which the nation passes in order to attain the kingdom of its freedom.” (M. Shlemkevych) This was the attitude adopted by the Sixth Congress of United Ukrainian Organizations in America, which declared, in 1933, that “the terrible price that the Ukrainian people is paying for the idea of statehood ... only strengthens the Ukrainian nation, removes all barriers, party factionalism and misunderstanding, and brings everyone together spiritually into a single whole...”

From a religious point of view, one can consider this famine as a harsh punishment for some grievous sin committed by the people, or in the words of one Ukrainian dissident: “the sentence handed down to the

masses who so blindly followed the path of hatred and assisted dictatorship in taking root.” The bishop of Kiev in the 16th century considered the deprivations besetting his people at that time to be God’s punishment. He claimed that God “turned Ukraine into a complete desert for a few hundred years ... for the repugnant and abominable conduct of the Ukrainian people.”

However, it should be kept in mind that punishment and the attendant suffering have a moral significance for both individuals and the societies in which they occur. They often serve to awaken the nation to the fact that it has strayed from the path of its destiny, and that it has fallen from the path of the ideal, to the path of the material.

However, it is also true that no crime can go unpunished, and that sooner or later, that if human justice does not exact its due, then a higher form of justice will. One of the accursed participants and executors of the famine of 1933, the Soviet emigre writer Lev Kopelev, said: “such a crime cannot be absolved through prayer, nor repentance.”

Christian teaching holds that every crime can be absolved and forgiven along the path of repentance. However, the communist atheists reject the teachings of Christ and are not inclined to repent. Thus, we can assume that their crime will be punished in accordance with its monstrosity by the Higher Justice. And yet, the Ukrainian people is not vengeful, and is inclined to show forgiveness even for the most grievous harm.

When we remember this tragedy, we remember it for the benefit of history; for the benefit of our knowledge and for the knowledge of the whole world, a world that should learn from our experience as we do.

## **My Memory of the Famine in 1933**

M.P. Borovyk

*(Abridged)*

In 1932 I was serving in the Red Army as a conscript. Then as now, I was a devoutly religious man, and expressed my religious convictions in conversations with anyone. These religious conversations of mine were treated by the military authorities as the “dissemination of religion among Red Army cadres.” For this, I was brought before a court martial and incarcerated. My brother Hordii was deported north for his evangelical work. He returned from this exile in 1936, while in 1937, during the Yezhov purges, he was again arrested, then shot. At that time, the Orthodox priest Serhii Florovych Remezov, was arrested by the NKVD and did not survive their tortures.

The strangest thing is, of course, that I survived the Famine of 1933 because I was sitting in prison, serving a sentence for my religious activities. In prison, inmates were to be issued 500 grams of bread daily, but we never received more than an average of 300 to 400 grams. Peasants who were free did not even get that much, and so they starved to death. What kind of system is it, under which a criminal (by their standards), a convict, was an individual of greater worth than a peasant farmer? The latter was fed, while the latter was deprived of the last remnants of his food.

In prison, I was trusted because of my religious conviction, even though I was known as a “religious sheep” and “man of power.” I worked for the prison administration. In the spring of 1933, I travelled among the surrounding villages in order to find firewood for the prison. Once I arrived at such a village to be met by the head of the local council and directed to an empty house. I was told that it could be taken apart for firewood.

“Where are the people who lived here?” I asked. “They’ve died of starvation,” came the reply. It was thus that I first learned that people were dying of hunger. Entire families. I had been in the Red Army and then in prison, and so I knew nothing of what was happening in the countryside.

In early January 1933, a shipment of prisoners from the Bobrovysti

district arrived. A man was brought in, obviously not of low standing, because he was immediately assigned to accounting in the administration where I worked. I met him often during the course of my work, and soon, I made a place for him in the cell where I slept. My behaviour toward him inspired trust — probably because of our common predicament. His name was Khamilov. He was the head of the Borovets'kyi district *Vykonkom* (executive committee). I didn't ask him whether he was a Party member, and he didn't say. He described what he had been arrested for. In 1932, an intensified drive for grain consignment was begun, and special "dredging" brigades were set up in order to assist in "kneading" the grain out of the peasants. In the fall of 1932, the people began to go hungry in the villages, and in the winter, they began to die of starvation. He saw this happening and thought that it was some mistake that the authorities did not know about. He decided to write about the situation to the Kiev Provincial *Vykonkom* (Kiev was only a provincial town in those days, because the capital of Ukraine was Kharkiv). He sincerely expected a government commission to arrive, investigate the situation, and take steps to put a stop to the absurdity of the goings on. However, in answer to his letter, a Circuit Justice Section initiated a show trial against him, and denounced him as an example of slanderers and saboteurs of planned grain consignment. This "circuit session" as they were called, sentenced him to eight years of imprisonment.

This serves to prove that the famine was purposely caused by the Russian executioners, who managed to exploit even the Jews in realizing their will, by promising the latter privileges while at the same time executing their elite.

At the railway station in Nizhyn, there were large grain stores, whence the prison population got buckwheat, barley, millet, and even some wheat. With my own eyes, I saw enough grain in those stores to feed the entire Kiev province. But on each grain silo two letters were affixed: "NZ" — *Neprikosnovennii zapas*, (untouchable food supply).

People from the villages brought their last possessions into the bazaar, such as rugs, embroidered shirts and towels, anything that could be traded for food. But who needed these things? It was difficult to obtain food in the cities. Some wives of high placed Party members and functionaries bought certain things, but most people from the villages lacked the strength to return home, and simply died in the streets.

A widow from Nizhyn, named Mokhersha, lived with her eighty five year old mother. The widow managed to find some flour somewhere, and baked some *pyrizhky* with it, hoping to sell them at the bazaar and buy some firewood for the winter. The police arrested her for speculating.

She was sentenced for three years imprisonment. While she was serving her term, her mother died of starvation.

I will never forget the terrible tragedy I witnessed in February 1933. A cold wind blew and wet snow fell. The chief administrator of the prison called me to him and ordered me and two other prisoners to take some boards over to the church. The other four churches in the area had already been closed down and converted into a storage warehouse, but this one had been converted into an addition to the jail.

When we got there, the sight we met is impossible to describe: it was full of peasant women of all ages, all half naked, ragged and shivering from the cold. Some of them were completely swollen from hunger and reacted to nothing. Their breath condensed on the walls of the church and streamed down. As we carried in the boards, they simply wiped off their tears and huddled together in fright. After a while, some of them realized that we were as unfortunate as they, and began pleading with us for hot water, but where were we to get any? When asked, they told me that they had been imprisoned for withholding grain and for anti-Soviet propaganda. When I asked them where their husbands were, or who they had left their children with, some said the husbands had been deported north, other men had simply fled, and the children of all had simply been left in empty unheated houses. Two days later, the women were gone and no one could find out where they had disappeared to.

On 9 June 1933, I was released, perhaps with the expectation that I would die in the famine. I went home and passed through Chernihiv, where I was to transfer trains to the Chernihiv-Ovruch line. I waited for the next train until two in the morning and I saw the hungry and swollen who travelled to Russia to buy bread. One of the men I met told me that it was forbidden to export food out of Russia, but that he was carrying a loaf of bread. An NKVD (OGPU) agent searched the man, found the bread and cut off half of it for himself, claiming that the law stated that it was illegal to bring more than one kilogram of bread into Ukraine from Russia. Imagine, if such an occurrence were to happen in Canada, on the way from Quebec, who would ever believe it? And yet we survived this.

When I arrived back home, I found that many of my relatives and friends had died. And yet, in Polissia, fewer died of hunger than in the steppe regions of Ukraine. During the tsarist period, many distilleries were constructed in our area, that produced alcohol from potatoes grown in large fields nearby. In 1933, the people threw themselves at these fields as soon as the ground began to thaw and began digging around for some stray potatoes and ate them, frozen though they were.

In Polissia, there was also a kind of forest beet, early seasonal mushrooms that gave of a sort of bitter milky substance, but people boiled them twice over and ate them nevertheless. Early blueberries could also be found and there was also some horse sorrel in the fields after the wet spring.

My family, compared to others, was still in a tolerable condition. There were only three of us: me, my wife, and my sister. We had a healthy cow and thus, drinking milk and eating frozen potatoes and sorrel, we managed to stave off death by starvation. But I still had my brother Martyn to consider, who had begun to swell from hunger, and being in a better condition, I undertook to help him. An army command centre was located about eight kilometres from my house, and the construction that it usually oversaw had recently come to a halt. Although people tried to dissuade me from doing so, I went there looking for work in my prison garb. As God is my guide and keeper, I got work — as an interior painter — and managed to get a job for my brother as well. My family's and my brother's joy at this was inexpressible. This meant that we would get 800 grams of bread a day; bread that we hadn't seen since Christmas. However, our happiness was somewhat dimmed by the fact that my brother was so weakened by hunger that he could not get to work the first day. We made it the next however, although I had to lead him by the hand all day and give him a litre of milk that my wife had given us both for lunch, just so that he would take home those first 800 grams of bread.

Thus my brother was saved. However, it was impossible to save his wife and young son, and both of them died of hunger. Everyday people died of hunger. Nobody protected them, and after they'd passed on, their bodies were collected onto wagons, taken out beyond the village and thrown into communal graves. At that time, Doctor Buryi was in charge of the medical clinic in Noryn. He travelled from village to village, instructing people as to which grasses or herbs could be eaten without danger of poisoning. In 1934, doctors had to submit statistics to the government concerning incidences of death and their causes. He filed a report in which he listed the cause of death as malnutrition or starvation. This report was not to the liking of the NKVD (OGPU), apparently because in the USSR, people did not die of hunger because there is always enough food. Dr. Buryi was forced to refile his report, in which he listed cause of death as something other than hunger. He told me of this himself when I came over to do some carpentry at the hospital.

Perhaps deep in his soul Dr. Buryi sensed that I would immortalize the good man in my memoirs one day. He died after the Second World War. His daughter Mary lives in Lethbridge Alberta, and she can attest

to the veracity of her father's statements.

In the area of the Noryn' village council, Ovruts'kyi district, Zhytomyr province, there were five hundred households. Five hundred people from the area died in the famine of 1933. The average family had four members, so basically 25% of the population of our village council area died. I don't remember the names of everyone who died from our area. I don't even remember the names of all of those who died in our village, although I would have recognized them on sight. Not to list the names I do remember would be a sin, and so, here they are:

Baliuk, Ivan; Baliuk, Oleksa; Baliuk Stepan and four children; Baliuk, Stakhii; Lavreniuk, Pavlo Fedorovych; Moroz, Iosyp Abramovych; Borovyk Mariia; Borovyk Mykola; Kravchuk Pylyp Stepanovych; Serhiichuk Vira Havrylivna; Serhiichuk, Dmytro Arkhypovych; Serhiichuk, Iaryna and son; Kulish, Sydor and three children; Ievdokym the tailor and his daughter; Serhiichuk Feodosii; Serhiichuk Vasyl and his wife; Rabushei Pavlo and his wife; Chukha, Stepan and four children; Kravchuk, Danylo; Vashchuk, Stadei; Rabushei, Iosyp; Rabushei, Hanna and her children; Rabushei, Roman and son; Shanbir, Stepan and his brother and family; Vashchuk, Demyd and his wife Hanna; Vashchuk Nykodym and his family; Hudzylo, Dmytro and his family; Bereziuk, Mykola and his family; Harbar, Fedir and his family; Pyzhyk, Viktor; Meinarovych Sylvester; Rybachenko, Arkhytei and his wife; Harbar, Tereshko; Harbar, Anton and his wife; Bortun, Mykola; Bortun, Iakiv Korniiiovych; Bortun, Levko Iakovych; Bortun, Andrii Iakovych; Bortun, Nastia Iakivna; Koval Hordii and family; Hoichuk, Ivan; Hoichuk, Varka and her child; Hoichuk, Malashka; Brozhko, Petro and his family; Demianchuk, Hordii; Borovyk, Lavrin and his family; Borovyk, Kindrat and his family; Lavrenchuk, Mykhailo Mefodiiiovych; Borovyk, Nastia; Shambir, wife of Opanas and daughter; Borovyk, Savka Petrovych; Borovyk, Hryhorii Nykonorovych; Lukianchuk, Domna Mykolaiivna; Leshchynskyyi, Pavlo Hryhorovych; Hoichuk, Iakym; Hoichuk Denys and his family; Diachkiv and his entire family; Lavrenchuk, Kharyton and his family; Hudylyko, Anatoli and his family; Hudylyko, Vasyl' and his family; Korobets', Nestor and his family; Orysia (sister of above) and her husband; Lavrynychuk, Khrystofor and his family; Lavrynychuk, Domana and her family; Redchuk, Khotyna Trokhymivna; Redchuk, Hotyna Trokhymivna; Redchuk, Stepan Andriiovych; Palii, wife of Ivan; Mel'nyk, Olena (maiden name); Savchuk, Uliana Mykhailivna; Dukianchuk, Hanna Pavlivna; Tarhonii, Hanna; Lukianchuk, Torkhym, and some members of his family; Hudylo, Denys; Petruk, Stepan; Lavrenchuk, Kylyna (maiden name).

Although I did not mention everyone, and I have forgotten many surnames, but let the above at least be remembered, as those innocents on whom the Russian Communist executioners forced to look down the black barrels of death. They died and never thought that their martyrs' deaths would be spoken of to the world.

Such was God's will that we survive and reveal the terrible truth about communism to the Western world.

## **Hell on Earth** Andrii Lehit

The girls no longer sing in the street,  
autumn's shadow and lash fall everywhere,  
in the neighbouring Zhabokriukivka  
even the frogs haven't cried for a year.

The ragged thatched rooves are sleeping  
as are the hungry overworked people,  
and beyond the fields on the horizon,  
the harpies are putting a yoke on the moon.

The barns bid farewell to the storks,  
and reeds choke the crystal clear pond,  
the Church that was revered as the Little One,  
now droops without a bell or a cross.

Nothing remains of the Greater Church,  
only broken bricks and humps on the ground,  
the herons call down from the highest heights  
the herons sadly fly on their way.

The sycamores rustle no more near the roadways  
only the bare stumps burn like lanterns  
soundlessness reigns over the bare fields,  
and the plundered native land sleeps.

But here comes nineteen thirty three,  
the year the people called the accursed,  
when every barn bin and corner of granary  
was swept clean by the red broom.

They took the horses and bulls to the collective,  
they took the wagons, plows, and harrows too,  
they took some people to the distant north,  
while others died a hungry death.

It was a cold, icy winter  
that raged and whirled above the villages,  
the wind blew grey herds across the sky,  
and swept up white walls of drifts.

As the wind howled in a choir of wolves,  
the Frost painted panes with flowers.  
In the cold house, a grieving mother, barely alive,  
sat with her young children.

The famine chased the elders away  
into Turkestan, Siberia, the forests of Ural,  
the pens, sheds and fences been burned in the ovens,  
and the livestock and grain were taken by soldiers.

Father had gone to Tambov  
to sell the last of the clothes for grain,  
and now we cannot see the Lord's world through our tears.  
Mother has been waiting for him for months.

...A knocking comes. The door opens..  
and pain squeezes my poor mother's heart,  
emaciated, in rags, without grain,  
my father barely stands on his swollen feet.

If Taras arose from the grave  
and looked Ukraine over, he would weep,  
for the hell among us now  
is worse than hell was under Nicholas.

Everywhere, the scythe of death by hunger  
raged through the cities and towns,  
where has the beauty of the country gone?  
Where has the joyful singing gone?  
In Kyrlyivka, where he grew up  
in a ragged and unheated home,  
a woman stoops, as if taken down from the cross,  
a mother over her prostrated children.

Their cows and bulls had been taken from them  
their garden was ripped right up to the house,  
father and grandfather were driven east,  
while the mother and children were left to die.

“Bread,” cried little OIia,  
“Sleep, child, you’ll dream of it,”  
and the red broom emptied  
the barn, the shed and the cellar.

“Milk,” cried the smaller Ivas,  
“Sleep my beloved Ivasyk, without milk:  
Herod Stalin is raging at us,  
and has taken our cow Lyska to the slaughterhouse.”

...She put out the lamp, and lay herself down...  
but without closing their eyes for a minute that night,  
as already had half the village,  
the three of them fell asleep for eternity.

## **The Secrets of the Famine**

*(Where the NKVD (OGPU) Buried Thousands of Bodies)*

Vasyl Zaiika

During the tragic years of the famine orchestrated by Moscow, I worked in the Donbas region in Mine 4-6 Maksymivka, as a coal quality inspector. My responsibility was to take samples of coal as it was loaded onto freight cars, and send these samples to the laboratory for testing. I then took the results of these tests to the chief inspection bureau.

In terms of work-time, my job was not regulated by norms, because the railyards supplied freight cars both day and night, and I had to appear at the time they arrived, whatever the time of day. The main street in Kadiivka, a town that I walked through each day, was Torhova street. Virtually all of the administrative and commercial buildings were located on this street. There were various shops, a factory kitchen, a cafeteria for the workers of the "Illich" mine, a restaurant, and, at one end of the street, a bazaar that everyone called the "talkuchka." During the spring of 1933, famine was raging in the countryside. Peasants were trying to save themselves by escaping to the cities and towns in droves, because there at least some food was being issued by ration card. However, most of the peasants got neither jobs nor food and died in the street.

The chief inspection bureau was located behind a school park across from Torhova street. Thus, everyday I walked along it and saw hundreds of people, emaciated by hunger, as they lolled all swollen on the sidewalks, and saw the dead and dying among them.

One night in May 1933, I was walking to the bureau on business and witnessed how drunken policemen or NKVD (OGPU) operatives, aided by some criminal elements (who always seemed to hang around the police), loaded the dead and half-dead onto trucks. The criminals, who were also drunk, paired up, took the bodies by the legs and arms and then threw them onto the trucks as if they were firewood. They always did this at night, in order that local residents not know where the bodies were taken or what was done with them. I too wondered about these secret burials many a time.

Once, also in May 1933, a messenger from the mine came to me at around one or two o'clock in the morning. He was a boy of about sixteen or seventeen, and he told me that the coal was being loaded at the mine.

I dressed quickly and we set out toward it. In order to get there more quickly, we did not pass through the town, but cut across a field behind, following a path that led from the *Parkom* mine, past the no. 31 mine to the Maksymivs'ki mines. There were a number of auxiliary mineshaft exits along the way that were used for ventilation and as emergency outlets in case of collapse of one of the tunnels. These exits, or "shufry" as they were called, were excavated about two hundred to three hundred metres away from the main shaft, and when the coal in the mine was exhausted they were fenced off and then covered over.

The path we followed wound about eight to twelve metres past one of these "shufry" that had fallen into disuse. As we drew nearer to it, we saw a truck pull up. Some NKVD (OGPU) men got out, turned off the light in the truck, rolled back the fences around the exits and then the criminals began to throw the corpses and the dying into the shafts. We could hear the groans and cries of the unfortunate victims of this wantonness.

We could see the cargo of this "shipment" with complete clarity because the moon came out from behind a bank of clouds and lit up the sight of this unspeakable crime. It was obvious that the NKVD (OGPU) had given the order to use this place as a burial ground: the police would not have dared. When we got to about thirty or forty metres away from the "shufry" a voice from the truck stopped us: "Halt Who goes there?"

We stopped and a drunken NKVD (OGPU) man came up to us. We could now see his uniform. He drew his gun and said: "Who are you and what are you doing walking around here so late?" I had my certificate of place of work, so I showed it to him, explaining that I was on my way there, and that the boy was a messenger who was sent to me. I also said that we had taken a short cut to the mine to get there more quickly.

"What did you see or hear?" he asked sternly. I played stupid and replied: "We met nobody on the way, and we saw nothing and we heard nothing." All the while, two more NKVD (OGPU) men got off the truck and one of them said: "Maybe you want to go down there too?" and pointed to the "shufry." "I've already been in there," I replied, "I worked in the mine for a couple of years, and now I've got another job."

The NKVD (OGPU) men said nothing in return and turned back to the truck, speaking in Russian, and left two of the criminals standing beside us like guards. I recognized one of them — he was a pickpocket everyone called "Lafa." The NKVD (OGPU) men came back up to us and told us to get on our way to work. Then one of them, apparently the chief, said: "If you breathe a word of this anywhere, one word, about this night, then we'll see that you come back here."

We left, and the two of us promised each other not to tell anyone, any time, not a word. However, rumours were already circulating among the people, because many had seen bodies of those who had died in the famine buried in these "shufry." Mainly the no. 5 Semenivka shaft and the no. 8 Maksymivka shaft were used for this. Later all shafts so used were filled in and razed to the ground. Then they were divided into lots and sold to workers as gardens.

Thus the Muscovite-Bolshevik fascists hid the secrets of their bloody crimes. If something similar had happened in other countries, then the whole world would have known of it by now. Such crimes, that happened as more than seven million Ukrainian people were murdered by famine, should be investigated by an international tribunal. There are many witnesses of this famine and the killers in the Kremlin should be held accountable for their crimes. When a Korean airliner was shot down recently at the behest of the Kremlin, killing 269 passengers and crew, the whole free world spoke out against Moscow, and many statesmen and members of the press were moved. However, about the 50th anniversary of an unspeakable famine, the majority of the press is silent.

## **In Memory of the Victims of the Famine**

T. Khokhitva

*(50th anniversary address, delivered at a number of Ukrainian community meetings in southern Florida)*

My fellows in grief:

We are gathered here today to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the greatest horror that has ever befallen our fatherland, Ukraine: the fiftieth anniversary of a famine, artificially created by our enemy and occupier, communist Moscow. No one knows and no one will ever find out exactly how many million children, women, old men and youths in their prime, died of starvation in 1933.

There was only one crime any of those who died, or of those who survived great suffering, had committed: **THEY WERE ALL UKRAINIANS.**

Let us pay our respects to their memory and observe one minute of silence.

During the years that followed the murder of our people by artificial famine, much has been written about it in the diaspora. However, for some reason, little has been written about the things that preceded it: the collectivization of the countryside and the attendant “dekulakization” campaign; the physical destruction of the best elements among our peasantry; the destruction of our strongest institutions that preserved our national culture, Orthodox faith, tradition, and customs.

This appalling murder was diabolically planned by the communist government of Moscow, then brought into being when an entire army of 25,000 bloodthirsty sadists was sent into Ukraine during the periods of grain consignment and collectivization. They controlled the local communists and Komsomol members, who, in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the Communist Party, murdered their own brothers. Once these janissaries had been exploited to the fullest to further the shameful ends of their communist rulers, they fell to the same famine that claimed their victims.

In order to grasp the details surrounding this matter more fully, I will allow myself to go further back in time to explain the significance of certain events connected with the plans of communist Moscow.

Having vanquished armed resistance and having occupied Ukraine, communist Moscow proceeded to pillage it, particularly for food. At the time, Lenin instructed Russians thus: "You want bread? Take up your weapons and go to Ukraine. There you'll find bread, butter, fat and sugar..." And so it was: an armed Russia invaded Ukraine looking for bread. Nevertheless, Ukraine began to rise from the ruins: agriculture began to develop; a policy of Ukrainization unfolded, and placed the native language back into schools and institutions; the youth threw itself into learning; the intelligentsia fostered national consciousness, a will to live under the sun, and a sense of equality among other nations of the world, in the people.

This development made the ruling Russian elite anxious, because it feared the potentially threatening consequences. This growth had to be checked as soon as possible, the hardies brought to heel, and the people frightened and demoralized. The free Ukrainian spirit had to be broken.

Everyone knows that Moscow's actions are not only planned in advance, but also well camouflaged. Thus it was in this instance. As long as the communist rulers did not feel secure and strong enough, in the aftermath of the civil war, the Red Russian government put the so-called New Economic Policy (NEP) in place. This policy allowed all walks of society to use their own initiative. This resulted in economic growth in Ukraine, including significant development of agriculture. However, this did not last long, because already by the end of the 1920s, the communist government promulgated a law that called for the collectivization of all agriculture in the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian peasantry, particularly the middle and wealthier peasants, protested against it, since it was completely incompatible with the ways of the Ukrainian farmer. Although this protest was mostly silent, in the face of a massive terror instituted by the communist government, nevertheless, the authorities sensed it and levelled the blame on the wealthier class of peasants, calling them *kurkuli* or "kulaks." They were proclaimed the enemies of Soviet rule, which in those days, was equivalent to outlawing an entire stratum of the Ukrainian peasantry.

Obviously, the plans the ruling communist elite in Moscow did not stop at the conversion of the free Ukrainian farmers into serfs of the collective farms. They were long term plans designed to industrialize the Soviet empire. In those days, as the Red Russian rulers began the conversion of their empire from agriculture to industry, they needed to buy machinery, technology and weaponry from the Western world because Russia did not have them. They paid for them in gold; in grain or in other agricultural products; in timber. To get at gold or timber, a cheap

labour force is necessary to mine and smelt the former and fell the latter. The cheap labour came to be the Ukrainian farmers they tore from their beloved traditional work, and sent them to the far north to work in mines and taigas, to the Urals, Siberia or the Far East.

However, the main export the Soviet rulers counted on to trade with the Western nations was grain. Thus, the struggle for control of production between the farmers and the state was the fiercest of all. This struggle was related to collectivization and to the "liquidation of the kulak as a class." It was grain that decided the prestige of the new communist empire before the Western world, and thus the struggle over it was to the death: either we seize the grain from the farmer and we fortify our position, or the farmer will overcome and we will perish.

Throughout the 1920s, every peasant dispensed with his land as he chose. If he chose to sell his grain in the fall, he did. If he chose to sell his grain in winter, so he did. If he wanted to hold out until spring in order to raise the price of it, he could. However, in 1929, the government issued a law requiring every farmer to sell their grain to the authorities immediately after the harvest. Every farmer had to sell them a quantity of grain pre-set by the government. The wealthier farms were required to sell progressively greater quantities. In 1930, this resulted in a situation wherein the government demanded more grain than had been harvested. When the wealthier peasants were unable to hand over the norm, they were declared "enemies of the state," and fines were levied on them that exceeded the value of their estates.

Obviously, no one could pay these fines, and so their farms were sold by auction to cover the costs. Everything was sold: the houses, all barns and other structures, machines, combines, horses, cows, sheep, farm implements, and so forth. These assets were ostensibly "bought" by the collective farms, but actually, this was mere robbery, because the former owner received no payment whatsoever for his property. It was simply recorded that the collective farm obtained such and such an item or estate for such and such a price. During such a "sale," rural activists (communists and Komsomol members) took everything from the farmer: flour, grains, potatoes, beans, peas, and even baked bread, clothing and shoes. Such was communist morality.

This was the procedure of state grain consignment and collectivization. Some of the middle-income peasantry and rural craftsmen, such as blacksmiths and tanners, who rebelled most openly against the slavery of the collective farm, were deported out of the district, or even province, and their property was seized by the collective farm. Such was the terror of communist arbitrary rule.

In this fashion, the prosperous peasantry was destroyed; the middle-income peasant was annihilated and coerced onto the collective farms. These collectives were run, by and large, by incompetent, but Party-faithful, paupers. Could one expect any production from an untried and unheard of collective system of agriculture that was directed not by the skill and knowledge of a farmer, but by a Party directive? The ensuing events proved similar to the Biblical story about the thin and fat cows. "Seven thin cows were grazing by the sea, when seven fattened cows came out of the waters. The thin cows threw themselves upon the fattened, and ate them, and yet they did not still their hunger." And so it was in our country: the poor fell on the rich and ate them, and did not still their hunger. These poor peasants were herded into collective farms by the authorities after being deprived of all other means of survival.

Perhaps for the benefit of the "human eye" abroad, the "liquidation of the kulak as a class" was announced. This was a program that was to degrade the wealthy to the position of the poor and middle-income peasant, and to render him incapable of gaining wealth again. The wealthier farmers were to be degraded by nationalizing their assets as property of a collective farm, and then forcing them to work on it, a socialist enterprise, and not a capitalistic-landowning one.

In practice however, this was not a degradation, but simply the physical ruination of the ablest workers of the soil. It was a simple destruction of these workers and their families. How else are we to describe the groundless arrests; the absurd false accusations; the wholesale expulsions of families from their homes, children, elderly and the infirm included; the deportation of the virtually naked, unshod, and hungry to the distant north to the taiga and tundra?

Thus, since the most productive farmers were liquidated, the collective farm did not acquit itself well in the role of producer of grain. Not only did the yields of the harvest diminish because of incompetent agricultural practices, but there were also shortages of labour in agriculture because of the deportation of the "*karkuli*" and their families. The boastful communist clique of the Soviet Union, obviously, paid no mind to this, and continued to demand grain from Ukrainian farmers in quantities it was impossible for them to produce. Then, the authorities instituted the cruellest of measures: the forcible collection of grain, not only from those remaining peasants who were not members of collective farms, but even from those who were. This banditry was so barbaric that words fail to describe its inhumanity. Those who carried it out were more akin to beasts than to people.

Thus it was that, in late 1932 and early 1933, the rural population had

no food left at all. It was winter time, and all of the cats and dogs in the villages had been eaten. Some tried to catch wild birds or boars; others tried eating bare cobs of corn; still others tried boiling rotted briars (nettles and pigweed, but this could save no one. People began swelling up and dying of hunger. There were even instances of cannibalism. Whoever could still move fled to the cities to try to find any sort of food. However, entry or exit from the city, (by peasants in particular) was strictly controlled by the police. They allowed no food to be taken out of the city. Many rural mothers would take their children to the city and leave them in the streets, with the hope that someone would find them and not allow them to die...

The horror of the famine shook everyone, but the communist government not only failed to come to the aid of the dying Ukrainian peasants, in fact, it did just the opposite: it prohibited all cities to provide assistance to the rural population. The city, they claimed, had a certain allotment of food that was to be dispensed to workers and functionaries according to ration cards. Party and government officials were fed in canteens that were closed to the public.

The bodies of those who died in the famine lay in houses and in the village streets for weeks. The bodies found in the cities were regularly picked up by trucks that went about their rounds and then drove their cargo out of city limits and dumped it in mass pits.

In order to conceal this horror from the eyes of the outside world, the government severely punished those who dared to speak of it. And yet, the West did know about the famine, and silently continued its bloody trade with cannibals. This we know from local sources, who bear witness to the fact that there were a few humane people who tried to tell the world the truth about the famine in Ukraine. However, "the satiated did not believe the starving."

In his book, *The Second World War*, (vol. 4, chap. 25) Winston Churchill wrote that, in a conversation with Stalin, on 15 August 1942, he asked the latter if he could compare the losses sustained in the war to those sustained in the famine associated with collectivization in 1932-33. Stalin replied: "It truly was a horror. It lasted for years. However, it had been absolutely necessary in order that new machines appear in our factories, and new tractors appear in our fields." Stalin's reply to Churchill proves irrefutably that the famine in Ukraine of 1932-33 was a consciously perpetrated genocide.

Also, it is obvious that the West knew about the events that ensued as a result of communist rule in Ukraine. The world knew and remained silent. Why? It was not an elemental famine, it was the mass murder of

millions of innocent people. Can it be that throughout the entire world of the powerful there was not a single person with a humane heart? Where were the Christian, and other Churches and religious organizations whose main tenets include humane morality and brotherly love? Nobody expected any kind of military intervention on the part of the West, and yet common sense would dictate that such events should have elicited some kind of reservations to the modern idea of marxist communism among people of sound mind. And yet, this did not occur. In the West, for 60 years nobody wanted to either see or hear about the terrible truth about the system that threatened and still threatens, not only the Western world, but the entire human civilization, as it plays with nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, our people died in terrible anguish. No one conducted services for the dead, they were simply thrown into collective pits, worse than if they had been cattle. Millions of corpses covered not only the lands of Ukraine, but also the furthest reaches of the Soviet empire. None of them moved the heartless devils. They triumphed and celebrated their conquest of the Ukrainian worker.

Nobody knows the real reason that led the communist clique in the Soviet Union of the day to perpetrate such an unparalleled crime. It is a crime that even today, the rulers fear speaking of out loud. At the time, the Russian communist clique blamed Ukrainian nationalism for the opposition to grain consignments and collectivization. And yet, it was conceived of by the same communists who sought to justify the annihilation of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and all Ukrainian nationally conscious elements.

When I speak of these things here in North America, then Americans and Canadians simply shrug their shoulders, unable to believe that such a thing could have occurred in this twentieth century — the age of such advancement in human civilization, such development in human thought. They cannot believe, because an individual from the West cannot grasp how it could be that six or seven million people died in peacetime. Perhaps they cannot conceive of it because they have not lived through it themselves.

However, we will not sink into despair, because evil cannot always overcome, and in some matters, even the mightiest Red Russian rulers are weak. They can abuse the body, deaden it with the most horrifying tortures, but they cannot kill the spirit of the people. It lives and will always live.

The spirit of millions of our martyred brothers and sisters remains with us, awakens our conscience, calls upon us not to fall into apathy and not to give in to despair.

Their shadows beg us to pass their memory on to our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, in order that they carry the memory of that great misfortune to our heirs. Let the memory be carried on until our land is free, and a majestic monument with bloody words of warning upon it is erected. Let these words of warning be such that never again could anything of such nature happen anywhere.

February 1983

## The Famine. A Pogrom of the Ukrainian Peasantry

F.P. Burtians'kyi

Fifty years ago, Ukraine survived a famine that was deliberately created by communist Moscow. This famine enveloped all of rural Ukraine and killed more than ten million people.

I am a witness of this horror, and I want to describe it as I saw it, survived it, and recount how I managed to escape death by a miracle.

My family lived in Selevyna, a village in the Odessa province. It consisted of about two hundred households and was considered prosperous. During the struggle for national liberation, during the rule of the Ukrainian People's Republic, my father was chosen the (assistant) vice county chief of Lovshyn. When Ukraine lost the war with the Russian communists, and the latter came to power, my father was arrested by the Cheka and summarily shot.

The new communist regime ushered in a period of robberies and the famine of 1921. Forty people died in that misfortune in our village.

The new regime also brought in new leaders for the village, headed by the communist Makovs'kyi. The new communist authorities began persecuting the wealthier peasants, giving them the shameful name, "kurkuli" or "kulaks." My entire family was categorized as "kulaks," and our family was considered an enemy of the communist authorities.

In 1928, the so-called collectivization began, the first phase of which was the establishment of the SOZ (Land Cultivation Collective). The population opposed these SOZ, but some of the poorest peasants and communist activist joined, apparently of their own free will. The communist authorities considered the peasants' hostility to the SOZ to be the result of the inimical activities of the kulaks. A campaign of cruel persecution was initiated, and our family was subjected to it. My mother died that year, and I was left completely orphaned. Local officials categorized me as a "batrak," or proletarian hireling.

In our village, there were no local communists at the time. However, there was one grand old farmer of middle income, Omelko Kovalenko. His son had left the village for Donbas two years back, and found work at the Rovenky mine. There, he joined the Communist Party and returned to our village when collectivization began. The district committee appointed him as the head of the village council. And thus it came about

that this half-baked head of the council, Kyrilo Omel'kiv Kovalenko, included his own father on the list of individuals to be dekulakized. Thus, he served the Party faithfully. The Party, however, repaid him in 1930, by sentencing him to ten years of imprisonment for some misdemeanor. "To each hangman his due" as the people say, but I know nothing of his subsequent fate.

The years of 1929 and 1930 were marked by oppression and terror used by the Party and the government to force the peasants to join the collective farms. These were the years of dekulakization and the liquidation of kulaks as a class. I had already married and had joined the collective farm. However, the communists would not forget that my father had been executed by their Cheka, and persecuted me to the point that I decided to leave for Donbas. However, they took their revenge on my young wife and our infant. They stole all of our possessions and threw my wife and our five month old child out of our house. They forbade people to help them, saying: "let her suffer under the open sky until she brings her husband to us." While they were robbing us of everything we had, they tore the shirt from my wife's back, then tore our five-month-old son from her breast and threw him to the floor like a rag... From that day, our poor child began to ail, and he died at eleven months of age.

By the end of 1931, 68 families from our village had been dekulakized, and the rest had been herded into the collective farm. Dekulakization proceeded along the following lines: the district committee of the Communist Party and the district executive of the village council would draw up a list and designate those who were to be dekulakized and arrested; those who were to be deported out of the district or province; or those who were to be deported out of the republic, in other words, those to be sent to the far north, "the far reaches of the country of the Soviets." All property of these unfortunate industrious farmers was stolen by the local communists and Komsomol members, who carried out these inhumane and horrible assignments. Of course, such things as the land, buildings, farm implements, and livestock were taken by the collective farms that had already been set up, and the grain was taken by the state.

Alongside the campaign of collectivization came the grain consignments. Peasants had to give their grain only to the state, and in quantities dictated by the state. Production quotas were higher for the wealthier peasants, and they sometimes were two or three times greater than the norm. This was called the "plan by estate," that is, the wealthier the estate, the greater the amount of grain it was asked to hand over. In this way, all grain was taken (ostensibly, bought) from the peasants, leaving them with nothing for either food or seed.

Special so-called grain consignment “staffs” were established by the local communists in each village. These staffs included local communist activists and Komsomol members, who called the peasants, who had not yet joined the collective farm, to appear, at all times of the day and night, before their committee, and demanded that these peasants meet the quotas of grain consignment.

The methods used at these sessions are difficult to imagine. During winter sessions, peasants were doused with water and then sent out into temperatures of twenty below zero and kept there until they froze over. The hapless peasant would then be hauled back into the staff room to face further tortures: fingers rammed into doorjambes, faces seared with oil lamps. This was all done under the supervision of one of the aforementioned 25,000, or some other dignitary of the district or province, such as the Jew Oliforov an official of the OGPU. Honest farmers from our village, such as Musii Burkovs’kyi and Ivan Ishchenko died during the course of such tortures, may theirs be the Kingdom.

Those farmers who were subjected to the “plan by estate” endured other forms of punishment. The communists accused them of hiding grain by mixing it with chaff and straw, or by burial. In the course of searches for this imaginatively stowed grain, brigades of communists and Komsomol members would arrive with iron staves and pitchforks, and scatter the chaff lying in barns, prod the earth in the barns, tear up chimneys in houses, smash chests... Of course, they never found grain because there was none to find. Then a monetary fine would be imposed. This served as a punishment for the non-performance of the plan for grain consignment. The fine was always such that the farmer could never hope to pay it. Then all of the individual’s property was seized and sold at an auction, ostensibly in order to pay the fine. The farmer and his family were simply thrown out of their house, or run out of the village.

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church and its clergymen suffered just as much. There was a church in our village, and its prior was Father Petro Tkachenko. He was not only a sincerely religious man, but also a goodhearted spiritual guide. He owned his own plot of land in the neighbouring village and he cultivated it with the help of his wife and two children. He was arrested together with T. Zabiaka, the principal of the school, and nobody ever found out what befell them.

The communists turned the church into a prison, where those destined for deportation to the distant Russian north were held in the dead of winter. After being held under guard by armed Komsomol members, all of the wretched prisoners, including children, women, aged, and the infirm, were led, like thieves, to the railway stations, herded onto freight cars

and shipped off to the distant, northern, wild tundra and taiga. People were forbidden to approach prisoners with any manner of assistance, whether in clothes or food, nor were they allowed to bid farewell. Can one consider those who carried out these actions, those who abetted them with their "laws," human? No, they were not human, they were terrible beasts for whom no name has yet been devised.

By the end of 1931, our village had been completely despoiled by the authorities and had been forcibly impressed into the collective farm. 380 work-horses had been communized, and of these, 44 were still alive in 1932. The horses died of overwork and from their non-forage feed. They were only fed straw. Nevertheless, those who supervised these horses were severely punished for negligence and sabotage.

By 1932, virtually all peasants had been inducted into collective farms, and so the grain consignment plans were applied to the latter. In applying the plan to the collective farms, the government dictated that the state quotas were to be satisfied first, and then the needs of the individual collective and its workers dealt with. However, the grain consignment plan was so unrealistic that even entire collective farms were unable to meet them, let alone provide enough for the needs of its members. The cruelty of the Communist Party in its dealings with communized farmers offered no hope for compromise between the two parties. The defenceless collective farm workers were thrown to the mercy of fate, and were thus destined for famine. Nobody stood up for them and there were no laws that protected the collective farms from such robbery. The Party and the government were like bandits stealing not only grain, but also all food. As a result of this, people managed to find food during the summer, but by fall and early winter, the famine began in earnest. My God. What a terrifying word that is, and how much more of a terrifying sight.

My wife and I had already fled to Donbas to escape the famine. Here I found a job and received my food ration as a worker. These rations saved the three of us from a death by starvation. But not everyone survived: our infant son could not endure, and left us for a better world.

In the spring of 1933, my wife and I both worked in a mine and we both received food rations. I filed for leave from work, because I had decided to visit the village of my brothers and sisters, and to provide my in-laws with some assistance. While still on the train, I wondered at the fact that all of the windows were covered. Later, I found out that these were coverings put in place to prevent anyone from seeing what was going on outside. When I arrived at Zinovievsk (now Kirovohrad) I found a real hell. The station was empty, and all around swollen, starving people begged everyone who had arrived for but one crust of bread. The

dead lay in the street — they were only taken away at night. Those who were still moving and those who were already dead, were all village people, I could tell by their clothing.

As I passed through the city, I noticed the building of the local government administration. There was a *Torgsin* (Soviet-Foreign Trade) shop on the first floor. I steeled my courage and dared to look inside. Everything you could desire was in that store, but only for gold or silver. This was ostensibly free trade, and yet all communists, higher officials and OGPU operatives benefitted from outfitters not open to the public called “*zakritie raspredy*” (closed outlets).

I went to a bazaar that was located near an alcohol distillery and saw a terrible sight. On one side of the plant, waste and still mash were pouring into the Inhul river. People were falling into this waste, drinking it, and dying slowly. No one made any effort to prevent them from doing this; no one tried saving their lives. On the plant grounds, cisterns full of clean mash stood under armed police guard — intended for feeding pigs and other livestock.

In the bazaar, it was possible to buy bread, but a half kilo piece cost forty to fifty *karbovantsi*.

I hurried on my way to the village, and arrived in the evening. Here I had spent my childhood and my tempestuous youth, but I could not recognize the place. It was all in gloom; everything was dead; no dogs barked, no birds chirped, no children shouted. I shuffled through the weed-covered streets until I reached my sister Onila's house. The yard was overgrown with briars, and I was afraid to go into the house: was anyone alive in there? Both my sister and her husband were in fact alive, but they were both emaciated by hunger. They told me what was happening in the village, and listed off the people who had already died of hunger. Only those who managed to come to work in the collective farm were surviving, because they could eat in the mess hall, as they did.

I stayed with my sister overnight and then moved on to Reimentarivka where my in-laws lived. On the way, I passed through the Rozpashka farm. It stood empty. The once luxurious orchards were reduced to stumps overgrown with nettles and brambles, and collapsed houses seemed to stare up at the sky with their crumbling chimneys. People from Redchyna and Zashchyta told me that some of the villagers had been dekulakized and deported somewhere, and those who remained had died of starvation. The last residents of the farm, the father and his two sons, had been imprisoned, apparently for cannibalism.

When I reached Reimentarivka, I went to the village council building to register my arrival. The head of council was a relative of my wife's,

Ivan Hudzenko. He related the events of the recent past in the village to me, and said that seven hundred people had perished of hunger.

On my way back to Donbas, I stopped in on my sister once again. She told me that in Selevyna over three hundred people had died of hunger. It was only June at the time, two months of waiting until the next harvest.

I relate these terrible events to the Canadian people, because they took us in, exhausted and beaten though we were, to live in this God-given Canadian land. I would like this article to be a warning to its good-hearted people about the threat of the Russian communists propaganda that carries the poison of famine and death. We are lucky to be living out our lives in a democratic Canada, where glorious future for our children is secure.

Let this memoir shine like an everlasting, unquenchable candle among free Christian people, and let the victims of the famine be forever remembered.

## I Affirm

Mykola Meleshko

In the March 1987 (no. 364) issue of *Moloda Ukraina*, a declaration of the Italian consul in Moscow concerning the famine in Ukraine, was published. In 1932-33, I was in Kharkiv and, as an eyewitness, I affirm that the Italian consul accurately described the horror of that time. It is true, the residents of Kharkiv were not dying of hunger, the peasants were. They would come into the city in order to find but a small bit of bread, because Stalin's bands confiscated everything edible in the countryside.

By the end of 1933, so-called "commercial bread" was being sold in the stores of Kharkiv, for about a *karbovanets*' and half a kilogram. This bread was sold without ration cards, and was a bit "whiter" than the bread sold with them at 25 *kopiiky* per kilogram. At the time, a worker would average about three to four *karbovantsi* per day, so he/she could afford to buy one two kilograms of loaf of such "commercial" bread for a whole day's work. Drove of peasants would come to Kharkiv to buy it, because they had no ration cards to purchase the bread available in stores. They were forced to buy bread on the black market from speculators, at inflated prices of about 6 to 15 *karbovantsi* a kilogram. This they did at a time when the government paid them 1 *karbovanets* 20 *kopiiky* for every *pood* (16 kgs.) of grain it took for its consignments.

Many peasants had no money to buy the "commercial bread" and died in the streets of Kharkiv. Trucks would come to collect the dead and the half-dead, and trucked them out to a ravine outside city limits, where corpses from prisons were also taken. They were all thrown into a heap in the ravine, dusted with lime and then covered with earth. Even if one describes this as it happened, few will believe it could.

One night, I was standing in line for bread by the shop that received shipments of bread at night, just before dawn. The bread would go on sale at eight in the morning. I stood in the line-up the entire night through and on until three in the afternoon. However, by the time I reached the counter, there was no bread left in the store. That day, the going rate for bread sold by speculators on the black market in the bazaar was 8 to 10 *karbovantsi* a loaf. I was exhausted by hunger and had already begun picking through garbage to find food.

Once, worn out and hungry, I fell asleep near some garbage pails.

Then I heard someone say, in Russian, “Yes, that one is still alive.” I opened my eyes, and saw two men standing over men. At the curb stood the truck of corpses. I got up and left.

I worked in Kharkiv, but in 1933, when I applied for a passport, I was denied one because, as a dekulakized citizen, I did not have the appropriate papers. In 1930, I had been thrown out of my house along with my entire family, and a collective farm was set up on my property. The communist authorities did not issue people such as me any documents, and so I had to buy some counterfeit ones to survive.

It is not easy to tell of those times. Not many will believe you, particularly those who had not experienced anything like it. I was taken, with my forged documents and all, to fight “for Stalin and country.” And so I fought. I served as a tank crew member as a second lieutenant. I spent three months on the front and was captured by the Germans. At the hands of this “liberator,” I spent some time in prison, again swelling from starvation. It seems that I have survived two famines: Stalin’s and Hitler’s.

## **The Unforgiven Crime: A Memoir**

Boieslav Honta

It is 1931. Autumn. Beautiful sunny weather. Out in the fields, the sowing of winter wheat has just been completed. Everything seems to be going well, but the mood of the residents of Antonivka, a village in the Ladyzhens'k district of the Kievan province was not one of happiness. One could sense that dark, and as yet invisible forces were preparing a fatal calamity that threatened not only the residents of Antonivka, but millions of other Ukrainian peasants as well.

The old men of the village, brimming with experience, foresaw that the coming year would bring one of the best harvests ever. They spoke true, for the fields had produced a very good yield. And yet, something unheard of happened. Before the harvest had even begun, so-called "shock teams for state grain consignment" had arrived. These people had been sent from Moscow: they were communist activists.

It all began when all the grain that the fields had yielded were taken from the village, without even leaving anything for seed. Initially, the activists came and took the recent harvest. They returned with carts and passed from house to house to confiscate all food from the peasants, leaving nothing for the winter. A panic went through the village: some tried to hide at least some food, but the "shock teams," acting on orders from Moscow, searched all sheds, crawled into cellars, ripped up floorboards in houses and holding pens. The activists then brought out long iron bars and went about prodding garden beds, the grounds around houses, looking for anything that might have been "hidden from the state." Sometimes they even managed to find something, and they either confiscated it, or angrily soiled it so that the farmer would not be able to use it. In short, they deliberately left the peasants waiting to die of starvation...

In Antonivka, there were four Party members, and eight Jews. None of them had ever known poverty. Khaim Burtman had been a director of a dairy plant, and all of the members of his family had worked there. Thus, none of his relatives or the Party members in Antonivka ever felt any effect of the famine.

The head of the village council was also a Party member, a man from other parts, named Shpola. He seemed to be a fairly good man, and he

even tried to help people in distress. Rumours circulated that he was a former “Petliurite officer.” Perhaps it was for this reason that he was occasionally called out to Uman. People said that when he saw the first bodies of those who had died in the famine in the streets of Uman, he could not bear the horrifying sight and shot himself.

Late autumn was approaching. Having no food, the people began to gather ears of grain from the fields of collective farms. They did this despite a governmental ukase stating that such gathering of grain would be punishable by two years imprisonment.

Experience proved that hunger was stronger than any ukase. The starving people continued to gather grain from the stalks and the arrests began. I do not know how many were arrested, but old Takycha told me that altogether, more than one hundred people were arrested, and that these were mainly women and children. I managed to find out that only five children returned to the village, and that the fate of the rest remained unknown. They had disappeared without a trace...

By winter, starvation gripped the village in earnest. There wasn't a cat or dog left alive. Horses and cows were dying in the collective farm's pens because there was no feed to give them, and because there was no one to take care of them. Things had become so bad that the people rushed to where the dead livestock lay, ripped it to shreds, and voraciously ate it on the spot.

When spring came, the bodies of those who had died of hunger lay everywhere in Antonivka: in the houses, in the yards, in the streets — the bodies of women, children, old men... Some were still moving, but they were already swollen. The people who were still alive and by some miracle, also able to stay on their feet, would tear up milkweed pigweed, nettles, or any other grasses. Nothing escaped the febrile searches of the starving: anything that fell into their grasp, they ate. When the white acacia trees began to bloom (where they once used to beautify the sides of the road leading to the village) most of the buds did not even have time to break before they were torn off and eaten. The weakest, who were in no condition to climb acacias, ate lilacs, henbane and went mad.

There were frightening scenes in neighbouring villages: in Posukhivtsi, Liubashivtsi, Ryzhavtsi, Kolodystyi. In Kolodystyi, there was a sugar refinery. Initially, the people pulled all of the sugar from storage, and then they ate all of the feed for all the livestock in the surrounding area.

I remember Ternivka, a town where brash and large bazaars and fairs would take place, and people from all around would attend. Eighty percent of the population of Ternivka were Jews, and they were not affected by the famine. And yet, only seven kilometres lay between our Antonivka,

and Ternivka. Thus, swollen and emaciated peasants would come to Ternivky. They no longer looked like people: more like shadows that stumbled from lack of strength... Everyone carried something of value: jewellery, clothing, embroideries — heirlooms handed down from great grandparents and hidden in family chests. The finest of fineries were exchanged for pieces of bread. And the Jews had all manner of food.

The road from Antonivka to Ternivka passed from east to west, through the Zhupanni woods that once joined with the Haidamak woods, which the locals called the Haman woods. Once, my aunt and I were on our way to the bazaar, when suddenly we were met with a shocking sight: the bodies of those who had died of hunger lay everywhere. Some had expired while sitting, others lay in various attitudes. The sight has left a bitter and lasting impression on me to this day. I can still hear the groans and cries of mothers over the bodies of their children.

Activists ran alongside wagons along the road, picked up the bodies, threw them on a heap on the wagons... The activists were collecting the bodies for mass burial in a pit by the forest. With my very own eyes, I saw them take a living boy of nine and throw him onto the heap of the dead. I could here the child's hoarse cries and pleas: "I haven't died yet..." The mother of the boy had gone mad, after seeing her other son eaten by her neighbours...

Even now, more than fifty years after the terrible tragedy of the murder by famine in Ukraine, it is difficult to write. Some times I cannot believe that I saw the horrifying scenes I did, throughout our villages, towns, and cities, and that I survived the famine in our village Antonivka, myself.

Antonivka stands at about the midpoint of the paved highway that stretches from north to south, from Kiev to Odessa. Before the Russian Stalinist famine, it was a town of about two thousand inhabitants. Now, there were only about six hundred left, not including the Jewish and communist party element, that throughout the famine, always had food. I saw everyone in my family, who lived in Antonivka, swell up and move feebly about, and my brother died...

I am consciously not setting out the names of those families, who were arrested and died during those years, because I do not wish to bring harm to those of my age and their children. Again and again, I arrive at the conclusion that it is impossible to describe all of the aspects of the terrible tragedy of the famine in Ukraine in the early 1930s. It was caused by the diabolical actions of Red Moscow and its lackeys, among whom were many of our own people. On the basis of the testimony of survivors and martyrs, one could write, not brief memoirs, but whole

volumes about the horror that was the Russian genocide in Ukraine.

Already as an emigre in Canada, I found out from reliable sources that the famine had been planned by Red Moscow since 1930. Charles Crane, (a Jew) in a letter to Edward Mendel (also a Jew) 21 October 1933, wrote: "It is truly a good thing that the Soviet Union has risen and shown itself to be true Jewish empire that kills, starves and tortures Christians, without any danger of retribution..." Crane's book contains a considerable amount of detailed material about who planned the famine in Ukraine, who it was who did so, and what they aimed to do.

Comments are unnecessary. Anyone who is interested, can read this book for themselves.

Write to: Charles Crane, Paris France

Edward Mendel House, New York, NY

October 21, 1933  
Yale University Library  
New Haven, Conn.

## **My Arrest and Interrogation**

Reverend M. Iavdas'

*(Reprinted from "A Martyrology of Ukrainian Churches" vol. 1, Smoloskyp publishers, 1987)*

8 September 1929 was a day that changed the entire course of my life. Everything that had been a positive experience was instantly cut off: a terrifying and unhospitable present took hold, and a horrifying and inscrutable future loomed. They threw me into a prison amidst strangers in the middle of the night. Fear gripped my soul, my heart beat unbelievably, my ears rang, my temples burned. Exhausted, in darkness, I fell to the floor, and lay on the straw as if petrified. My soul prayed without words, without organized thought. My entire being prayed. With my entire being, I turned to the Highest of Graces — to God. Only my prayer held out any hope for salvation.

Is not the hour of greatest difficulty, the hour when one feels torn from the rest of the world; from life; when one feels abandoned, scorned and forgotten; when one looks about uncomprehending, seeking help, but knowing that nobody will offer any...; the hour when one feels surrounded, not by protectors and good men, but only by those who could bury you alive? In times like these, one feels like fleeing to the far corners of the earth. However, this is merely a thought of the weak: because the reality is the heavy locks of the implacable OGPU on the door.

By order of the district OGPU, on 11 September 1929, a convoy of prisoners was readied. This convoy was to be led by two soldiers, and a police officer. The soldiers were armed with rifles, the policeman carried a revolver in a holster and a field bag over his shoulder. He was responsible for us. He carried the documents taken from us upon our arrests, and the documents that the OGPU had readied for our etap.

I was called up in turn. The OGPU interrogator, a young man, sat at a table in his military overcoat. He looked closely at the papers that lay before him. He asked my name, then took up my "religious cult serviceman's card." He turned it over in his hands for a while, immersed in thought, and then said:

"Zinkiv, Odessa, Holovanivs'ke, Pidvysoke..."

After a further pause, he added: "In a month, you managed to see

that much of the world? As far as we're concerned, a person who has honest work stays in one place. Who did you stay with in Odessa? What did you do there?"

I told him that I travelled there to rest and go for medical treatment, but did not tell him with whom I stayed. Amazingly, the interrogator did not ask me about it further, but rooted around in his papers and produced a letter I was familiar with, and said:

"And what is this?"

It was a letter I had sent to Odessa, to Father Artamon Kuzmins'kyi, a few days before my arrest. In it, I had described the difficulties of being a priest in the country. I wrote of the godlessness of the rural communist youth, who sang anti-religious godless songs in the streets almost every night. They sang one song with particular frequency: "Down, down with monarchs, rabbis, and priests; we will crawl into heaven, and flush out all of the gods" I also described how it was that I left my parish in Zhuravlyntsi, Holovaniv district (where I had been sent by Archbishop Iurii Zhevchenko), because I could not even get anyone to be a cantor for me for Sunday services. I had been told: "the years have gone, when we would fill the priests' sides..." I also mentioned the fact that people were scared to go to church on Sunday, as well as many other matters.

The interrogator read a few passages from my letter that he considered counterrevolutionary, then put it away, and began to stare at me, long and intently. I was rather stunned, and felt like a bird in a snare. I did not know how to sit, or what to say.

It distressed me that the letter had fallen into the hands of the OGPU. I was beset by the thought: "Where, when, and how could this letter have been intercepted?" I thought that if the letter had been intercepted in Pidvysoke, then it was of no consequence, I would be responsible for my own actions, and no more. However, if it was seized from Father Artamon, who had already been arrested, this could create considerable difficulties for him. I continued to get embroiled in my speculation. If Father Artamon received my letter before he was arrested, then it would be part of the case against him... In addition, how else could my letter have caught up with me so soon, and referred immediately to my case...

It was difficult not to become anxious while thinking such thoughts. The long silence was broken by the interrogator.

"Do you have any documents on your person?" he asked.

I told him that all of my documents had been confiscated upon my arrest in Pidvysoke, but he did not believe me, and began to go through my pockets, finding my notepad. Then he said:

"I knew you were not telling the truth."

“That’s not a document,” I rejoined.

“Oh, but it is a very important document,” he intoned, reading over my notes. “What are these figures? What is the key to this coded document?”

In my parish work, I did not have access to Bibles that had a daily and Sunday guide to Scriptural readings. In order to avoid confusion, and to avoid pestering my priestly brethren, I had copied such a guide into a separate notebook, and always carried it on my person. However, the interrogator would not believe me, and confiscated this “document” for analysis. He then sent for the guard, who was to take me back to my cell, and bring another prisoner for questioning.

It was scarcely an hour after my session by the OGPU agent, that his eminence, the Bishop of Uman of the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church (*UAPTs*) Mykola Karabinevych appeared in the corridor of the prison. He resolutely walked past. I wanted to rise and bow to him in respect, but the guard noticed my intention, abruptly accosted me, and ordered me not to move.

About two hours passed before Bishop Mykola was released. The nature of his conversation with the interrogator is completely unknown to me, but the Bishop appeared to be distraught by it. With wide steps, he advanced through the corridor, and when he drew up to me, he nervously said, in a hoarse voice: “You must not do that... You came to me, and said nothing.” Then the guard brutally led Bishop Mykola out into the street, preventing him from telling me what he wanted to say. “What could this mean?” I thought, feeling insulted by the bishop. Later, however, I thought over the matter and dismissed it.

The matter stood thus: when I had arrived in Uman to petition Bishop Mykola for a parish, I remained mute about the fact that the OGPU bureaucracy had expelled me from Zinkiv, but when I was taken off the local rolls, the OGPU official for the Zinkiv region did not tell me whether I was allowed to work as a churchman elsewhere. If the organs had issued such a decree, it would have meant that I was slated for victimization. Bishops were forbidden to assign parishes to such priests. It is true, Bishop Mykola did not ask me directly about this matter, but I should have known that to tell him about it would have been the honourable thing to do. Now, I had no way to expiate my sin. Later, however, during my imprisonment, I was truly repentant.

Filled with good thoughts, despite my imprisonment, I walked through the streets of Poltava and came to the door of the local OGPU building on Voskresens’kyi avenue. On the way, I passed the Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral of the Resurrection, where so recently I had sung

a canticle of the Dormition in trio with His Excellency the Archbishop Iosyp Oksiiuk and the archdeacon Tymofii Doshka: “The Holy Mother of God, untiring in prayer and unwavering in hope, was not to be held by the grave or by death...”

The Komsomol members who led my convoy left me in the foyer of the Poltava OGPU building. I sat in this room for six or seven hours, and nobody came for me, and nobody said anything to me. Finally, the door opened slightly, and Baturin, the OGPU interrogator for religious affairs appeared. Not so long ago, I had met him on the street in Zinkiv, and a week later, he had sent for me at the OGPU headquarters in Poltava. He had sent for me to warn me that bad rumours were circulating about me in Zinkiv. I knew that this was all fabrication, that these were not rumours, but his impressions of the church of Three Saints in that town. In early 1929, I initiated a parishioner’s effort to restore the church. The iconostasis was restored and repaired, the interior walls were whitewashed, the floor was painted, the copper cover of the altar and the golden domes and crosses were repaired. Having noticed my authority in the parish, Baturin decided to deprive me of it.

Baturin now greeted me the way he did when he saw me on the street in Zinkiv.

“So, you here too? How are you? How is your health?”

“You can see for yourself,” I answered.

Not bothering to listen for my reply, Baturin quickly closed the door behind him and disappeared. After about 15 minutes, a guard came in and led me to the second floor and locked me in a cell across from Baturin’s room. There were three people in this room, all teachers in Poltava high schools. I can no longer remember the names of two of them, but one was Ivan Nakonechnyi, the supervisor of the I. Kotliarevs’kyi school.

Later, the inhabitants of this room were taken away. My colleagues of the first instance were taken to another cell, and Kalantai, the archeology professor; Father Ivan Taran, the prior of the Poltava Ukrainian Orthodox Cathedral; and the professor of the Poltava Institute for People’s Education, Chuiko, were brought in.

These were all the outstanding citizens of Poltava and uncompromizing patriots of Ukraine, and they all belonged to the Ukrainian Orthodox parishes of Poltava.

The OGPU official in charge of religious affairs interrogated us all personally. Even though nobody apart from Father Ivan Taran and myself were members of a “religious cult,” they were referred to him nevertheless.

Baturin was a brutal and despotic man. Heedlessly, Father Taran decided not to answer any of Baturin's questions. He even dared to say: "I do not wish to answer your questions because your behaviour indicates that you are not a true Soviet investigator. You are a man, who immediately condemns those who fall into your hands."

During his first interrogation of me, Baturin ordered me to write a confession. He gave me a few pieces of paper, an inkwell, a pen, and said:

"I will leave you here, alone. You sit and write what you know." As he got up to leave the room, he added: "But everything must be reasonable..."

Baturin left for about two or three hours, but I had written nothing.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked, looking at the blank piece of paper that lay before me. "You could have written something," he continued, "but you did not write a word. Then we must talk with you in a different language..." This last he spoke to as if to himself, with a certain calculated moralistic inflection.

"Did you have a parish council?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered.

"A choir?"

"Yes."

"Of acquaintances, friends?"

"The entire parish knows me," I answered.

"The parish, the parish," he interrupted me impatiently, "I am not asking you about that. I must know the names of your personal friends and your closest acquaintances, with whom you ran about town, drank, and spoke about various political matters."

"This I cannot remember," I answered.

"Very well," said Baturin, "please sit down again and write down the minutes of this interrogation. You will write down the names of the members of your parish council, the active members of your parish, of the church choir, brothers, sisters..."

To this I replied that I would not wilfully write about, or make up an artificial organization, which never existed and does not exist. I said that he had his OGPU agents, let them go to Zinkiv and investigate this question. If they managed to find an individual who admitted that he was a part of an organization that the interrogator believed existed, well that was God's will, but I would not set one up myself.

Baturin then reminded me of the last /Piatydesiatnytsia/ celebration, during which Oleksii Iakovych Iaresko, the conductor of the Orthodox church choir of the parish of the church of the Three Saints, sang secular

Ukrainian nationalist songs, as well as “*Bandura*,” the music of Davydovs’kyi, which is filled with religious content.

I can no longer remember what it is that I told the interrogator, but it was obvious that these songs were not to his liking, and that he considered Oleksii Iakovych Iaresko, a highly cultured man, excellent musician and choirmaster, to be an “undesirable” element.

Baturin once again ordered me to think very carefully and write, because, as you can see, he had already started me off on writing a report which would implicate some choir members and faithful of the parish who took part in the aforementioned celebration.

Having given the order, he left. After an hour had passed, he returned to find the paper blank once again, and to find me unwilling to write anything whatsoever.

“This is not good,” he said, “you are only complicating your case.”

“What will I write if I am innocent of any wrongdoing against the Soviet state?” I answered.

“The very fact that you have been arrested has made you guilty,” the interrogator told me.

Then he went to his filing cabinet, rooted around in some papers, then pulled out a thick wad of them, and pulled out a small paper and placed it on the table. I looked at this paper, and as I had in Uman, I recognized my writing. However, no matter how much I looked at it or the interrogator, could I divine what it was. He pretended not to notice anything, and after a long pause, asked me:

“Tell me: why have you written a number of agitational pamphlets?”

“I cannot remember doing anything of the sort,” I answered.

“Then I will remind you,” he said, and, taking up the piece of paper he had produced, began reading to me from it. It was then that I remembered what I wrote and to whom.

In 1926, I was working in the Kuzemyno parish when I wrote a letter to the sexton of the Slovenian Russian church in Dovzhok. In a conversation we had had, the sexton expressed his support for the Ukrainian church movement and the *UAPTs*, and expressed an interest in the notion of Ukrainianizing the local Ukrainian parish. At the time, I was a very young and inexperienced priest, and in my letter, I described, as best I could, what the *UAPTs* was, and what its goals were. I gave no thought to the consequences of writing such a letter, and wrote him as frank and sincere a letter as my soul dictated to me. This letter somehow found its way to the OGPU, and now Baturin pulled it out as an example of agitation against the Soviet regime.

To all of this, I said, that the letter was simply a reply to an individual

who was interested in the matter of the Ukrainian Church, as could and should have been written by one of its clergymen.

Suddenly, Baturin changed the topic, and asked:

“Do you know what the SVU is?”

I told him that I did not. He began explaining to me that it was a Ukrainian counterrevolutionary organization, led by the academic Serhii Iefremov, and that it attempted to topple the Soviet regime by force of arms and set up a bourgeois government in Ukraine. He further explained that the security organs had uncovered this organization and that soon its leaders would be brought before a Soviet tribunal.

“Among them are the leaders of your *UAPT*s, Volodymyr Chekhiv’skyi and others.” He thought for awhile, and added: “We have proof that you are a member of this organization.”

This I denied, and said that I had just heard of it from him for the very first time...

When I was next brought into Interrogator Baturin’s chamber, he was sitting to one side, and a man, unknown to me, thin and balding but still fairly young, was seated at the table looking through some papers. Baturin introduced him as a representative from the centre, from the Kharkiv OGPU.

This time, I was questioned about the SVU and my connections to the higher orders of the clergy several times. I was asked about Archbishop Oleksander Iareshchenko, Archbishop Iurii Shevchenko, Archbishop Iosyp Oksiuk and other outstanding clergymen of the *UAPT*s. I was told of various proclamations and agitation against the Soviet regime. They said that I railed against Soviet rule in my sermons, came out against collective farms. Towards the end of the session, I was accused of being an anti-Semite, because during Scriptural readings I permitted Jews to be called “Epistles of St Paul to the Jews (*zhydy*) rather than (*ievreii*), as the Soviet authorities called them and ordered everyone to call them.

Both interrogators questioned me in turn, exhibiting their artful experience in Soviet law.

At first they were polite, but when they noticed they would not get any results that way, they began to shout and threaten me...

I answered all of this with the silence of the grave. I must say that under the devilish conditions of interrogation, to endure and to remain silent is a great accomplishment. First of all, such behaviour has an edifying effect on the prisoner himself, and it also demoralizes the interrogator. The latter’s imagination quickly becomes exhausted. He becomes convinced of the hopelessness of trying to extract any information from the prisoner. He would then simply cast the case off by assigning

a sentence off the top of his head.

That night, I was finally released.

Exhausted, I returned to my cell. My fellow prisoners began to ask questions of me, but noticing my condition, desisted. I only wanted to do one thing: sleep. I had just settled in to do just that, I found that I would not be able to. Through my drowsiness, I felt that I was being shaken and prodded. When I awoke, I saw a OGPU guard before me.

“To questioning,” he thundered.

“But I have just come from there,” I replied.

“Let’s go. You’ve been sent for.”

The interrogator’s first words were: “Forgive me for having disturbed you for the second time tonight, but this is for your own good.” He gave me an evil smile as he poured out this nonsense.

“I respect you more than other men of the cloth,” he continued. “My entire evening has been spent thinking over a way to let you go, to release you. You are a young man, of humble origins; you have been educated by the Soviet authorities and Soviet schools. I know that you will be able to pay restitution for the sins you have accidentally committed against the regime. I am sure that your anti-Soviet actions were committed of your own free will, but as a result of someone’s criminal influence upon you. Therefore, the one who should answer for this is not you, but the one who brought it about. Tell me, who incited you, a man who has benefitted from a complete Soviet education, to going to serve the Church that has proven to be counterrevolutionary?”

I remained silent.

“Tell me, do you not wish to go free?”

I continued to be silent.

“I can release you immediately” he continued, “or I can make you rot in jail.” This last, Baturin said vulgarly, with an angry flash of his eyes. Then, as if recovering, he added:

“You are silent, but I know that you want to be free. I can release you right now, but only under one small condition...”

Here, Baturin pushed a typed document up to me, and said: “Read it, sign it, and you are free.”

What was written there, was shameful renunciation of my priestly function, my faith in God, and a denunciation of the *UAPTs*, in my name. It remained only for me to put my signature on that paper, and the Devil would celebrate a victory.

Not only that paper lay before me, but also the full force of the shameful sin of treachery wavered before my eyes. To renounce God, faith, Church, and dignity: this would be to drown, to put to shame all

that was the best and most dear; all that had uplifted me through my four years of pastoral service to the *UAPTs*. To renounce all this would mean to demoralize and to repel from the dear Church, all of those whom I had taught, in those four years, to believe and to love. To renounce all this would mean to call down God's wrath upon my head, to be scorned by the good and by my fellow pastors; to appear unworthy in the Christian world. If I renounced all this, the bread of the faithful that I had received, would be repaid with scorn. In short, to renounce all of this, would mean to become Judas.

I had never been in such a difficult and troublesome situation. In my pounding head, I thought: "Who will help me now, who will comfort me and tell me what to do?" At that moment, the words of my spiritual teacher, Artamon Kuzmins'kyi, upon my application to follow the life of service to the Church, came to me: "It is better not to go, than to go, and to thus shamefully disgrace the shrine." And I almost said aloud: "Come what may, but it is Your will, God."

"Even if you shoot me, I will not renounce all," I told the interrogator, and pushed the paper toward him.

## **The Anti-Ukrainian Terror and Famine-Holocaust of 1933**

Vasyl' Hryshko

In 1929, the so-called “socialist advance on the rural capitalist element” began with full force. A rapidly disseminated speech by Stalin, and his subsequent orders to Party functionaries, turned it into an officially sanctioned terroristic act of “liquidation of the kulak as a class, based on total collectivization.” Thus, it proceeded with particular cruelty in Ukraine, in concert with a forced collectivization drive. This was the beginning, or perhaps, the first act, of the tragedy that culminated in the catastrophe of 1933.

During the course of this tragedy, which began in 1929 and ran through 1930, it immediately became obvious that, although collectivization and “the liquidation of the kulak” were socio-political drives that were more or less instituted everywhere in the Soviet Union, including Russia, in Ukraine, they were nevertheless not only connected, but in fact synonymous with a national political anti-Ukrainian pogrom. This pogrom, as we know, was committed under the guise of a proclaimed intention to “liquidate the kulak as a class” and as part of the “unmasking and liquidation of the Association for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU).” This last action began in the fall of 1929, and included show trials of 45 star defendants, stage managed by the OGPU in the winter and summer of 1930. The liquidation of both the SVU and the kulaks began in earnest in 1930.

The liquidation of the SVU constituted nothing other than a massive terror against the Ukrainian national intelligentsia, both of the generation active at the time, and of those who had participated in the struggle for statehood in 1918-21: the leadership of the Ukrainian nation. The victims of this action were active in Ukrainian culture, education, religious and church affairs, as well as economics and industry (particularly in cooperatives) and in many other professions. Many nationally conscious and active students were also victimized. Concretely, this meant that at least a few tens of thousands of the most valuable representatives of Ukrainian society were imprisoned, destroyed by execution, or died in concentration camps.

The “liquidation of the kulak” entailed a total deprivation of all means of sustenance, followed by imprisonment and deportation, to concentration

camps and so-called northern Russian “special settlements”, of entire families of the best farmers and masters of Ukrainian agriculture. This “kulak liquidation” action, was carried out in concert with forced collectivization of the so-called “middle and poor” masses of peasantry. It was carried out by Party members specially mobilized from large industrial centres. They were mostly Russians, and hardly any were Ukrainian. Those who were of Ukrainian origin were denationalized and largely Russified.

The urban Party members also mobilized the local rural Komnezam members and their so-called “activists”: communists and Komsomol members. This local rabble carried out the orders of the “authorities,” and did all the black and dirty work of “dekulakization.”

As we know from official published Soviet statistics, 200,000 rural households and family estates were victimized by the “kulak liquidation.” Insofar as these “kulak” families included the more populous families of six children or more, this “liquidation” destroyed at least 1,200,000 human souls. During these actions, many heads or other members of families were accused of earlier, or simply imagined, “anti-Soviet” crimes, and according to extraordinary, and often secret OGPU trials, were shot to frighten the others. According to the testimony of survivors, at least half of those who were “dekulakized” and exiled to northern Russia, died during the first year. They died of starvation, in epidemics and from the brutal, inhuman regime of the concentration camps and “special settlements.” Those who survived were, by an absolute majority, lost to Ukraine. Their heirs and offspring were completely Russified.

Thus, the Ukrainian peasantry, which constituted 80% of the population of Ukrainian origin of Ukraine then under Soviet rule, was beheaded and deprived of its most nationally conscious, active, industrious and productive element, at the very outset of the collectivizing advance on rural Ukraine. This terror, which victimized over one million Ukrainians in the first year, was the first act of Soviet anti-Ukrainian nation killing; an act now known by the international term — genocide.

And yet, this was only the beginning of the tragedy of Ukraine, which intensified in 1931 and 1932. In these two years, 70% of all agriculture in Ukraine was collectivized, and thus was essentially a collection farm (*kolhosp*) oriented system of production. Even according to communist theory, it could be considered “socialist.” Nevertheless, the robbing of this already “socialist” peasantry, which was incapable of fulfilling the grain consignment quotas, not only did not diminish, it increased. This it did under the slogan: “the struggle for grain is the struggle for socialism.”

According to the very definite orders Stalin issued from Moscow, this “struggle for grain” in Ukraine was made into a “class struggle.” Since there were no more “kulaks” because they had all been “liquidated,” it was necessary to create a new “class enemy.” This was done according to very concrete guidelines set out by Stalin, and the new name for the enemy was *pid-kurkul*, or “sub-kulak.” The people so categorized were the middle peasants or collective farm members, who manifested an inimical attitude to collective agriculture, to grain consignment, and particularly if they evinced any dissatisfaction with Soviet agrarian policy in general. According a serious analysis of the Stalin period, published in the *samizdat* during the post-Stalin thaw in Moscow, the number of so-called “sub-kulaks” arrested and sent to concentration camps was more than double, and in some areas, more than triple the number of “kulaks” thus treated earlier. Ukraine, of course, was a “leader” in this category.

The grain consignment quotas for 1930 and 1931 were particularly high, and when they were handed over, Ukrainian grain reserves were left completely empty. There was such a shortage, that in the spring of 1932, there was not enough grain for spring seeding. Moscow was forced, as official propaganda stated at the time, to “lend” Ukraine a portion of the Ukrainian grain it had taken from Ukraine itself. However, by the time of the harvest that year, the effects of malnutrition and starvation began to appear among the collectivized villages of Ukraine.

Finally, in July 1932, when it became apparent that the year’s harvest would not be that bountiful, and that the grain consignment plan issued by Moscow could in no way be satisfied by it, the Kharkiv centre of the Ukrainian communist government began to petition Moscow. Kharkiv centre sought, in its own interests as a servant of Moscow, to reduce the plans for grain consignment to make them realizable. However, Molotov and Kaganovich, sent from Moscow for a special conference held in Kharkiv, resolutely proclaimed that “there will be no concessions in the matter of grain consignment.” They demanded that the plan for Ukraine be carried out at all costs. To be sure, later, during the grain consignments of 1932, Moscow had to reduce the quotas somewhat because the increases were so excessive as to strain credulity, but the reductions did not lower the quotas to realizable levels.

Therefore, the Moscow centre of the communist regime of the USSR, followed the policy of genocide by famine in Ukraine consciously and calculatingly. This was in step with its simultaneous national political terror. This constituted an attempt on the life of the Ukrainian nation.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of this lethal banditry, a number of special measures were employed. First of all, in order to carry out

the larcenous “grain consignment action” against the essentially collectivized peasantry, 112,000 non-Ukrainian specially selected Party members (largely from areas beyond Ukraine) were mobilized and stationed in Ukraine. Then, on 7 August 1932, a law was passed concerning the “protection of socialist property,” which provided for the most unusually severe penalties, including execution. No members or non-members of collective farms could take any grain for themselves from the collective, even if it lay still in the ears on the field after harvest. When the harvest was complete, it was forbidden to give peasants advances for workdays in grain, until such time as the grain consignment plan for the particular collective farm was complete.

One of the forms of the “struggle for grain” that went on at the time in Ukraine, was the blockade of the villages and entire districts, listed on the so-called “black board” for not having satisfied the quotas of grain consignment. Areas so listed were cut off from all food supplies. Even so, by the end of 1932, despite the use of such extraordinary measures, Moscow managed to collect only 70% of the grain its plans called for. However, such a “shortfall” of the plan meant that a total famine gripped the despoiled peasantry in Ukraine during the winter, spring and early summer of 1933.

Regardless, the grain consignments from Ukraine were not halted even at this point. In the final campaign to root out the last of the purportedly “hidden” grain, the searches came to the confiscation of pots of beans or peas grown in personal home gardens, and of baked bread.

The general line of the regime was the following: the peasants were not to be trusted because they had to have some kind of grain or food stores hidden away. Thus, the foundations were laid for the catastrophe of the famine in Ukraine, of 1933.

In early 1933, the final act of the tragedy of Ukraine began, when the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party in Moscow, issued a special resolution at the behest of Stalin. The Communist Party of Ukraine was issued a formal vote of non-confidence for its poor performance in grain consignment delivery on 24 January 1933. Immediately after the passage of this resolution, an entire apparatus of select high-ranking Party functionaries from Moscow’s Party and state centre, headed by a man close to Stalin at the time, Pavel Postyshev, was dispatched to Ukraine. Postyshev was assigned to the Kharkiv Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (which was then in the seat of the capital), and the entire Ukrainian state and Party apparatus was subordinated to him, as a representative of Stalin in Ukraine. This basically constituted a national political coup from above. It was Postyshev,

with his Muscovite apparat, who carried the pre-planned and by then manifest, catastrophe of the famine in Ukraine to its conclusion.

In his very first speech from a position of authority in Kharkiv, Postyshev declared, that, (I quote word for word): “There cannot be any discussion about state grain relief for the collective farms of Ukraine, even for seeding.” This came at a time when, in the winter of 1933, the massive death rate was climbing steeply and unremittingly in the villages of Ukraine; when, from amidst a countryside paralyzed by starvation, came the desperate cries for help, of not only the peasantry, but of the local lower echelon of the state authorities; when all cried for relief to prevent the massive and total extinction of entire districts in Ukraine.

Not only was relief not provided, but also a statute was passed, prohibiting the starving peasants from leaving their villages in search of help in industrial centres. In the cities, workers and civil servants were somewhat secure, although they were also half-starved by the small rations of bread and the minimum of the simplest of food.

In addition, the informal border between Russia and Ukraine became very real, and it was forbidden to travel to Russia without a special permit, that was not issued to peasants. In Russia, there was no famine, and food was easily obtainable.

In spite of all of this, whole clouds and droves of peasants in entire families continually flowed into the cities, where many died in the street. Their bodies were collected, dead or dying, by special police patrols. Those who were still alive were driven out of the city into the suburbs to die. This massive expiration of thousands upon thousands of Ukrainian rural people, literally happened before the very eyes of the city folk, but the authorities only helped them die.

At that time, in the spring of 1933, 35 high ranking officials of the *Narkomzem* (People’s Commissariat for Land Affairs) in Ukraine were shot, by order of the OGPU. First among the shot was Fedir Konar-Palashchuk, a noted former leader of the Galician Sich Riflemen, and later, of the contingent of Ukrainian Galician Army who, in 1920, found themselves encircled by the Bolsheviks and went over to them. Konar-Palashchuk was accused of participation in the non-existent “UVO-OUN underground,” which had supposedly infiltrated the organs of the *Narkomzem* of the Ukrainian SSR, and had artificially created the famine in Ukraine. A further 40 others were shot, having been charged with similar offences.

Finally, Moscow officially declared Ukrainian nationalism to be the “main danger” in Ukraine, and that, so it was declared, Ukrainization had grown into Ukrainian nationalism. The programme of the Education

Minister of the Ukrainian SSR was to blame for all of this. He had allowed himself to settle into “nationalist leanings” and purportedly abetted the activities of the “nationalist UVO-OUN underground.” As proof, it was claimed that two of Skrypnyk’s closest aides, the Bukovynian Oleksander Badan and the Galician Ievhen Ersteniuk, were agents of the UVO-OUN who operated behind “the broad shoulders of Skrypnyk,” as it was written in the Soviet press. When Moscow, through the lips of Postyshev, demanded that Skrypnyk recant and condemn his “nationalistic sins,” he, on 7 July 1933, demonstratively shot himself.

This the excellent Ukrainian proletarian writer and communist, Mykola Khvyly’ovyi, also did to himself. These two suicides, in the Ukraine of the day, eloquently underlined the tragedy that had befallen Ukraine. It was a tragedy that they both had, as well as many Ukrainian communists in general, each in their own way, brought on.

At this time, the mortality of the Ukrainian peasantry in this artificially created famine was at its highest, and took on the dimensions of what is now known as a “holocaust.” According to the calculations of an economist and statistician who lived in Kharkiv, in spring and early summer of 1933, approximately 25,000 people died in Ukraine every day.

Even according to the most conservative of calculations done by specialists of demographic statistics, there were at least 6 million people lost their lives as a direct result of the famine. If one includes the losses in natural population growth and other victims of the concurrent national political terror, the total losses sustained by the Ukrainian population is larger, about 8 million souls.

According to samizdat documents and the declaration of the Ukrainian Helsinki Monitoring Group of 1976, the total number of Ukrainian victims claimed in this the three year period 1930-33, if one includes casualties suffered in Kuban’ and in the Don region, stands at 10 million. This number includes those who died of hunger, were shot, died in prison or exile; in short all of those who in some way or other, were lost to Ukraine. The size of human losses of this period of Ukraine and Ukrainians in the USSR as a whole, that it was reflected in the census of 1937. When the results from the census began to indicate the apparent gross shortfall in population, the regime decided to annul the census, and classify the results as state secrets. The statisticians who calculated the census figures were arrested for “sabotage.”

## Echoes of the Great Famine in the Memoirs of Eyewitnesses and in Ukrainian Literature

Dmytro Chub

(Abridged)

Famine is a terrible occurrence in the history of mankind. Until modern times, it happened in individual countries only as an elemental misfortune, brought on by drought, crop failure, or continuous warfare. Such a famine envelopped certain provinces of Ukraine in 1921-22, particularly the Kherson, Mykolaiv, Zaporizhia, Donets', and Odessa provinces. However, these were years of very low rainfall, and the sun had scorched all of the seeded fields. However, even then, the authorities imposed a tax on those provinces, and only relented when half the population of certain villages died. However, the state gave no relief to the starving peasantry. Active relief was only given by the American Relief Administration (ARA). However, at that time, at least the press did not try to silence all news of this elemental misfortune.

On the other hand, the famine in Ukraine of 1933, which has since come to be called Stalin's famine, destroyed seven million people, and happened under completely differing conditions and because of completely different causes. In Ukraine, there was to have been a good harvest that year. However, in 1929-32, Moscow had been conducting its policy of forced collectivization, and of the liquidation of the so-called kulaks as a class. Hundreds of thousands of innocent people were deported northward to their deaths, and this effectively eliminated the base of grain production. Virtually 100% of the Ukrainian population were opposed to collectivization.

When it became aware of this opposition, the daily *Proletars'ka Pravda*, fearing for its hide, published an article in which Ukrainian peasants were called "traitors of the proletarian interest." Under Moscow's orders, the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR issued resolution on 6 December 1932, according to which:

1. Transportation of goods into areas that had not met grain consignment norms was to be halted, as was all state and cooperative trade with such areas. State and cooperative stores were to be closed, and merchandise taken.

2. Trade in alimentary products was prohibited.
3. All credit for the abovementioned areas was to be suspended, and any already given was to be rescinded.
4. All administrative posts were subject to revision, and enemy elements were to be eliminated.
5. The same was to be done on all collective farms, and counterrevolutionary elements guilty of sabotage were to be eliminated.

On 11 January 1933, Stalin declared, at the Plenum of the CC of CPSU, that former Petliurites were active in collective farms, that they had adopted the new tactic of “silent sabotage,” and that this was the reason for the slow pace of grain consignments.

Soon after, on 24 January 1933, the CC and the TsKK of the CPSU declared, at their meeting in Moscow, that the Ukrainian Communist Party’s administration of the collective farms was inadequate, and that it manifested “a lack of class consciousness,” particularly in the Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Odessa provinces. The declaration assigned Pavel Postyshev as the Obkom of the Kharkiv province, and Khataievych and Veger to the other two, respectively.

Also at this time, the new head of the OGPU of Ukraine, V. Balitskyi, was despatched from Moscow. In addition, 25,000 other communist activists trained in Moscow and Leningrad arrived in Ukraine.

Given these statistics, it is obvious who organized the famine in Ukraine, and who it was who robbed the peasantry of their last reserves of grain and food. This Muscovite horde, acting in direct contravention to the constitution of the Ukrainian SSR, fell upon Ukraine like a cloud of locusts. The activists went from house to house, day and night, in every village, to seize any reserves whatsoever: they took not only grain, but also flour and groats. Their heartlessness was extraordinary. The writer and scientist, Oleksa Voropai, who was an agronomist during the famine, saw the horrifying scenes it presented with his own eyes. He also managed to collect the testimonies of other eyewitnesses and published them in a book entitled *In the Ninth Circle*. This collection of accusations of Moscow for its crimes was also published in English.

A woman from Kyrylivtsia, Khmelnyts’kyi district, Vinnytsia region, tearfully entreated a young Russian MTS political section leader (sent from the “city of Lenin”), after everything had been taken from her: “My God, how am I going to feed my children?” The reply was: “They will simply die with you.”

It was thus that the cruel communist despoilers behaved. They aimed to destroy half of the population of Ukraine in order to eliminate any opposition to collectivization. They prepared the terrible famine that wiped

out seven million of our people. In the spring of 1933, people began to die of starvation en masse, and there was no one to harvest the crops. The communists, who had been sent from Russia, treaded our people like cattle: they screamed, swore at them vulgarly, and arrested them. The slightest insubordination brought on arrest and disappearance. In reply to the fact that people were dying at work, on the roads, and at home, these usurpers would say: "That's nothing. We have enough people. Those are simply counterrevolutionaries and Petliurites." At meetings of the the workers and functionaries of the MTS, the chief of the polit-division of the Uladiv MTS, a former sailor from Kronstadt, shouted: "All grain is to be seized, to the last kernel. It is to be torn from the hands of those who materially support the counterrevolution. Force the *muzhik* to work on the collective farm by starving him. Such are the directives and laws of the Party."

He understood nothing about agriculture , but he continued to drive around in his new car, raging. However, he did not manage to gather much, because the people were exhausted, robbed, and dying. The fields of the sugar beet plantation were getting choked with weeds, the seeding was getting delayed — everything was dying.

At that time, there was enough bread in the shops of Moscow, but peasants were not allowed to buy train tickets to go there unless they had special permission.

The pedagogue Dmytro Solovei, an author of two books, *The Golgotha of Ukraine* and *The Paths to Golgotha*, thoroughly analyzed the entire process of collectivization, dekulakization, and the confiscation of all food, (which, in fact, caused the famine). He provides a wealth of documentary evidence, and even mentions the names of the villages in which various events occurred, as well as the names of those who witnessed the destruction caused. In *The Paths to Golgotha*, Solovei quotes a passage from the memoirs of Professor Fedir Riabokin' of Kharkiv University. Riabokin's father lived in the Lysychi, Karlivs'kyi district, in the Poltava region. Every Wednesday, the professor's father would arrive and the son would buy 16 kilos of rye flour for his entire family, at grossly inflated speculator's prices. With this flour he could feed, apart from himself, his brother (an agronomist), his daughter in law, and his two grandchildren. However, just before Easter, the father did not arrive. Professor Riabokin' began preparing to go to the village, but finally, his father appeared, barely alive:

"Father what is the matter with you? Why have you been away for so long? What is happening in Lysychi?" I asked. "Well, it's happening, my son, happening..." and father began to weep. "What has happened

father?" I cried, falling before him.

"Well, it happened..." he said, and calmed down slightly. "I buried Oryna... her husband, both of their children" (Oryna was professor Riabokin's sister) "How did they die?" I asked. "Why... of famine." "But how could this be? Still in the fall I heard from Oryna, and she told me that they had had a good harvest, and that they had plenty of bread and potatoes."

"Well, it happened like this," answered my father. "He (Oryna's husband) was a private farmer, and refused to join a collective, so they imposed a 100 *pood* grain levy on him. He produced that amount, and then they levied another 200 just before Christmas, when he had only 20 left. Then the communists and activists came and took everything down to the last kernel; even flour, groats, beans, peas... They said: 'We do this to you,' they said, 'because what you don't want to give the state, we will take from you by force.' They took his cow for meat consignment still in the fall, and the family slaughtered the piglet before Christmas, because they had nothing left to eat, and there was nothing left to feed it. The geese, ducks and chickens were stolen by the neighbours and eaten."

In the book written by Dr. O. Voropai, we learn of the way the authorities treated the starving and swollen people who poured into the cities en masse. Already after 1933, Dr. Voropai met a doctor who had worked in the main hospital of Dnipropetrovsk. The latter remembered 1933 as follows:

I was working in the main hospital in Dnipropetrovsk, and one morning I had the misfortune of being ordered to examine the bodies of those who had died in the Dnipropetrovsk "death camp." This was a camp for those, whom the police had picked up off the streets and driven to an enclosure of barbed wire. At night, the OGPU trucks would bring heaps of the dead and pile them up. At special meetings of the medical personnel, warnings would be issued to the effect, that giving any medical assistance to starving peasants and villagers who got into the city, was strictly forbidden. The starving were considered "enemies of Soviet rule."

Trucks from the collective farms would drive through the villages and collect the dead in their houses.

In Stepanivka, Vinnytsia region, wrote Dr. Voropai, wagons from the collective farms would ignore those who had not been members of the collective. One woman, a widow, carried her three dead and shrouded children to the cemetery, and then died herself.

In Petropavlivka, Dnipropetrovsk region, a young peasant who had been dekulakized and driven from his village already in 1929, returned

secretly, in 1933. He arrived from the railway station on foot and at night, but grew fearful of walking into the village nevertheless. He crawled into the rye field that stood across from his former house, where his old parents were then living, and slept until morning. At dawn, he saw the following: a fourteen year old girl, the daughter of Omelian Slyz'kyi, a former neighbour, was dragging her father's body out of her house and was trying to load him onto a cart. Barefoot, clad only in a shirt, streaming with tears, she could not manage to lift the heavy body... As he recounted it, he came out of the rye, and asked:

“Where are you taking your father?”

“To the cemetery,” the girl said, “He has been lying dead in the house for three days. I am afraid to sleep with him in the house.”

Conditions were no better around the birthplace of Taras Shevchenko. A resident of Kyrylivka recounted that half of the village died and the rest fled. In Zelena Dibrova, of 1210 households, 843 emptied completely, and only in 367 houses did everyone not die.

Oleksa Hai-Holovko is a writer who now lives in Canada, but at the time of the famine he was sent as a correspondent into the countryside. When he arrived in Krasnograd, he noticed that there were hardly any people in the streets. The shops were all closed, and there was no place to eat. Only because he had special papers was he allowed to eat at the canteen for OGPU and Communist Party members. He was then transferred to Novopavlivka, a village near Krasnodar...

That night, the local Party and Komsomol members were divided into five brigades, each of which was to go and collect the dead in the houses of the surrounding villages. Hai-Holovko was assigned to Kobzivka, where signs were already posted, telling how many had died in each house. Aided by a female student who had also been sent on this detail, he carried the dead out of the houses into the street, where they were loaded onto wagons and taken to the cemetery. The writer saw hundreds of corpses, and recounted all of the horrors he encountered in his book *Along the Deadly Road*, published in Canada in 1979.

The former wife of the dramatist Mykola Kulish, Antonina, who now lives in America, wrote in her memoirs, that her husband heard of the famine in the countryside, and travelled there to see exactly what was going on. After two weeks, he returned to Kharkiv so despondent and despairing, that she grew very afraid, and asked:

“Did something happen on the way? Are you ill?”

“Old one (so he always addressed his wife),” he answered, “if you only knew, if you had seen what is happening in the villages — a horror. Imagine — there are swollen and dead people lying about on all the roads;

it is quiet in the villages; people no longer walk around because they have no strength to move. Children lie dead beside their mothers, who themselves have fallen in doorways and lie dying. There aren't even any dogs left in the villages. This Ukraine is in bloom, the harvest beams in the fields, but there is nobody left to gather it. The wealthy country, the golden land, the industrious and talented people, what have we done with them?"

"Mykola was crying," wrote his wife, "he groaned and fell ill. Occasionally he would arise, screaming. I would try to calm him, but he would answer: "This must not only be written about, but screamed; the bells must be rung in alarm"

Even though some writers were arrested, they continued to react against the events. They wrote letters to the Central Committee of the Party, and to the publishing houses. Hnat Khotkevych, who then lived in the Vysokyi suburb of Kharkiv, sent an anguished letter to his publisher during the winter of 1933. He wrote:

How am I to continue living? They have taken my job and my ration cards away. We are starving. I can only buy one ladle-full of beans a day, out of which we make a thin broth for everyone. We only have one pair of boots for our two children, and they already have to go to school. It is a harsh winter, but there is nothing to heat the house with. As we go to sleep, we cover ourselves with all our clothing. Water freezes in our house.

A former Red partisan, the writer Dmytro Hordiienko, had a crippled left hand, and he wrote a letter to his publishers, saying that writers at the time were materially worse off than the messenger of the Soviet People's Commissariat. All of these letters were reprinted, and sent the Central Committee of the Party. Both Kulish and Hordiienko were arrested, and both perished in exile.

Of course, this famine, organized by communist Moscow, could not help but leave a mark on our literature. Many bold works written about the famine were burned by writers during the waves of mass arrests. Everything was burned that could have provided grist for the mill of the prosecutors. Some who had written poems, tried to memorize them to keep them safe until the opportune moment for publication would arrive.

Such a poet and writer was Oleksa Hai-Holovko. Still in 1933, he wrote the poem "In a Ukrainian Cemetery," memorized it, burned the original text, and reproduced it from memory in Canada.

*In a Ukrainian Cemetery (excerpt)*

A red storm... Cries and weeping  
pierce the bloody thick mornings.  
I stand in my grieving Ukraine

crucified by Moscow on an honest cross.  
Everywhere, graves, graves, graves  
in the graves lies my unfortunate country  
O holy fate, give me strength

that I may speak the yet unsaid.  
The fiery word seizes the heart,  
because we fall and perish in cruel prisons.  
There is no escape, none, none,  
alone, we cannot get out of hell...

The poet Oleksa Veretenchenko escaped from a German encirclement (during the Second World War) returned to Kharkiv, and wrote two deeply resonant poems. I quote an excerpt from one of them, from memory:

*1933*

My paupered Ukrainian people  
Ukraine, my Sich mother  
Where are you coats of arms and heirlooms?  
Where is your state mace?

Long has the steppe not heard  
the cry of the eagle aloft.  
The fame of Khmelnyts'kyi and Mazepa  
is not sung about by grey kobzars.

Only the pounding of chains  
can be heard in Solovky, in Siberia, in Kolyma.  
The cossack country of hetmans  
is dying in Russian slavery.

Where has the joyful smiling gone,  
and the Kupalo fires of girls?  
Where are the Ukrainian villages,  
and the cherry orchards around the houses?

Everything has perished in the cold blazes:  
mothers and children are dying of hunger,  
and madmen in bazaars sell human flesh to people.

Everything has disappeared... and on all of the ruins  
our drunken enemies dance.  
Ukrainians die in Ukraine,  
in Baikol, in the cold of the taiga...

No — we will not rise like a cloud.  
No — we will not strike like a thunderbolt.  
If a punishment is due for all crimes,  
then what kind of punishment is due them?

## **The Planned Famine in Ukraine, 1932-33**

Dr. Osyp Moroz

*(Abridged version of article published in Visti ukraïniis'kykh inzheneriv no. 1-2, 1984)*

On 29 December 1933, Stalin declared that the kulak had been liquidated as a class. Because of the absence of guidelines that might have limited excesses, the process of collectivization had been decided upon by local activists. The tendency to dwell upon dekulakization had overcome the focus on collectivizing methods of agricultural production.

The decision for complete collectivization was made on 5 January 1930. The decision also regarded the pace and the methods of collectivization. This decision was made by Stalin himself, and was thus not a resolution of a Party congress or a statute of government. Article 4 of a statute enacted on 1 March 1930, sets out as property of a collective farm: the entire inventory of farm implements, all livestock, all grain reserves, feed, and buildings. In addition, Article 127 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR, enacted on 1 August 1932, declared the resale of agricultural products illegal, and subject to punishment of no less than six years of imprisonment and confiscation of property. This article of the code played an important part in the organization of the famine in Ukraine in 1932-33.

Expropriations began in the winter of 1929-30; the second wave came in early 1931; the third, towards the end of 1932. The iron net was not able to digest the massive deportations of such a wide swath of the population. Six to seven million people were to have been deported out of Ukraine to northern Russia. On 12 February 1930, the OGPU (The All-Union State Political Administration, the contemporary KGB) divided the kulak population into three categories, depending on the level of "threat to security." The first category was to be arrested by the OGPU itself, imprisoned; the second was to be deported; and the third was to remain in the district of residence, but on land that required amelioration, such as swamps, forests, barren areas, and so forth. In February 1930, the tension reached its zenith. During the first phase of the collectivization, that is, throughout 1930, the peasants in Ukraine even rose up in rebellion. The Army and 25,000 mobilized communist activists put down the revolts.

On 1 March 1930, there were 15 million farming households and estates in the USSR, of which 11 million were absorbed into collective farms in two months. Stalin wrote his article *Dizzy with Success*, during this period, and had it published on 2 March 1930. This article, and many resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPSU, such as the one of 14 March 1930, could lead one to the mistaken conviction that Stalin wished to slow the pace of collectivization. In his recognition of certain pernicious abuses of power (coercion) in the process of such a sudden collectivization, Stalin did not demand that the situation be ameliorated, or that confiscated land be returned to its owners, or that imprisoned peasants be allowed to return home, or even that churches be allowed to open again. With his article, Stalin intended to pacify his opposition and to prevent it from adopting a secure political position. Perhaps, however, Stalin sought simply to slough off responsibility for his actions and decisions.

Stalin did not want to have similar methods of collectivization adopted in Russia. They were applied only in Ukraine and the northern Caucasus, where he laid the groundwork for future colonial relations. In Ukraine, on 10 March 1930, 65% of households and estates and 70% of the land was collectivized. However, by 1 July of that year, only 30.4% of households and estates and 39.7% of the land remained thus, because the peasants left the collective farms en masse. However, on 3 July, they were forced to return.

Ukraine was subjected to a total collectivization that had a different agenda than its counterpart in Russia. Dekulakization was not only an economic element of policy, but also a political one. The policies were applied to everyone who opposed them, even if the individual had no possessions. Peasants voted on whether or not to join collective farms. The peasants were asked if they opposed the government, and if they did, they were slated for deportation. Kulaks constituted 4% of the population. The poor and middle-income peasants who opposed collectivization, thus supported the kulaks, and therefore opposed the policies of the regime. Every peasant who did not join a collective farm was considered "an enemy of the state."

Peasants had no control over how much they worked in a collective farm. The state decided how much they worked and how much they would be fed. It is mistaken to think that the Party was not conscious of the consequences of such conditions. The Party aimed to increase agricultural production, and to be the owner of the production and the produce. Although consumption of the product by the peasantry was minimal, there was still a possibility that it could be reduced even further, in order to

improve the Soviet Union's balance of trade to a level necessary for the industrialization of the Soviet state.

In A. Rochester's *Lenin on the Agrarian Question*, the author quotes Lenin as follows:

This was the first time, and I expect the last time, that the greater masses of the peasantry were hostile to us, — not consciously, but instinctively. This gave rise to a special, and obviously, unpleasant situation for us.

Thus, Soviet authorities were conscious of the peasantry's attitude to them.

The first responsibility of a modern state is to provide for the existence or sustenance of its population and to secure it. However, total collectivization did not have the population or the consumer in mind, because it was not an aim in itself, but only a means of facilitating industrialization.

Total collectivization was an integral consequence of the plan of industrialization, and as such, automatically became part of the first Five Year Plan. Forced collectivization was instituted to make the government, and therefore, the Party, the sole owner of the products, consumer outlets, and of the work performed. Thus, out of the concept of forced collectivization the new concept of organized famine, designed to reduce consumption and to destroy a section of the Ukrainian people, was born. The famine of 1932-33 was a direct economic and political act taken by Moscow against Ukraine. This was not a punishment, but a direct goal.

Therefore, because climactic conditions during the harvest of 1932 were completely normal, it is correct to characterize the famine as a famine organized by man.

Even in the pre-revolutionary period, Ukraine produced 25.8% of grain and 82% of sugar beet crops produced in Tsarist Russia. We can calculate the figures in another fashion, in order to factor out the systemic inadequacies of the old regime. If Ukraine produced 26.8% of the USSR's grain, then we obtain a figure of 9.34 million tons, out of the total of 37.26 million tons. The total grain harvest of the state was listed as 18.4 million tons, and out of this, the Ukrainian Soviet state wished to receive 6.4 million tons.

On the basis of our calculations, the peasants of the USSR as a whole, were to provide 50% of their harvest, while those in Ukraine were told to provide no less than two thirds, since Ukraine was to provide 30.6% of all grain consigned to the Soviet state. In the 1909-13 period, Ukrainian peasants had to sell about 29% of their harvested crop to pay taxes and to satisfy their cash flow requirements. In addition, peasants could keep

14% of his grain for seeding for the following year, and the rest, that is, 57%, he could consume or dispose of as he wished.

An additional factor was density of population. According to Tymoshenko's (*Agricultural Russia and the West*, Stanford University Press, Food Research Institute, 1932), European Russia had a population density of 64 persons per square kilometre; Northwestern Ukraine had 157 persons per square kilometre; and Northeastern Ukraine had 126 persons per square kilometre.

Let us examine the grain harvest of the USSR in more detail. In 1913, there were 23 million hectares of arable land in Ukraine. Land devoted to grain crops constituted 21 million hectares, which in 1928 and 1933 came to be reduced to 20 million hectares. This obviously means that all 20 million hectares were under cultivation during the period of forced collectivization.

*Grain crop lands in 1932-33 (million hectares):*

USSR,	94	100%
Ukrainian SSR	20	21.2%
Russian SFSR	63	
Other Republics	11	78.8%

The total amount of grain, that Moscow intended to harvest in the USSR in 1932, was set at 18.4 million tons, and it was to be collected as follows:

Producing area	Grain Harvest (Millions of Tons)	%
RSFSR & Other Republics	12.0	69.4
Ukrainian SSR	6.4	30.6
USSR	18.4	100.0

Relative percentages for Ukraine to Russian and the other Republics (in million hectares):

	RSFSR and others	URSR	URSR%
Seeded fields	74	20.0	30.6
Consigned to the state	12	6.4	21.2

The amount grain harvested from one hectare of land for both Ukraine and other republics was 8 tons.

The figures of rural population to arable land for the Russian SFSR

stood at 30 million peasants to 63 million hectares of arable land.

If we accept the figure of N. Jasnyi for grain harvested in 1932, that is, 37.6 million tons harvested in the USSR, we have the following picture:

	USSR	UkrSSR	RSFSR etc.
Arable land	94.0	20.00	74.00
% of USSR	100.00	21.20	79.80
Grain harvested	37.26	7.90	29.36
Grain consigned to state	18.40	6.40	12.00
Grain given the peasantry	18.86	1.50	17.36
% of USSR	100.00	7.86	92.04

If we accept the pre-revolutionary figure which had Ukraine producing 25.6% of Tsarist Russia, we see the following picture:

Grain harvested (million tons), Consigned to the state, Given the peasantry, Grain given in ha kh /??/, no. of peasants per hectare, Grain given in kg/ 1 ha

C2USSR,

37.60,

18.40,

18.86,

206.4,

\*,

\*

C3Ukrainian SSR,

9.54,

6.40,

3.11,

150.50,

2,

75.25

C4RSFSR and Other Republics,

27.72,

12.00,

15.72,

212.40,

1,

212.40

In any case, Ukrainian peasants were given than half the grain given a Russian peasant. Starvation is said to set in when less than a norm of 200 kilograms is given per person, per annum. Ukraine was told to live on one third of the starvation norm and thus, there was a famine in Ukraine. There was no famine in 1931 because the population still had the reserves from the previous year to eat.

The total grain consignment quota for the Soviet Union in 1931 was 22.3 million tons. 7.2 million tons, or 31.8% was to have been provided by Ukraine. The government knew that the starving population of Ukraine would try to steal grain from the collective farms. This was the reason for the decree of 7 August 1932. Even the resale of food was considered a crime. When this law was enforced, Ukrainian peasants were subjected to unnecessary and unjustified severe punishments. Vyshyns'kyi, the General Prosecutor of the USSR, admitted this himself: "Courts began to reach such extremes in their judgements, that hitting a pig with a stone was considered to be an attack on communal property." The law protected not only the physical well being of pigs in the collective farms, it also sought to protect their nerves and sensibilities.

S. Pidhainyi claims, on the basis of his studies, that the famine Moscow organized in Ukraine killed 1.5 million people in 1932; 3.3 million in 1933, plus 2.7 million in losses caused by decreased population growth caused by the famine.

We declare, that the famine had a dramatic effect on the population of Ukraine, which it decreased, and on the population of Russia, which it increased:

	1926 (In millions)	% of USSR	1929	% Growth	
USSR	147.0	100%	170.5	100.0	115.9
Russians	77.8	52.9%	99.0	58.4	27.2
Ukrainians	31.2	21.2%	28.1	16.6	-10.0

The fact that the number of Russians increased, while the number of Ukrainians drastically decreased, deserves some explanation. The census 1959 gives the following population figures, (in millions, and in current boundaries):

	1926	1959	% Growth
Russians	77.8	114.1	146.6
Ukrainians	37.2	37.	
		2	0

If we take the figure of 37.2 million and multiply it by 146.6%, the figure we get 54.5. If we subtract 37.2, we get a figure of 17.3 million people who should have lived to see the census of 1959. This is not an exact figure, and it could be proven that it should be larger.

The thesis contends that the famine in Ukraine was directed at the peasant class as a whole (including the poorest) is confirmed by the following statistics of fatality:

Condition of wealth pre-revolution	% Mortality in Famine	% In Collective Farms	% Private Farms
poor	33.7	72.5	22.5
middle	57.6	62.3	37.7
wealthy	8.7		100.
Total	100.00	61.9	38.1

There were special retail stores for Party members called *zakryti rozpredy* (closed outlets). E. Hlovins'kyi claims that not a single member of the Communist Party died of hunger in the famine of 1932-33. In the documents unearthed during the Second World War, a directive was found in which Stalin decreed that peasants be given only 10% of the grain they produced.

The government erected towers in grain fields, in order to keep a close watch on the harvest. Theft, even after 1933, was an integral part of the system. It is possible that more than one million guards were hired, who produced nothing. W. H. Chamberlin, an eyewitness, wrote in his *The Russian Iron Age* (cited in S. Pidhainy's book, p.181):

The territory gripped by famine, as far as I could see and could determine from reliable sources, included Ukraine, the northern Caucasus and a large section of Kazakhstan, and Central Asia...

The total number of dead of famine, according to Chamberlin, was five to six million. According to the calculations of the American ambassador in Moscow during the Second World War, W. C. Bullitt (who was once a Soviet sympathizer) the total number of victims directly attributable to the famine was at least three to five million. Various studies conducted in the 1980s have set the total number of Ukrainian casualties in the famine of 1932-33 as seven million.

## A Document on the Famine

(Reprinted from *Moloda Ukraina March 1987*)

Note: Recently, an extraordinary document about the famine in Ukraine in 1932-33 was found in the archives of the Italian government. This document is a letter written by the Italian consul Gradenigo to the Royal Italian Embassy in Moscow. It is the testimony of an eyewitness of the terrible and nightmarish events brought about according to the plans and organization of Moscow, and under the leadership of Stalin. Some thought that these unbelievable crimes against the Ukrainian people, particularly the Ukrainian peasantry, would be forgotten in time. As we have come to see, this has not happened. After fifty years, it is as if the dead are rising up to talk about these crimes against humanity.

It appeared to us that the Western world did not know about these crimes because Bolshevik reality was hermetically sealed, and no news could get out. However, as we see today, some things did manage to break through and were circulated in the West. The free Western world had been informed about these crimes, worse than those committed under Hitler, but was silent.

This document first appeared in translation into Ukrainian in *Visti z Rymu* (News from Rome) of December 1986, of which this is a reprint. It is a pity that this document had not been published before Robert Conquest's *Harvest of Sorrow* had been written. It is our wish that readers become acquainted with this document.

It is widely known that Soviet flashwriters have been attacking R. Conquest's book *Harvest of Sorrow* and S. Novyts'kyi's film *Harvest of Despair*, claiming they are both fabrications. This is also broadcast on Soviet radio. The Soviets are trying to deny the irrefutable facts about that period, and claim that no such famine occurred in Ukraine. The Italian consul Gradenigo, who was staying in Ukraine in what was then the capital city, Kharkiv, saw everything with his own eyes.

As one reads this document, a chill passes along one's spine. One expects that many such documents about the planned famine in Ukraine can be found in various archives. It is essential that these archives be accessed and that the secrets therein be divulged.

The Editors (end of the Note)

Kharkiv, 31 May 1933; XI no. 474/106

The Famine and the Ukrainian Question

To the Royal Italian Embassy in Moscow

Famine continues to wreak such destruction on the people that it remains completely incomprehensible how the world can stand by indifferently in the face of such a catastrophe, and how the international press, which calls so actively for an international condemnation of Germany for its "terrible persecutions of Jews," can stand shamefacedly mute about this carnage, organized by the Soviet government, in which Jews play a large, although not leading, role.

There can be no doubt: 1. That this famine has been caused by a consciously organized crop failure, planned to "teach the peasant;" 2. that not a single Jew can be found among the dead, in fact, they are all quite plump and well taken care of under the brotherly wing of the OGPU.

The "ethnographic material" will be transformed, one Jew, a big fish of the local OGPU, has cynically claimed. Today one can foresee the final demise of this "ethnographic material." It is destined to be replaced.

No matter how terrifying and incredible such a forecast might seem, it must nevertheless be accepted as a reality that is being brought about.

The government in Moscow has prepared, by means of a cruel requisition (about which I have previously filed reports), not a crop failure, but a complete shortage of any source of sustenance for the Ukrainian peasant, in Kuban and in the middle Volga basin.

Three attitudes can be the basis of such a policy:

1. the hostility to the passive resistance of the peasantry to collectivized agriculture;

2. the conviction that it is impossible to change this "ethnographic material" into a model of communism;

3. the need, which varies in clarity or focus, to denationalize the country, in which Ukrainian and German consciousness has begun to reemerge; the need to neutralize potential political difficulties; and the preference, for the security of the empire, that Russians settle the country, and constitute at least a majority.

The first was the factor that led to the initial "lesson," which was decided upon, as it is evident from the statements of many Party members, by the government.

The second at least caused the virtually total indifference of the government to the tragic consequences of the "lesson."

The third will probably lead to the liquidation of the Ukrainian problem in a matter of months, with casualties of about ten to fifteen million. Let not this number be considered an exaggeration. I think that

it will be surpassed if it has not already been attained.

This great misfortune is mowing down millions of people and is destroying the youth of an entire nation, and affects only Ukraine, Kuban', and the central Volga region. In other areas, the effects are much lesser if they are felt at all.

Reliable professionals, who have managed to travel in various areas of Ukraine, unanimously state that the catastrophe is restricted to Ukraine, Kuban' and the central Volga.

"The ruin begins in the Kursk region," claims the writer Andreev, who recently returned from Moscow. He added that the Ukrainian peasant would never again return to the land. Those who will survive will be homeless, alienated from his fatherland, and nobody will be able to revive any faith in the current regime. The collective farm workers are also terribly weakened by the famine, and the collectives themselves are disintegrating because of the mortality rate and because the survivors are all fleeing to the cities. Everyone is fleeing to the main centres, even though those who have just enough strength to get there die in the streets, because they have no money, and no one makes any move to help.

My daughter, Andreev continued, is barely fifteen, and yet even she will never be able to see this country as prosperous and joyful as it was in the past.

Perhaps the "Salvation" will come when the peasantry is completely destroyed. The government will replace it with a new element that will work the land as if it were working in a factory. However, experience has proven that factories managed by the current Soviet regime produce nothing. Thus it will be, without a doubt, with the land. If it is organized into collectives, the regime will collapse. I have just returned from travels to the area around Leningrad. There, they are complaining that they have lost 50 to 60% of their cows. But they are lords, they eat bread every day. As if they had something to complain about. But they have it good; let them come here and see what is going on. Such was a conversation among mutual friends.

These are observations on the general order of things, informed by a series of factors that have led to the current misfortune.

I think it appropriate to cite yet another anecdote about the situation: Comrade Frenkel, a member of the "collegium" of the OGPU confided to another acquaintance of mine that every night 250 corpses are collected off the streets of Kharkiv. I can personally say that I witnessed a truck loaded with ten to fifteen bodies pass by the consulate after midnight. Because there are three large buildings under construction near the Royal consulate, the truck stopped in front of one of them, and men with

pitchforks got out of the truck to look for the dead. I watched as they picked up seven people with those pitchforks, including two men, one woman and four children. Others woke and vanished like shadows. One of those who was assigned to this collection detail told me: "You don't have this kind of thing back home, do you?"

On the morning of 21 May, some bodies were thrown into a heap of human excrement in the bazaar, right along the fence that separates the square from the riverbank. There were about thirty of them. On the morning of 23 May, I counted fifty one. A grey faced child was sucking milk from her dead mother's breast. The people said: "these are the buds of a socialist spring."

One day, I was walking along Pushkins'ka street towards the centre of town. Rain was falling. Three homeless people passed by, pretending they were fighting. One of them was pushed into a passing woman who was carrying a pot of borshch wrapped in a kerchief. The pot fell to the ground and broke open. The guilty one fled, but the other two swabbed the soup up from the ground with their hands and ate it greedily. Some of it they poured into their hats for the third accomplice.

On the same street, Pushkins'ka, a few metres away from the consulate, a woman sat on the sidewalk with her two children all day long. Tens of other mothers and their children also sat up and down along the street. This woman held out a simple milk carton and an old tin can, into which the odd person would throw a kopiika. That night, she pushed her children away in one motion, and in another, she got up and threw herself under a tram that was passing by at full speed. Half an hour later I saw a janitor sweeping her entrails off the street. The two children stood there, watching.

Only last week, a brigade was organized for the collection of homeless children. Apart from the peasants who flow into the city, because they no longer have any chance for survival in the country, there are also many children in the streets. Their parents brought them to the city, abandoned them, and then returned to their village to die. They hoped that someone would take care of their children in the city. And yet until last week, they all lay and cried on each street corner, on the sidewalks, everywhere. We saw 10 year old girls acting like mothers to four or three year-olds. When night fell, they would cover them with their own shawls and slept, cramped, on the ground. Beside them lay a tin can for the alms they hoped for.

During the last week, street cleaners have been working in white overcoats, moving about the city, collecting children and taking them to the nearest police station. This often happens amidst much anguish,

screaming and weeping. There is a police station near the consulate and every minute one can hear the despairing cries: "I don't want to go to the death barracks, let me die in peace."

Around midnight, the trucks arrive to take them to the Northern Donetsk freight station. Children found on trains and collected in villages are also brought there. Also included are those who are relatives of peasants, the eldest and unmarried, and all of those picked up in the city.

There are also doctor's assistants on hand. They are "heroes of the day" as one doctor told me. 40% of them have died of typhus they contracted while treating patients. Those who are not yet swollen and appear to have a chance of recovering, are sent to the barracks of the Kholodna Hora prison, where they are kept in shacks, they sleep on straw, and close to 8,000 people languish, most of them children. A doctor who had been assigned there described to me how it was that they receive milk and broth, but, obviously, rarely /text missing, in original also noted/ ... he said "anyway, I pass from one tearful episode to another."

The swollen are transported in freight trains out into the fields about 50 to 60 kilometres from the city, and left there to die, unseen. Once filled, the cars are sealed with metal bars. It often happens that a train is sent on its way days after the cars have been sealed. A few days ago, a railway worker was walking by a line of freight cars when he heard screams. When he approached, he could hear the pleading of someone inside, begging to be saved from the intolerable stench of the corpses. When they opened up the freight car, they saw that he was the only one left alive. They pulled him out and left him to die in another car, where those they sealed inside were also still alive.

When the train arrived to the dumping ground, large pits were dug, and then the dead were pulled from the cars. Care was taken not to pay too much attention to detail, but it was nevertheless possible to notice how a body thrown into the pit came alive and moved in the last throes of life. However, the job of the gravediggers was never interrupted by these things and the removal of corpses continued.

These details were all supplied to me by doctors' assistants, and I can guarantee their authenticity.

The Kholodna Hora prison has about 30 deaths per day.

In Grahovo, a town about fifty kilometres from Kharkiv, formerly of about 1,300 inhabitants, now numbers only 200.

The Poltava region seems to have suffered even more direly than the Kharkiv region. In Poltava, even the doctors have begun to swell up from malnutrition.

A Komsomol activist from Sumy wrote to his girl in Kharkiv to say

that parents there are killing their youngest children and eating them.

I am sending a sample of the powder made of the roots of trees eaten as a sort of porridge in the Bilhorod region.

An old man of dignified bearing was seen standing in front of Balovych's house. He suddenly bent over a pile of chips and swallowed a handful of them.

Please find enclosed a photograph of a child brought here by a family of German origin from the central Volga region in order that the child be sent back to its fatherland through the auspices of the German consulate. The appearance of the old emaciated man is one of the more common sights one sees even in Kharkiv.

In conclusion, I will mention the suicide of the OGPU general Bros'kyi. When he returned from an inspection of the countryside on the 18th of this month, he had a terrible confrontation with V. A. Balitski, during which the general screamed that this was not communism, but "a horror," that he had enough of inspections, that he would no longer go anywhere to establish order (ostensibly to pacify the population), and then shot himself.

So also Khvyl'ovyi and Hirniak for similar reasons. The latter two are particularly interesting from the political point of view, and this is the subject of a separate report.

In conclusion, I will mention an individual, whose name I was unable to learn, but who apparently was a big fish in the local government, went mad during a rural inspection tour. He had to be restrained with a straight-jacket. Apparently, he also screamed: "This isn't communism, this is murder."

But I must conclude: the current misfortune will result in the Russian colonization of Ukraine. It will change its ethnographic characteristics. Perhaps, in the very near future it will no longer be possible to speak of Ukraine, nor of the Ukrainian people, and therefore, of the Ukrainian problem, because Ukraine will truly become a Russian land.

With the greatest respect,  
Royal consul  
Gradenigo

## **Open Letter and Reply of the Clergy and Faithful of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church to Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow**

*(Reprinted from the Ukrainian News 1 November 1987)*

Having learned, from the press, of your call “to all children of the Russian Orthodox Church” and even to “those, who call themselves the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church” to celebrate the millenium of the baptism of Rus’, we the undersigned clergymen and faithful of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, assembled in this holy shrine, the cathedral of St. Mary the Protectress in Chicago, Illinois, USA, reply to your call as follows:

1. The Russian Orthodox Church of which you are the head is not the Mother Church of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (formerly of the Kievan Metropolitanate), because not the Russian Orthodox Church, but the Great Church of Constantinople of the Eastern Roman Byzantine Empire brought the Christian Faith to us; as it was prophesied on the hills of Kiev by the disciple of Christ Andrii Pervozvannyi. The apostolic Great Prince Volodymyr of Kiev, married to Princess Anne, the sister of Byzantine emperors, after his own baptism in Korsun’, baptized our people in the Dnipro-Slavuta in the year 988. The Kievan Metropolitanate, formed after the official acceptance of baptism, existed until 1685 as an autocephalous Church that continued an active mission in the north, in the lands of Ves, Mordovia, Chudy, and of the Finns, which initially became the lands of the Muscovite principality, and then of the Muscovite state. Therefore, the Kievan Metropolitanate is the Mother Church of the Muscovite Church, and not the opposite, as you claim in your pre-jubilee circular.

2. The free and productive existence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kievan Metropolitanate) was interrupted by the Church of Moscow in 1685, when it bought, “for threescore sable furs ...and four thousand roubles” the right to the Kievan Metropolitanate. However, the enslaved Metropolitanate continued its evangelical and educational work within the Muscovite Church, and provided the latter with leaders, theologians, and archpriests educated in the Kievan Mohyla Academy including: Ielysei Pletenets’kyi, Stefan Iavors’kyi, Feofan Prokopovych, Dymytrii Rostovs’kyi, Ivan Tobolovs’kyi, Inokentii Irkuts’kyi, Ioasaf

Bilhorods'kyi, Feodosii Chernihivs'kyi, and others.

3. What did the pretendent to the title of Mother Church, the Church of Moscow, do for the Kievan Metropolitanate in the 237 years preceding the revolution in 1917?

Without any protests on the part of the religious leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church, Tsar Peter I imprisoned the last Metropolitan of the free Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Iosyf Neliuboych-Tukalts'kyi, in the casemates of the Lubens'k-Mgars'k monastery; and, through the offices of the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church, cast a shameful anathema on the Het'man of Ukraine, Ivan Mazepa, a generous builder and restorer of many churches in the capital of Ukraine, and a man who brought gifts to the Church of the Grave of the Lord in Jerusalem, (Mazepa died in 1709 in Iassy and was buried as an Orthodox Christian by the clergy of the brotherly Rumanian Orthodox Church). This same deviator from Orthodoxy incarcerated the acting Het'man of Ukraine, Pavlo Polubotok, in the fortress of Peter and Paul in Petersburg, where the latter died.

Without a single protest from the Russian Orthodox Church, the despoiling tsarina Catherine II, destroyed the fortress of the defenders of Orthodoxy and of the entire Christian south, the Zaporozhian Sich; she plundered the church there, the Church of the Holy Mother of God the Protectress, and imprisoned Archbishop Arsenii Matsiievych; she threw the last Zaporozhian Sich chief Petro Kal'nyshevs'kyi into a stone, windowless and doorless cell in the dungeon of the Solovetsky monastery, where he suffered in anguish for 25 years and went blind, as Russian Orthodox priests prayed for the torturer of Ukraine, right above the very place of his suffering, without a single moment of conscience.

4. In return for the educational activities of Ukrainian archpriests, enlighteners of Muscovy, those aforementioned and many others, the despotic tsar Peter I forbade the publishers of the Kievan Cave Monastery to print any books that were in any way different from the barely literate publications of Moscow. In the later period of the Synod of the Muscovite Church, neither Ukrainians, nor Ukrainian language were recognized, and the publication of the Holy Scripture of the New Testament, as translated by the Orthodox clergyman Pylyp Morachevs'kyi in the 16th century. Only because of the direct intervention of the Moscow Academy of Sciences in defense of the Ukrainian language, was it possible to publish but FOUR Bibles in Ukrainian, and not until the beginning of the 20th century.

5. The Russian Orthodox Church manifested its criminality in its dealings with its Ukrainian counterpart most plainly after the revolution

of 1917. First came the exclusions of Kievan priests and academic theologians from the clergy for having conducted liturgies in Ukrainian. Then came the refusals of Bishop Mikhail Ermakov and Nazarii Blinov to bless the All-Ukrainian Church Synod in Kiev, and the refusal to ordain bishops for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Is this short list of examples, taken from a multitude, not enough to prove that the “motherly care” by the Russian Orthodox Church of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church does more to enslave the latter?

Therefore, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church was never, is not, and will never be, “a child” of the Russian Orthodox Church, its evil and heartless sister. The Russian Orthodox Church always proved to be a slave of both the tsarist regime, and now of the bloody communist regime of modern tyrants and despots. The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, established by the government of the Ukrainian People’s Republic on 1 January 1919, and brought into life by the All-Ukrainian Church Synod, has proclaimed its complete disassociation from the Church of Moscow. “In freedom, under which you are liberated, stand and never allow yourselves be enslaved again.” Such are the words of a prophet worthy of the bride of Christ: the Ukrainian Church.

As the faithful of Christ the Saviour, we now stand and will always stand for our religious freedom. We will never submit to the Muscovite Patriarchy, nor its godless communist protectors who destroyed our holy Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Nevertheless, it lives on and prospers in the free world, beyond the borders of the prisonhouse of nations: the USSR, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the protection of the truly Christian democracies.

Sunday, 18 October 1987

Chicago, Illinois, USA

Approved after many waves of applause, and signed by seven clergymen and over two hundred faithful.

