INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE 1932-33 FAMINE IN UKRAINE

PROCEEDINGS, OCTOBER 21 - NOVEMBER 5, 1988

UNITED NATIONS PLAZA HOTEL

NEW YORK CITY, U. S. A.

I N D E X

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION

OF INQUIRY INTO THE

1932-1933 FAMINE IN UKRAINE

OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 3, 1988

UNITED NATIONS PLAZA HOTEL

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

INTO THE 1932-1933 FAMINE IN UKRAINE

Commissioners:

Prof. Jacob W.F. Sundberg, President
Sweden

Prof. Col. G.I.A.D. Draper
United Kingdom

Prof. John P. Humphrey
Canada

Prof. Georges Levasseur
France

Prof. Ricardo Levene
Argentina

Prof. Covey T. Oliver
United States of America

Prof. Joe Verhoeven
Belgium

2
151.K-4

Counsel for the Petitioner:

William Liber, Esq.

General Counsel:

Ian A. Hunter, Esq.

Clerk:

Adrian Jenkala, Esq.

Documents Officer:

Stephen M. Werbowyj, Esq.

OPENING STATEMENTS

October 31, 1988

PRESIDENT: Good morning. This is the International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 famine in the Ukraine. The Commission hereby declares the second hearing, the New York hearing, open. As I said in Brussels, our business is a novel and serious one. We are constituted as an independent international commission. The conditions for our Commission are based on the draft statute for commissions of inquiry, reported favourably to the International Law Association at its 60th conference held in Montreal in 1983. We have fixed our terms of reference for this entire proceeding to be to inquire and report upon the existence and the extent of the famine; the cause or causes of such famine; the effect it had on Ukraine and its people; recommendations as to responsibility for this famine. The rules of procedure of the Commission are incorporated into the terms of reference, and copies will be available upon request. Mr. Liber, are you now ready to start?

MR. LIBER: I am, sir.

PRESIDENT: Counsel for the petitioner, please, the floor is yours.

MR. LIBER: Thank you. Mr. President and members of the Commission, if I may first just introduce myself; my name is William Liber. I come from Toronto, Canada. I've been asked to take over this task acting as counsel for the petitioner, the World Congress of Free Ukrainians. As you know, the counsel that had originally taken on this brief was appointed, at the commencement of the hearings in Brussels, to the Supreme Court of Canada and, therefore, could no longer continue to act in this capacity. I look upon this as a privilege to be able to attend here today and this week, to act as counsel on behalf of the petitioner. The privilege is not only to represent people of Ukrainian background of which I am one, but it's also a privilege to appear before an auspicious group such as yourselves.

I had filed an opening statement with you, which you have now received copies of, and I'd just briefly like to touch on what has been done and what will be done this week. Initially, of course, the, this Commission, which is formally known as the International Commission of Inquiry, was constituted to look into the existence and causes of the famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933. The petitioner, whom I represent, is the World Congress of Free Ukrainians.

It's an organization which is a spokesgroup for approximately 230 Ukrainian organizations in the non Iron Curtain countries of this world. These groups come from 20 different countries, and they represent a membership of almost four million Ukrainian, or people of Ukrainian background. The activities and operations that have been carried out by this Commission, by this organization - that is the World Congress of Free Ukrainians - were dealt with previously at Brussels and it would be repetitious and time-consuming to describe them at this time.

I would like to touch on the terms of reference that you as a Commission have set for this hearing. Your Commission has set out the terms of reference briefly into four segments, and they are the existence and extent of the famine; the cause or causes of the famine; the effect it had on Ukraine and its people; and fourthly, the recommendations and responsibility for the famine.

At the hearings that you held in Brussels, which were convened from the 23rd to the 27th of May, 1988, evidence was tendered to prove, to try and satisfy you that the famine - of which I think there's little doubt occurred - occurred as a result of the deprivation of people, the deprivation of food from people who were,

would have not starved and died had there not been government intervention. In order to prove this, there was viva voce evidence adduced at that time; you had the historical and demographic evidence of Dr. Robert Conquest, Dr. James E. Mace, Dr. Wolodymyr Kosyk and Dr. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk. In addition, there was a large amount of documentary evidence filed as exhibits, and I wish to bring to your attention that the documentary evidence is of considerable importance in this case. Finally, there were the witnesses dealing with survivors and the researcher who had taken oral histories.

Although it is expected that we will be, and I'm anticipating, I think with justification, that I will be given an opportunity to sum up our case at the end of the hearings this week, I would like to comment briefly on the evidence that was tendered in Brussels, just to refresh memories and perhaps put things into perspective. Now, I don't intend to review the academic background of the various witnesses, the expert witnesses who gave viva voce evidence in Brussels, other than to say that Dr. Robert Conquest, who was the principal witness, principal historian, along with Dr. James Mace, are both scholars in Soviet government and history and probably the pre-eminent scholars in that area in the western world. And they have made observations through

their research and have made conclusions. In the brief that I have filed with you on the opening statement, I have suggested that they concluded that the excessive grain procurements imposed by the Soviet government in Moscow caused approximately seven million deaths. My friend, Mr. Hunter, has brought to my attention that in his view that this finding wasn't made, and I make that comment with some reservation and certainly subject to our being able to pinpoint it at a later time in these hearings.

The historians commented on the methods that were imposed by the Soviet government to enforce the grain requisitions, and Dr. Conquest spent a great deal of time on his evidence discussing the attitude of the communist party to the people, the peasantry and the fact that they were exhibiting nationalistic feeling and how that affected the thinking of the Soviet government.

Dr. Wolodymyr Kosyk, who is a professor of history and author of many works relating to modern history in Ukraine, testified and essentially his evidence was based on an article that he had submitted to the American Congressional Committee that was investigating this famine.

In addition to the evidence of the historians,

there were many documents filed which dealt with the famine. The, in spite of the massive material, we know that there's a far greater mass of cogent material that would be helpful to this Commission and helpful to any other body that's studying this problem. The only problem is that that material is locked up in the archives somewhere in the Soviet Union; it hasn't been made accessible to us and it hasn't made, been made accessible to their own scholars, and I'm not sure whether it ever will be made accessible in our lifetime.

Hopefully the signs are that the studies that have been carried out by people such as Dr. Conquest, and Dr. Mace, the American Congressional Committee, and this Inquiry, has created enough pressure on the Soviet government. And there are signs that perhaps with this new attitude that the Secretary General Gorbachev has exhibited, known as Glasnost, that perhaps some of this material will be made available to us in the near future. If it is, then it will be helpful. If it isn't, we'll have to deal with this on the material that we have.

PRESIDENT: Mr. Liber, could you speak up a bit, if it's possible?

MR. LIBER: Now, the comment I make with respect to the documentary evidence is the significance of it and

how it dovetails into the case that we're presenting.

The documentary evidence has - there is a basic objection, I should say, with respect to documentary evidence, and that is the fact that it's basically hearsay evidence. And as we all know, the principal objection to hearsay evidence is that you cannot cross-examine it, you cannot test its credibility and for that reason one must be very reluctant to accept documentary evidence. Or once it's been accepted, you must be very careful as to what weight you put on it.

The argument that you will hear from myself at the end, at the conclusion of these hearings will be on the basis that in order to make an assessment of responsibility here, then you will have to not look at the expert evidence of the historians, the evidence of eyewitnesses, but also the documentary evidence. And you have to dovetail the three of them together and if you don't do that, then you're not going to be able to assess responsibility. If you do, then you should be able to assess it.

Now, in addition to the documentary evidence that was presented, there was also evidence presented through a special hearing that was convened in the United Kingdom in, and the Commission appointed Prof. Draper to sit as a single Commissioner to hear

the evidence of one person from whom we received a number of documents that are of considerable importance and significance. And that, of course, is Malcolm Muggeridge. Malcolm Muggeridge was a reporter with the Manchester Guardian at the time. He spent a number of years in the Soviet Union; he travelled into Ukraine; he was an eyewitness to the famine, reported it and reported it the way he saw it. As a result, he was vilified, lost his job, suffered financial losses.

And at the time time, another correspondent with the New York Times, Walter Duranty, was winning Pulitzer prizes for what we would, we submit, were articles that were misleading, false and probably could be assessed as out and out lies. And it's not often that when I'm at a hearing that I try and characterize someone as a liar but I think I'm on safe ground this time.

Prof. Draper and the Commission counsel, Prof. Hunter, and the petitioner's representative, Ms. Chyczij, attended in London and interviewed Mr. Muggeridge at some length. The interview was not the greatest interview in the world, and I'll be the first to profess that that's the case. I wouldn't, I'd be almost as bad as Duranty if I were saying otherwise. But the fact of the matter is that it was conducted

and I think that it's, it's, it serves now to vindicate Mr. Muggeridge and also to document the evidence that we're presenting in this case.

The documentary evidence that has been presented, two areas of it are very significant and they have been referred to and will be referred to, I think, many times. In addition to newspaper reports, the two significant areas are, of course, the decrees that were issued by the Soviet government pursuant to which the policy of grain procurement was not only imposed but also enforced, is of great significance.

These decrees connect the government to the policy - the central government - to the policy that caused the grief and the horrific losses that have been attested to. At this hearing we intend to continue with evidence to substantiate the case that we have made out thus far.

The areas that we will be dealing with will be first eyewitnesses, which we have a number to call today and tomorrow. And I appreciate that there has been considerable evidence of eyewitnesses and oral histories, but there are several of these eyewitnesses who are of some significance and can touch on areas that are of importance.

Secondly, we are calling a number of experts

to testify as to the demographics and economics of the times.

Dr. Leszek Kosinski, who is a professor of geography and an eminent authority in his field, fortunately is available to give evidence and he will be here to testify as to the demographics of Ukraine and the surrounding adjacent countries at that time.

What we will intend, what we intend to try and demonstrate is that there were fluctuations in the population curve in Ukraine which were not visible in other areas as best we can tell. Once again, the demographic evidence is of some, is difficult to pin down for the very simple reason that the census that was taken in, in the 1920s and 1930s, was certainly not as scientific as it is today or at least to our standards. And I'm sure 50 years from now the next people that take a census will say that we weren't very scientific. But it certainly was not as sophisticated a system as we have now.

Secondly, we know that the 1926 census, the evidence is that the 1926 census was a fairly reasonable assessment of what the populations were. That the following census, the 1937 census, we don't know what it was because only parts of it have been published. And then the 1939 census, there are some suspicions

about it because if you were taking the census in 1939 and you knew that two years earlier a hundred of the 102 people that were involved in the census perished. you would be careful about what you're doing then. Your reporting would have to be coloured by that. But Dr. Kosinski will testify on that issue.

Secondly, Dr. Nicholas Chirovsky, who is a, is a professor of economics and has a doctorate in laws, in political economy, and a master of economics, and who taught economics at Seton Hall University, New Jersey, and now is I think retired but just recently retired and teaches part time at the University of Florida, will testify as to the economic situation, the balance of trade and such. Because the evidence has been thus far that the, one of the major reasons for the necessity for grain was for export in order to get hard currency to enable them to meet their obligations to purchase the machinery and equipment required to generate the industrialization program that had been started at that time.

Dr. James Mace testified before this tribunal in May and there's no need to review his qualifications and academic background. He's being recalled in order to present the Report to Congress of the US Government Commission on Ukraine Famine, which was recently published. At the time that he testified in Brussels,

the final report had not been published and he will be called in order to present that report. And perhaps if there are any questions on it, or comments, he can deal with them.

Finally, we were intending to recall Dr. Robert Conquest who also testified before the tribunal, and in order to testify further in certain areas that questions had been raised on. I spoke with Dr. Conquest last night again and unfortunately his schedule has now, is such at the moment that he's unable to attend to give evidence, although I will be having a further conversation with him tonight. He's trying to rearrange matters again and, if possible, he will try and make it. If it turns out that Dr. Conquest can't attend, I, I have some suggestions that I will present to you, Mr. President, and to the members of the Commission, as to how we can deal with that issue.

The, there will be further - you may, you may be dismayed at the thought but there will be further documentary evidence filed at the hearings this week. And the documentary evidence that we intend to file this week are, fall into four different groups.

Number one is the oral histories and eyewitness accounts which document the oral histories that were taken from witnesses throughout Canada and the United States of America in order to show the extent of the

suffering in the famine as such.

Secondly, there are a number of international press reports which again we are submitting as evidence to document what the newspapers at the time, the correspondents were saying, and to suggest that perhaps the extent of the government involvement - that is the central government - was a lot greater than one would think if you look at it on the surface.

Finally, there's a volume entitled, "Documentary evidence," and it consists of, principally of diplomatic reports of the German and Italian governments. Now, these reports refer again to the extent of the problem in the area at that time. They make reference to and comment on the effect that the decrees, that were being issued by the central government, had on the continuance of the famine; the increase in the suffering of the people; the increase in the deaths.

And that then, finally, the fourth document book that we will be submitting at this time is one that we seriously considered before we decided to make the submission but we feel that the impact of it is significant enough that, that we should run the risk. And that is a, excerpts from a book that was published in 1939 by a gentleman known by the name of A. Wienerberger. And it is headed, the document book will be headed, "1932-1933 Original Photographs from Kharkiv, Ukraine."

And it should have been headed "photographs and text." But the concern that we had, of course, is that we all know that when you start using photographs, you're walking on a field of barbed wire and broken glass - or you could be. In this case, we felt that we would run that risk because of the impact that the text has and the importance of the total book. Now, what we have done is we have - unfortunately, as one would expect, the book is certainly out of print and unfortunately it took a great deal of diligent searching in order to find a copy of the book. And it was found, and we were able to acquire a photostatic copy of the entire book.

The book is written in German, the German language, and what I would ask with your permission, - and I've spoken with Mr. Hunter on this - is I'd like to submit the photocopy of the German text as an exhibit, and also the excerpts that we have taken out, along with the copies of the photographs.

That will be the sum total of the evidence that we will be presenting at the hearings this week, and I don't think there's anything further that I can add at this time. Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Liber. Prof. Hunter.

MR. HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. President, Commissioners. In my opening statement in Brussels I set out the functions of the general counsel as I understood them, and I indicated and I reiterate today that the onus of proof of the allegations that are made rests on the petitioner.

I do not intend to comment on the evidence that was presented in Brussels or at the English session or the conclusions to which that evidence fairly leads, because I intend to do that at some length in a comprehensive closing argument. But lest my silence at the moment be misconstrued as acquiescence, let me say that I do not and I do not believe that the evidence will fairly support the conclusion that my friend referred to as to the numbers of victims of the famine. I think a full reading of the evidence of Dr. Conquest and Dr. Mace will indicate that they did not arrive at the precise figure of seven million. Indeed, I believe in the cross-examination of Dr. Mace he adopted the approach taken by the American Congressional Committee which is to say that there, one can't put a precise figure because the census data on which one bases these calculations is too suspect.

In any event, I'm content at the moment to let the transcript of the viva voca evidence and the

exhibits speak for themselves. And as I indicated, I will deal with my submissions on the evidence in a comprehensive manner in my closing argument.

I'd like to make one final point by way of an opening statement and that is I note that in the list of witnesses my friend intends to recall Dr. Mace who testified at length in Brussels. And my friend indicated this morning that he did that for the purpose of having Dr. Mace present the final report of the American Congressional Committee. If that is all that Dr. Mace is going to do, I certainly have no objection and I would regard it as a courtesy to give him that opportunity. But I am concerned if what is being proposed is that Dr. Mace be recalled to re-testify. In my submission, that would be improper. It would be improper even with the Commission that has the authority to determine its own rules of procedure.

Dr. Mace was the petitioner's own witness, he testified extensively in Brussels; he was cross-examined and re-examined. And I note that one whole afternoon has been allotted to Dr. Mace's appearance here. If it's, as I say, to present the report, I have no concern. I have concern if he's to be, to reopen those areas and retraverse the ground again. So I would simply at this point put the Commission on notice that I will be making an objection if that is indeed the intention

on Thursday afternoon with Dr. Mace, but I have no objection to him presenting the report in a formal way and, to the Commission. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Do you want to comment on that?

MR. LIBER: Well, the intention is, as I indicated in my statement, that it's to present the report and have the report filed formally.

PRESIDENT: And no more?

MR. LIBER: And no more.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Thank you. In such case, it is time to start producing the witnesses.

MR. LIBER: Thank you. Mr. President, members of the Commission, as you have been informed we have a number of witnesses, eyewitnesses who will testify today as to their observations in different areas. And what I intend to do is in order to try and keep the evidence shorter - and you may say that this doesn't make too much sense - but in order to keep it shorter, I'd like to question them myself through their evidence.

I noticed that in Brussels they were just allowed to state, to make statements on their own but I think it can be perhaps more effective and shorter if we do it this way.

The first witness that I'd like to call would be Michael Borowik. And unfortunately, with the exception

of one of the witnesses that we intend to call today and tomorrow, most have to give their evidence through an interpreter.

PRESIDENT: And Mr. Borowik belongs to those who needs an interpreter?

MR. LIBER: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, perhaps you would please spell the names of the witnesses.

MR. LIBER: Yes. Michael Borowik is B-o-r-o-w-i-k, and he comes from Canada, Toronto, Canada.

PostFax
MONTREAL, QUEBEC
CR213-10N

TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL BOROWIK
(Translated by Mrs. Laryssa Temple)
October 31, 1988.

PRESIDENT: Is the interpreter present?

MR. LIBER: She was here this morning.

PRESIDENT: Could you please be seated.

MR. LIBER: The interpreter is Mrs. Laryssa Temple.

PRESIDENT: Mr. Michael Borowik, are you prepared to testify before this Commission?

WITNESS: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Will you in such case repeat after me the following affirmation?

WITNESS: Yes. (Witness affirms.)

PRESIDENT: May I ask Mr. Liber to start the examination.

Examination-in-chief by Mr. Liber:

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Would you ask the witness, Mrs. Temple, to speak right into the microphone, please, 'cause he does have a soft voice. Now, Mr. Borowik, would you please tell us the date of your birth and where you were born.

A. I was born on July 11th, 1909, in the little town of Norinsk.

A. And could you tell us how many people or how many households there were in your town, and the distribution of the wealth in the town?

A. There were 500 homesteads and the peasants were middle class and poor class. There were no kurkuli - kuliaki.

A. And your own father, what were his landholdings, if any, and did he have any employees?

A. My father had three and three-quarter deciatyn of land - a deciatyn is 2.7 acres. He worked it himself.

A. And what was your own training?

A. I was a bricklayer, a mason and a carpenter.

Q. Now --

A. A builder.

Q. Now, Mr. Borowik, do you, do you remember in 1928-1929 whether there were any changes in the make-up of the local government, the local council, which I understand was known as the silrada.

A. Yes, there were changes in 1929.

Q. All right. Would you describe these changes to us?

A. They began to put heavy taxation on the people; they began firing squad executions and they began exiling persons to Siberia.

Q. And do you recall whether they introduced collectivization in your area and, if so, when?

A. The fall of 1930.

Q. The spring. The spring.

INTERPRETER: I'm sorry. The spring of 1930.

WITNESS: Yeah, spring.

Q. MR. LIBER: Now, did the changes in the local government precede collectivization?

A. The big changes in the silrada were after the beginning of collectivization.

Q. Now, you mentioned that there were no kurkuli in your village, and I take it kurkuli are the wealthier people in the village?

A. There were no wealthy peasants as kurkuli were known. However, some were called kurkuli and one was dekurkulized or dekulakized who even had only two hectares of land.

Q. Now, when they started to impose these taxes, can you tell me what form the taxes were?

A. The first taxation was eight poods per hectare. A pood equals 16.36 kilograms. The next taxation was a surtax and it would come within a month. The taxes continued coming ever more frequently and then the Red Brigade, the Red Broom Brigade came and took everything.

Q. Now, who was the Red Broom Brigade?

A. Most of them were outsiders living in Ukraine, directed by agents from Moscow.

Q. And can you tell me the methods that they used to

collect these taxes and enforce the tax requisitions?

A. They gave an order. For those who did not follow the order they were sent to Siberia, they were sent out of their homes, chased out of their homes; even their clothes were taken away.

Q. Now, you said that collectivization started in the spring of 1930. Can you describe to us the manner in which it was conducted in your village?

A. There was an order and it came from the central government and it said that everyone must enter the kolhosp.

Q. And did anybody object to entering into the kolhosp?

A. Yes, to my knowledge in all village all people objected to entering the kolhosp. To my knowledge, the most protests were in the Uman region.

Q. What happened in your village when people objected to joining the kolhosp, which would be the collective farm.

A. The more intelligent in our village were exiled to Siberia; some were executed by firing squads, those who resisted collectivization. The less intelligent lower class ones were forced into the collective farm and by 1933 there was 100 per cent collective farm membership of the people remaining.

Q. Now, in 1930 what form of work were you doing?

A. Up till 1930 I was a small farmer, small landowning farmer. I was also a bricklayer and a builder.

Q. Where did you do your bricklaying and building work?

A. I mostly worked on military installations.

Q. Would that be in your own village or would it be elsewhere?

A. It was eight kilometers from my village.

Q. And then were you arrested at anytime?

A. In 1932 I was inducted into the army. I was, I was tried for religious agitation and I got a seven-year sentence.

Q. And the court that tried you, what type of court was it?

A. It was a travelling tribunal of a military unit.

Q. And what army did this military unit belong to?

A. It was the Russian Army.

Q. And then where did you serve your sentence?

A. At first I was in Kiev.

Q. And then?

A. And then as I was taken as a prisoner builder to Nizhen.

Q. And who was your cellmate when you were in jail?

A. His name was Khalimon. He was chairman of the rayvis-konkom or the rayon, governing body of the Bobrovytsky rayon.

Q. And why was he sentenced to jail?

A. He said that of his rayon quotas, he fulfilled the first one; the first quota he fulfilled to the government. The second quota on his rayon he had difficulty fulfilling to the government. The third quotas in 1932, people were already dying of hunger and he sent a request to the government that they send an investigative commission. He was expecting a commission to inquire into the status of the persons in his rayon and their difficulties. Instead, a tribunal came, tried him and sentenced him to eight years.

PRESIDENT: One moment here. You've been referring to a number of geographical names --

INTERPRETER: Certainly.

PRESIDENT: Are these spots in the Ukraine? Were these sentences served in the Ukraine?

A. Yes. We mentioned Kiev and Nizhen. Kiev, of course, is the capital of Ukraine. Nizhen is a city 100 kilometers from Kiev. The reason I was sent there as a builder is that that was the point where they sent those persons being exiled to the Baltic Canals - the city of Nizhen.

Q. MR. LIBER: Now, Mr. Borowik, when were you released from prison?

A. I was released on June the 11th, 1933.

Q. I thought you told us that you had a sentence of seven years or eight years; why is it that they released you earlier?

A. In the prisons, in the prisons they were giving 400 grams of bread a day. At the height of the famine they released the prisoners into areas where there was no food so the prisoners could starve.

Q. Then did you return to your own village after your release from prison?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And when you got there, how did you find your village? That is how were the people?

WITNESS: Terrible.

A. It was terrible. Many had already died. Many were swollen from hunger. Many were emaciated.

Q. MR. LIBER: When you got back to your village, did you find any food in the area?

A. There was nothing. There was a little bit of grass in the fields.

Q. And what about stockpiles of grain; did you see any stockpiles of grain?

A. Yes, when I was in prison in Nizhen, we had to go to the stockpiles of grains daily. The stockpiles were

guarded and they had signs that said NZ. An NZ stood for supplies that could not be touched; "Nedotorkany Zapaz."

Q. And who was guarding these stockpiles of grain?

A. There were NKVD guards.

Q. How could you tell that they would be NKVD guards?

WITNESS: Clothes, clothes.

A. The militia and the NKVD wore distinctive uniforms. They had - NKVD had red headbands; the militia had blue ones.

Q. MR. LIBER: Now, in the written oral history that has been filed that you've attested to, there is a long list of names of people who perished in the famine. Could you tell us when you made this list and how you made it; that is what references did you make?

A. These were all neighbours and relatives. I knew all of these people. When the German occupation came, I gained access to the birth and death records at the silrada so I was able to compile the records from, my records from the records of the silrada.

Q. How could you tell that some of these people had not moved to the cities or to other areas and villages?

A. Some of them I buried personally; I dug the graves.

WITNESS: Relatives.

A. For my relatives.

Q. MR. LIBER: What about those that weren't relatives?

A. I had, I had seen them dying. I had seen these people dying of hunger. I simply compiled the lists later because I had access to records.

Q. Now, the village in which you lived, was there a doctor there by the name of Stefan Burij?

A. Yes, there was a doctor named Stefan Burij. He was the statistical physician who gave the birth and death records to the rayon. He was afraid of arrest but he did list as starvation as cause of death on the birth certificate - on the death certificates. The NKVD returned these death certificates, told him that in the Soviet Union there was no famine and he was to record a cause of death other than starvation.

He was afraid but he did redo the death certificates listing various diseases as causes of death of these people. When he told me this, he was crying.

Q. Thank you. That's all the questions I have of Mr. Borowik. Mr. President, I don't know, before you dismiss him --

PRESIDENT: Prof. Hunter.

MR. HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: General counsel.

MR. HUNTER: Thank you.

Cross-examination by Mr. Hunter:

Q. Mr. Borowik, you swore an affidavit in Toronto in November, on the 15th of November, 1987, and I think you have it before you.

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And I gather you're '79 years of age now?

A. Yes.

Q. And in your affidavit and in your oral evidence today you're recalling events from half, more than half a century ago.

A. Yes. There's much that I forgot but much that I remember.

Q. Thank you. And you say in your affidavit that the repression began in 1928 and '29.

A. In 1928, it was the preparations. In 1929 they began taking action on these preparations.

Q. And your affidavit says that it was enforced through a Russian GPU agent named Klipikov.

A. Yes, Klipikov ran everything.

Q. And later I take it that Ukrainians themselves were forced to enforce these measures?

A. Yes, a few of the Komsomol members - Komsomol, the committee of communist youth - but they were conducted, their activities were conducted by those who had come from Moscow.

Q. Would I be correct in assuming that your cellmate Khalimon was, in fact, a Ukrainian?

A. Yes, he was Ukrainian.

Q. And from your affidavit I gather that he co-operated in the grain requisitions?

A. Yes. At first he had to. Then when the requisitions became too much and he saw people starving, he began complaining.

Q. And it was when he complained that he was sentenced to eight years in prison?

A. When, when he stated that people were swelling from hunger and dying from hunger, that is when he was arrested for eight years. The stated reason was - the stated reason was defence, defence of kulaks and unfulfilment of the plan.

Q. Now, you refer in your affidavit to returning home to your village after you were released from prison in 1933, and seeing there Lapkin, the representative from the rayon.

A. Yes.

Q. Now, was he a Ukrainian or was he a Russian?

A. No, he was a Jew.

Q. And it was Lapkin in your, in your, you say in your affidavit, who guarded the wheat to make sure that the peasants got none?

A. Yes, he had been sent from the rayon to make sure that nobody got even a kilogram of the grain.

Q. Now, prior to your arrest you worked as a stone mason, I understand, and travelled from village to village.

A. Yes. When I was called to a distance further away I would come and work.

Q. And would you agree that the conditions varied from village to village?

A. It was the same everywhere except in a few situations I would see that the head of the kolhosp might be a slightly nicer person, a kinder person.

Q. Now, after you were arrested did you have any choice in the matter of where you served your sentence?

A. No. There you have no choice.

Q. Perhaps you could, perhaps you could explain to me what it means then on page seven of your affidavit where it says, "When the new administration arrived, they asked me to complete my prison sentence in Nizhen." Did you mean they compelled me or did you mean they asked you to complete it?

A. It was not a request; it was an order. This is a translation.

Q. Fair enough. I just wondered about it. Now, I'd like you to just answer with respect to your particular village and I'd like to ask you this question. Who was responsible in your village for ensuring that grain did not get to the peasants?

A. There were representatives from the rayon and an order from the rayon. The head of the kolhosp had to follow their orders.

Q. And do you know the names of these representatives of the rayon?

A. In 1933, the chairman of the rayvis-konkom was Myrnenko.

Q. And was he a Ukrainian?

A. I don't know.

Q. Would it be correct to say --

PRESIDENT: Mr. Hunter.

MR. HUNTER: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Could we ask first to have a recess? Does it fit into your plans?

Q. MR. HUNTER: I'll be less than five minutes, Mr. President, in finishing with the witness. I just have one or two more questions. I wanted to ask you whether or not the - and this is a genuine question - would it be correct to say that the administration of the rayon was mainly in the hands of Ukrainians?

A. No, no. It came from Moscow.

Q. And did it come from Moscow in the sense of local officials being ordered to implement these measures or did actual people come out from Moscow to do this? That's what I want to get at.

A. The elders were all from Moscow.

Q. The people were from Moscow?

A. Yes, the persons themselves. The activists and those who carried out the orders were from various backgrounds.

Q. Now, you indicated that in your village there was one person who was dekulakized.

A. It wasn't only one. It was several. It was in 1928, they were exiled in August of 1928. But these were poor people; these were not prosperous peasants.

Q. Now, I think you indicated in, when Mr. Liber was questioning you, that you remembered one who was dekulakized even though he had only two hectares of land.

A. Yes. He was from the village of Malahaych and his name was Olexi Chadiuk. His name was Olexi Chadiuk. It was my friend.

Q. And I wanted to ask you what did you understand the word "kulak" to mean?

A. A kulak was one who had others doing his work, who had employees doing his work. A person who did his own work could not be a kulak.

Q. Did his friend, whose name you just gave us, have people doing his work?

A. No, no. He grew potatoes and he took in pigs and fed them so he had a small business. He also was a member of our evangelical church so it was the business and

the religion that created his problems.

Q. Would it be correct to say, Mr. Borowik, that the definition of "kulak" was not very precise?

A. Yes, no, your statement would not be correct. The word "kulak" in the Ukrainian dictionary is one who has employees.

Q. Was the enforcement of the dekulakization policy confined only to people who had employees?

A. No, the reasons for dekulakization were not only economic; they were also political. If you did not like the Soviet authorities, you went to Siberia.

Q. Now, finally I want to ask you in your affidavit you said that after the collectivization policy began in 1930 there was resistance against the forced membership.

A. Yes, at first only 20 people entered this collective farm and the entire area of Norinsk, maybe a hundred people only entered.

Q. The question I want to ask is what form did the resistance take?

A. If you resisted at first they took your farm implements and then they began arresting.

Q. How did people resist?

A. They resisted, they cried, they yelled. They resisted in all ways.

Q. Did you see any animals slaughtered in resistance?

A. No, I did not see that in my village.

Q. Did you see any buildings burned in resistance?

A. Not in our area.

Q. Did you see any armed resistance?

A. No. All arms had been confiscated by 1929.

Q. Thank you, those are my questions.

PRESIDENT: Any questions? Anybody, any questions?

PROF. DRAPER: Yes.

PRESIDENT: Yes, we could adjourn for a moment and we will put questions to you after the recess.

(Recess. Upon resuming ...)

PRESIDENT: Okay. We resume the proceedings and the Commission wants to put some questions. Prof. Humphrey.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to put this question to the witness. How is it that he was able to leave this area where this persecution was going on and how is it that he is here with us now in this City of New York?

A. I refused to fight for Stalinist terror. I escaped in every way possible to the west and I feel very fortunate to be here today. In 1943 I got out voluntarily; I was not forcibly evacuated.

PROF. HUMPHREY: So you remained in the Ukraine during

this whole period?

A. Yes, I did.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you.

A. I had been taken back to prison, to the building section. And the war caught me in Lutsk as a prisoner. When the war started, I was released. It was a military battalion. One of the other witnesses here today and I were in the same battalion.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Draper.

PROF. DRAPER: Mr. Borowik, would you explain this for my benefit and that of the Commission, please. By the end of '33, 1933, had everybody gone into the collective in your village?

WITNESS: Yes.

A. Yes, everybody.

WITNESS: Yes, everybody.

PROF. DRAPER: What food did you get if you agreed to go into the collective?

A. Those who entered in 1930, at least half of them had died of starvation by 1933. They gave very little and finally the people died of hunger. Very, very little.

PROF. DRAPER: Allow me to put this question to you with some clearness. Did those people die of hunger

after they had - some of them - after they had joined the collective?

A. Yes.

PROF. DRAPER: Most of them or a few?

A. Of the ones that entered the kolhosp in 1930, fewer died. Of the ones that entered the kolhosp later, a greater percentage died - starved.

PROF. DRAPER: So you died of hunger whether you entered the collective or not, at the end of the day?

A. Yes, you starved even after you entered the kolhosp. There was no food.

PROF. DRAPER: How long did you serve in prison?

WITNESS: One year. One year.

A. One year.

PROF. DRAPER: Did you get more food in prison than you did outside?

A. Yes. In 1932 in prison you received 250 grams of bread per day, and in 1933 you received 400 grams of bread per day in prison.

PROF. DRAPER: How was it you did not die of hunger?

A. In prison in Nizhen I was receiving 400 grams of bread per day and I was able to survive on that. When I returned to my village I was one of the fortunate ones to have

a cow and we had milk. Most other cows had been taken away.

PROF. DRAPER: You kept your cow?

A. When I went to prison, my wife entered the kolhosp and was able to save a cow, our cow.

PROF. DRAPER: And the cow kept you alive?

WITNESS: Yes, yes.

A. Yes, it saved some of us. My --

PROF. DRAPER: Did it save you?

WITNESS: Oh, yeah, yeah.

A. Yes, but my brother's wife died and my brother's son died of starvation. My brother I was able to save, myself and my wife.

PROF. DRAPER: Did the German army come into your village?

WITNESS: Yes.

A. Yes.

WITNESS: Yes.

PROF. DRAPER: What happened to you then?

A. We refused to enter the Russian army because we were not going to fight for Stalin, so many of us escaped.

PROF. DRAPER: Many of you which?

A. Many of us, many of the people in my village --

PROF. DRAPER: Yes.

A. -- escaped because we refused to enter the Stalinist army. However, we had to come back and again begin the agricultural process in the village because when the Stalinist army was retreated, they burned everything - was retreating, they burned everything in my village.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Borowik. The testimony is over.

TESTIMONY OF PARASKEVIA SOKURA

(Translated by Mrs. Laryssa Temple)
October 31, 1988.

MR. LIBER: Mr. President, the next eyewitness that I'd like to introduce at this time is Paraskevia Sokura. I'll spell that. P-a-r-a-s-k-e-v-i-a, Sokura, S-o-k-u-r-a. Just come forward, please.

PRESIDENT: Okay. This is going to take place in Ukrainian?

MR. LIBER: This will also be evidence given in Ukrainian, sir.

PRESIDENT: Okay. In such case are you willing to give the affirmation?

A. Yes.

PRESIDENT: In such case, repeat after me as translated. (Witness affirms.) Will you please proceed, Mr. Liber.

MR. LIBER: Thank you, Mr. President.

Examination-in-chief by Mr. Liber:

Q. Mrs. Sokura, would you please give us the date of your birth and where you were born.

A. I was born on June the 7th, 1919, in the village of Bujmyr.

Q. And would you tell us the size of that village and the distribution of the wealth throughout the village?

A. Our village had approximately 600 homesteads. They were divided into three economic levels; there were the kurkuli, the seredniaki - the middle class - and the bidnyaki - the lower poor class.

Q. And can you give us any idea as to the numbers in each of the classes, or is that possible?

A. I can't accurately define that.

Q. And would you tell me what your own father's position was?

A. My father was a kurkul.

Q. And --

A. A kulak.

PRESIDENT: Kulak.

INTERPRETER: "Kurkul" is the Ukrainian word for "kulak." They're used interchangeably. "Kulak" is the Russian word.

Q. MR. LIBER: Now, could you tell us what his landholdings were and his assets?

A. I can't give you the acreage. My father had two homesteads; he owned a mill and he had large pasture lands.

Q. And did he have people --

A. He had an apiary.

Q. Did he have people working for him?

A. Yes, he had two people working for him. The second homestead was run for my father by a family.

Q. Now, I appreciate that you would have been fairly young in 1928-29, but can you tell us what your recollection is of the treatment of the kurkuli class?

A. In 1929 the authorities ordered the kurkuli, the kulaks, to give all of their holdings, all of their land to the kolhosp, the collective farm, and enter the collective farm.

Q. And was your father invited to enter the collective farm with his holdings?

A. Yes, my father was ordered to enter the kolhosp. He refused. He was given huge grain requisitions.

Q. And was he able to fulfil all of these requisitions?

A. As long as my father was able, he fulfilled these requisitions. They came ever more frequently. I don't remember if it was once a month or once a week, but they came ever more frequently; as long as my father could, he continued filling these requisitions.

Q. And then what happened on Christmas Eve, which would be the 6th of January, 1930?

A. It was tradition in our village to take Christmas Eve supper to godparents. I went with my father to take this dinner. When we returned, there were already representatives of the silrada, the village council,

with my mother in our house. My father went to the silrada and did not return home.

Q. Was he arrested at that time?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. Now, do you have any recollection as to who the people were that were enforcing the grain requisitions on your father?

A. Representatives from the rayon carried out these requisitions. They were Russians. During the time of Catherine the second, however, many Russians had been sent into our areas. The representatives, the Russian representatives of the rayon who were the leaders, the authorities in our village, would use these old Russian settlers as activists to assist in carrying out these requisitions.

Q. And do you know who was instructing these Russian activists? That is the background of the people that were instructing them, or can you tell us that?

A. Yes, they were all Russians. It was all done by Russians.

Q. Now then, after your father was arrested, what happened to the farm and the property that he owned?

A. The same night that my father was arrested, about two to three hours later the activists came and chased us out of our home. We were allowed to take nothing. We went to sleep in a haystack.

Q. And then what happened to your property? What did they do with it?

A. Everything was taken by the collective farm - the kolhosp. The silrada was in our home, moved into our house.

Q. That is the village council operated from your home?

A. Yes, it operated from our home.

Q. And then how did you and your mother exist after that?

A. My mother dug a mud hut for us and we lived there the entire winter. A mud hut, burrowed a mud hut.

Q. Then how did you and your mother exist during that winter, that is for food?

A. The persecution of my father began in 1928; he was prevented from going to church. He was agitated to enter the kolhosp. At that time he began preparing some security for us. He dug pits in land which he worked for the forestry department. And there he buried, he buried grain, he buried honey, he buried bread. My mother would go to these places - she knew where they were - and she would take little bits to sustain us.

Q. And were you able to actually sustain yourself on the food that you had, that your father had buried earlier?

A. Yes.

Q. When you were dispossessed of your farm, did you or your mother get any rations?

A. We received nothing. My mother did work in forestry.

Q. And was she paid any, for the work that she did, or did she receive rations or both?

A. She had a small salary and she received 200 grams of bread.

Q. Now, during the time that your, you and your mother were living in this dug-out and living on the food that your father had buried, were you questioned or was your mother questioned, to your knowledge, by someone because of the condition that you were in?

A. Yes, the head of the village council came to my mother and wanted to know why we were not swollen, why we were not emaciated, and why we looked healthier than the other inhabitants of our village who were starving.

Q. As a result of that, what did your mother instruct you to do?

A. My mother told the authorities that she fed us on the 200 grams of bread per day which she received in the forestry department and told us to say nothing to anyone because we would be taken from each other.

Q. And the person who questioned your mother, do you know the background of that person? That is what his nationality was.

A. Yes, he was a Russian.

Q. Now, during that time how did they treat other kurkuli families in your village?

A. The same way we were.

Q. Do you know the names of these people?

A. The one that lived with us in this mud hut dug-out, his name was Lewko; one was Sawka; one was Havrylo; and one, Dmytro. Those are the names I remember.

Q. And how were the seredniak families treated? That would be the middle class.

A. Like the kurkuli, the kulaks, the seredniaki were ordered to enter the kolhosp. If they resisted, the roofs were removed from their homes. If they continued resisting, they were arrested, exiled.

Q. And where were they exiled to?

A. To Siberia.

Q. Do you know people who had been sent to Siberia at that time?

A. Yes, I remember Ivan Karyna and Ivan Mytelchenko; both were taken to Siberia.

Q. Well, then, how long was your father in jail?

A. He was there for eight years.

Q. Do you know where he served his sentence?

A. In Kholodna Nova, in Kharkiv, city in Ukraine east of Kiev.

Q. And do you know anything of the conditions or what type of jail that was?

A. They were very difficult. He sat in a cell called an

odynochka, which meant one meter by one meter.

Q. When he returned, did he come back to the village?

A. Yes, he returned. Our home was no longer there. When he came back he was mentally ill; he could not get a passport, he could not get a job.

Q. Now, do you remember when the grain requisitions were being imposed on your father prior to your family farm being taken away from you? Do you remember who enforced those grain requisitions? That is who came to the house to search for grain?

A. Yes, they were representatives sent from the rayon.

Q. And their background?

A. They were all Russian.

Q. And describe the methods that they used to search for grain at your home.

A. The bukhsirna brigada, the brigades came and they carried long metal probes which they probed throughout, even under the floorboards, in order to search for grain.

Q. And if they found any grain buried somewhere, what did they do?

A. When they found it, they confiscated it; then they punished you for having hidden it.

Q. Now, do you have any recollection - considering your age, I put the question this way - do you have any recollection as to what the harvest was like in the

years 1930 to 1933, in that period?

A. Yes, they were very good.

Q. And do you remember what happened to the grain during those years it was collected by the government agents?

A. The grain was taken right from the threshing machines to the rayon centre. From there I can no longer tell you what happened to it. I cannot tell you.

Q. And where was the rayon centre?

A. It was Trostanetz.

Q. How did they get it from your village to Trostanetz?

A. It was taken by horse-drawn wagons. It was approximately 20 to 25 kilometers.

Q. Now, during the periods, the years 1931 to 1933, I'd like you to go through each year and tell me what conditions were like for the people in your village. First let's deal with 1931.

A. In 1931 people still had very small amounts of supplies but they were forced into the kolhosp, the collective farm. They had to turn everything over to the kolhosp. Their farm animals, their grain. But each kolhospnik , each member of the collective farm received a 25/100ths share of land for his personal use - of garden land.

Q. And were they able to survive - did you see signs of people dying of famine or hunger, I mean, in 1931.

A. In 1931 there was already famine, there was already

hunger but we did not yet see starvation from hunger.

Q. Did conditions change by 1932?

A. In 1931 the rations given out by the kolhosp were very, very small, and the small supplies that people had saved were dwindling. So by 1932 they started dying of hunger.

Q. And then in 1933 did things change again?

A. In the fall of '32 the rations given for the work up to that point were extremely small and were depleted before even the middle of winter. So by spring of 1933 very many people were dying of hunger.

Q. And did you see any signs or evidence of people actually dying from hunger? Did you see dead bodies in your village?

A. Yes, I saw very many.

Q. What did they do with these dead persons?

A. There were wagons that circulated, operated by special people for this purpose. They had large hoists; they picked up corpses with these hoists, with these lifts, put them in the wagons and they took them to mass graves.

Q. Do you know or can you give us an estimate of how many people in your village perished at that time?

A. I can't give an exact number but if there was one person remaining in one out of three homes, that was a good part of the village.

Q. Now, did you receive any help while your father was in jail or even after he came out of jail, other than what you've described to us this morning?

A. No, we were not even allowed to walk across the kolhosp to get water. I was a kurkul's daughter. We were a kurkul family. We were allowed nothing.

Q. And what about your father's brother; did he give you any help?

A. In great secrecy he attempted to help us in every way he could.

Q. Now, did you go to school?

A. No. I was a daughter of a kulak, of a kurkul.

Q. And were children of kurkuli parents prohibited from going to school?

A. It was forbidden.

Q. And then in the summer of 1933 did conditions change again? That is living conditions, the amount of food.

A. By the harvest of 1933, when they were harvesting grain they would make soup out of some of it and they would feed the workers at the kolhosp.

Q. And were you one of the workers by that time?

A. No, we were not allowed to enter the kolhosp; we were kurkuli, we were kulaks.

Q. So how were you able to survive then?

A. We would work - my sister and I would work in the ryhosp collecting beetles - and for these, we could trade these little beetles for a hundred grams of bread.

"Ryhosp" was a state farm.

Q. Thank you. Those are all the questions I have of this witness, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Liber. General counsel?

MR. HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. President. I have no questions of this witness.

PRESIDENT: In such case, let me put a few questions to you that have more to do with the background. The first question I would like to ask is you were referring to the population of the village in terms of classes. What was the basis of this, of these classes of this classification? Was it any kind of registration or was it customary to divide the population into classes or how do you explain the terminology?

A. I think it was by registration. A bidnyak or a poor peasant was very poor, had nothing. Seredniak or a middle class peasant had some land. Kurkuli had everything they needed. They were divided into those categories. Yes, and they were registered that way at our village council.

PRESIDENT: The registration, did it take place at the village council?

A. Yes, the registration was at the village council and the poorest entered the kolhosps, the collective farms first.

PRESIDENT: Second question. You are, in your testimony referring to the recruitment of the activists, you're making a distinction between the Russians and the Ukrainians. There were historical reasons for why there were Russians there but how did you tell a Russian from a Ukrainian?

A. It was very simple; they were Russians.

PRESIDENT: Did they look --

A. They didn't look differently.

PRESIDENT: Did they speak differently?

A. Yes, they spoke differently.

PRESIDENT: Different dialect ? A different language?

A. They spoke Russian.

PRESIDENT: And the Ukrainians spoke Ukrainian?

A. Yes.

PRESIDENT: So far it was easy.

A. Yes, it was easy to tell the difference.

PRESIDENT: What was the relationship between the Russians and the Ukrainians?

A. I can't say there was much friction but we went to the Ukrainian church and they went to the Russian church.

PRESIDENT: Why did the - why were the Russians used as activists?

A. I can't explain it well but I think they felt closer to their own and there was more respect between them.

PRESIDENT: Closer to --

A. Closer to their own, the representatives coming in felt closer to their own people who were Russians. The representatives coming in to enforce these things were also Russians; they felt closer to their own ethnic people than they did to the Ukrainians. So those are the ones they recruited. This is an explanation.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Humphrey.

PROF. HUMPHREY: When did you leave the Ukraine?

A. In 1943.

PROF. HUMPHREY: How?

A. The Germans took young people to Germany to work.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Were you better treated after the German invasion than before, during that period up to '43?

A. Yes, when the Germans came they returned our homes.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Okay, well. Prof. Draper. Prof. Levasseur.

PROF. LEVASSEUR: Did the authorities ever heard about the pits that your father had buried grain and honey and did they discover them?

A. No, they never learned.

PROF. LEVASSEUR: Never.

A. Never learned.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Draper.

PROF. DRAPER: This registration of the farm people into three classes, was that something that had existed under the Czars, do you know?

A. I don't know.

PROF. DRAPER: You don't. The people who came round and collected the dead, were they Russians or Ukrainians?

A. Everyone sent from the rayon was Russian. All of the activists that they recruited were Russians. They went to everyone's home, even members of the kolhosp. They searched out everything and confiscated everything.

MR. LIBER: Excuse me, excuse me.

PROF. DRAPER: Yes, but the question is those who collected the dead, were they Russian or Ukrainian or don't you know?

A. They were all Russian.

PROF. DRAPER: All Russian?

A. All Russian.

PROF. DRAPER: Were they given a food ration?

A. Yes, they were.

MR. LIBER: Excuse me, Mr. President, if I may. There is a mistake in the translation. Prof. Draper's question refers to the corpses that were being collected, the dead, and I think the interpreter --

INTERPRETER: Oh, I'm sorry, I heard "grain."

MR. LIBER: -- used the word "grain."

INTERPRETER: Oh, I beg your pardon.

MR. LIBER: So that the last two questions, although the answers are correct, I think, they were directed towards grain collection, not towards dead.

PROF. DRAPER: I'm much obliged, Mr. Liber. I didn't catch it. The people who collected the dead - dead - the corpses who died from hunger, were they Russian or Ukrainian?

A. We don't know. I don't know. I don't think anybody in the village knew because they wore black head masks.

PROF. DRAPER: Did you get taken back to work in Germany?

A. Yes, I did.

PROF. DRAPER: How long did you work in Germany?

A. I worked from 1943 until the Americans came in 1945.

PROF. DRAPER: What did they make you do?

A. I did something very bad. I built bombs, little bombs.

TESTIMONY OF PAVLO HLUSHANYTSIA
(Translated by Mrs. Laryssa Temple)
October 31, 1988.

PRESIDENT: We will proceed with the next one.

MR. LIBER: The next one could be a little longer than the first two, and I think the evidence is a little more significant. If --

PRESIDENT: We will have to take a break by 1:00 o'clock.

MR. LIBER: Well --

PRESIDENT: Well, you're having one witness. Would it suit you if we took the lunch break now and started again with your witness after lunch break?

MR. LIBER: That would be preferable, sir.

PRESIDENT: That's preferable?

MR. LIBER: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, in such case it is so decided. The session is ended.

(Recess for lunch. Upon resuming ..)

PRESIDENT: I hereby declare the afternoon session open, and we're going to hear, as I understand it, Mr. Pavlo - you better pronounce that one.

MR. LIBER: Hlushanytsia.

PRESIDENT: Thank you.

MR. LIBER: Mr. Hlushanytsia will also require the assistance of an interpreter.

PRESIDENT: I will hereby require you to make an affirmation, and please pardon my bad pronunciation of a foreign name. (Witness affirms.) I then turn the interrogation over to Mr. Liber.

Examination-in-chief by Mr. Liber:

Q. Thank you, sir. Will you please give us your birth date and your place of birth?

A. I was born September 3rd, 1916, in the village of Novoselytsia in the Popelianskyj rayon in Jhytomyrska oblast in Ukraine.

Q. And could you give us an idea as to the size of the village in which you lived?

A. Our village had 360 homesteads.

Q. And how many people would that be, approximately?

A. Approximately 2,000.

Q. And your father, could you tell us what his landholdings were?

A. My father had six deciatyn of land.

Q. Now, I understand that that would be about, altogether about 16 acres or so?

A. Approximately, I think.

Q. Did your father have any employees?

A. No; just our family.

Q. Can you tell us what the living conditions were like in your village prior to 1929?

A. In 1928, when the first five-year plan came out, our village was divided by economic status into three groups. The kurkuli, the kulaks; the seredniaki, the middle class; and the bidnyaki, the poor class.

Q. And can you tell me what the distribution would be between the three classes?

A. 29 of the homesteads were distinguished as kurkuli. The others belonged to the middle and lower class.

Q. Could you tell me what class your father was in?

A. My father was a kurkul, a kulak.

Q. And can you tell us what the treatment was like after 1928 of the kurkuli class?

A. All their rights were taken away. They could not take advantage of the co-operatives; they could not have medical care. And their children were not allowed to attend school.

Q. Do you know how they defined the kurkuli class at that time?

A. The explanation of a kurkul was one who exploited others, an exploiter and an enemy of the people.

Q. And what type of exploitation would bring you into that class?

A. My father was exceptional; he was designated as a kurkul because of exceptional abilities. The Soviet authorities looked to destroy people like that, to destroy Ukrainian nationality.

Q. And what were his exceptional abilities?

A. My father in our village had authority because he had national consciousness and because of this he was exceptional.

Q. And of the 29 that were designated as kurkuli in your village, how many of them, in fact, fell into the category of an exploiter or an enemy of the people?

A. None of them were exploiters. All of these had been poor people, and in the year 1924, when the NEP, the new economic policy period started, the authorities gave them one hectare of land per person.

Q. And is that all that they had?

A. Yes, this is all they possessed. Before the period when this land was granted to them, they were landless.

Q. And then in 1929 can you tell us what the situation was as to the position of taxes?

A. As an example, in 1929 of things that happened, I can give my father, as a meat requisition he was ordered to deliver one half of a cow as was our neighbour,

another kurkul. Between the two of them, they delivered one cow. Immediately they were harrassed for not understanding the difference between a cow and a half a cow, and the authorities insisted that the entire cow be designated a half a cow for one or the other of them, but it could not be one cow given by two people, each of whom were to deliver a half of a cow.

Q. And what about grain impositions; did they impose any quotas on either your father or other people that you knew, for grain?

A. Yes, there were some. My father had six deciatyn of land and his grain requisition was 600 poods. One deciatyn of land is 2.7 acres; one pood is 16.36 kilograms.

Q. And was he able to meet this requisition?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. And was there a point in time when the impositions that they made on him were greater than what he could deliver?

A. The moment he filled one quota, within an hour or two from the village council they delivered a double - doubled the amount of quota.

Q. Did he ever reach a point where he couldn't make the quota?

A. Yes, he did. He reached the point where he did not fill his quota.

Q. And what happened when he couldn't reach his quota?

A. The brigade came, came with the metal probes and they were searching throughout our homestead, whether my father had buried grain.

Q. And who was this brigade?

A. They were made up of outsiders sent in from Moscow, known as 25-thousands from the number of people sent.

Q. And were they the people that actually asserted the searches, carried out the searches?

A. In addition to them, there were activists from the village.

Q. And what was the background of the activists?

A. The ones I remember in my village, Falbushenko was a Jew, Malyshov was Russian, Kovbasov was a Russian, Khirburt was a Jew, Hladov was a Jew.

Q. And were they from your village, these people, or did they come from outside?

A. These came from Moscow.

Q. Now, how would, how, who made the decision as to, or do you know who made the decision as to what taxes were to be imposed? That is the extent of the requisitions?

A. The direction was the orders came from silrada; the decision came from our village council. They took their orders from the rayon. The rayon took their orders from the oblast. The oblast took its orders from Kiev.

And Kiev got its orders from Moscow.

Q. Now, in 1929 I understand that you and your brother went into hiding. Can you tell us why you did that and where you went?

A. I remember my brother and I had a little sister; my little sister was sick.

WITNESS: Older sister.

INTERPRETER: Older sister?

WITNESS: Older sister.

A. When we were being dekulakized, Falbushenko came in and when he opened the door my mother said, "Please, I have a sick child." He called her, he told her to get out of his way. He said, "Death to kurkul."

WITNESS: Kurkuli.

A. "Death to kurkuli," and referred to her by - expletives deleted. By - how do you say? By language inappropriate to repeat, or uncomfortable for me. By brutal language.

Q. MR. LIBER: Now then, what did you and your brother do?

MR. LIBER: Sorry, sorry. This gets to be a bit long. Can you translate it?

A. For two days they turned our house inside out. My father spent the time weaving mats out of straw to cover us because the children were sick. During 1917 my father

had hidden casks of cherry wine. The activists found this wine and proceeded to get drunk on it. My father got his jacket and covered all of us. While my father slept, these drunk activists returned. They began jerking this fur coat with which my father had covered us, from us. My brother and I each grabbed a weapon, a hand weapon and hit these activists.

Q. And then what did you have to do after that?

A. After I hit one of the activists, my brother hit the other; they began bleeding. We took their clothes and their shoes and ran away.

Q. Where did you run to?

A. We ran away to a neighbour's at first and then we went to Kiev, and Fastiw, and lived as homeless children.

Q. And how long did you continue to do that?

A. Until 1932.

Q. Well then would I be correct that you were not in the village when collectivization began?

A. We visited our village every week.

Q. And during the period of the grain requisitions starting in 1929 and such, can you tell me what they did with the grain that was collected?

A. In 1929, when my father would plant grain, there were activists who would follow him as he harvested it and take it away.

Q. Where would they take it and what would they do with it?

A. They took it away and took it to the railroad stations.

Q. And then what did they do with it there?

A. From the train stations they took it where it was needed for them.

Q. All right. During that time did you see any grain stored there that they didn't have the ability to remove and it was rotting?

A. Yes, in 1932 they had no room in the kolhosp, in the collective farm, to store the grain. The grain was just stored on the ground. It was guarded by the police. The rains came, and the grain rotted.

Q. And the grain that was there that was rotting, was it made available to any of the people in the village for food or seed or anything of that nature?

A. No, they had no access to it because there were armed guards guarding this grain.

Q. And do you know who the identity of these armed guards were? That is who they were; were they local people or were they imported again?

A. It was both outsiders sent in and local people.

Q. And what would they do if somebody tried to remove some of that grain?

A. They were shot on the spot.

Q. Now, after you went to Kiev with your brother, did you eventually find work in the Kiev area?

A. We were not able to work because we were not yet 18

years old.

Q. Then how did you survive?

A. We survived any way we could. When we could steal, we stole. When we could work, we worked. We used all means to survive.

Q. And did you eventually find employment?

A. Once my brother turned 18, I got false documents stating that I was also 18 and we went to work past Moscow to Orekhozuyevo.

Q. And where would that be in relation to Moscow.

A. 120 kilometers from Moscow.

Q. And that would be in Russia?

A. Yes, it is in Russia.

Q. And how was it that you and your brother, who were Ukrainians, managed to get employment in Russia?

A. We were able to get work because we had a third brother who was working there as an engineer. I went to work in a porcelain factory; my other brother who came with me went to work as a mechanic.

Q. And what name did you use to get employment?

A. I had a Russian name.

Q. Why?

A. Because my brother was working as an engineer and I didn't want him found out.

Q. Then what did you - what were your observations as far as the welfare of the people in the area where you were working?

A. The lifestyle was quite normal. They had a system of ration cards. They also had commercial bread. You could go to the co-operative stores and buy commercial bread.

Q. And did you have enough to eat there?

A. Yes, we had plenty.

Q. Can you tell us approximately how much bread you would have a day while you were there?

A. We received one kilo a day.

Q. And in addition to that, you could supplement that with what you could purchase?

A. And in addition, we could purchase.

Q. And did any worker, who had the necessary money, have the ability to purchase bread?

A. In Russia, all.

Q. Did you see any signs of people going hungry or starving when you were in Russia at that time?

A. In Russia there were no hungry or no starving persons.

Q. Then in March of 1933 what happened?

A. In that month there was a secret edict issued that all Ukrainians who did not have five years of tenure working in Russia had to be repatriated to Ukraine.

Q. And were you one of those?

A. My brother and I were two of those.

Q. And how did you travel and where did you, where did they send you?

A. When I came to work and attempted to withdraw my card, a card that you would punch when you come to work, I found that it was no longer there. I went to the supervisor to inquire about my card and he told me to go into the next room. Once I entered that room, I never left it to return to work.

Q. All right. Where did they send you and how did you get there?

A. They collected all of the Ukrainians, families, children, loaded us into cargo cars, gave each person a kilogram of bread and took us back to Ukraine.

Q. And in your trip down from where they loaded you into these trains to the Ukraine, were you able to see what was going on outside and what people were like?

A. In Russia we saw nothing because the wagons were locked and each one was guarded. After we had entered the Ukrainian border, we were about 20 kilometers inside, they opened the doors and said, "If you like, you can get out; if not, the train is going on to Kiev."

Q. What did you notice when they opened the doors there?

A. I noticed that Ukraine was blockaded by Soviet Army, by the Soviet Army, and even if you had gotten out of

the train there would be no way to get back across the border.

Q. Then when you got to Ukraine, where did you end up?

A. We came to Kiev.

Q. And can you tell me what your observations were when you got to Kiev?

A. We were crossing the bridge from the railroad station to the Yevbaz, the Jewish bazaar in Kiev. It was only the two of us walking over the bridge. When we came down off the bridge, we saw a lot of very plump people underneath this bridge. We did not realize that they were swollen from hunger until they came close to us and almost attacked us for food.

Q. And was that generally the condition in Kiev when you arrived in March of 1933?

A. Yes, throughout the streets, throughout the bazaars, there were people dying throughout.

Q. Now, after you arrived in Kiev, I understand that you and your brother got further employment on the train?

WITNESS: "Tak."

Q. MR. LIBER: And would you describe for us how you got this work; that is how is it that you were, that they accepted you for employment on this job?

A. Yes, we had a friend of Jewish heritage; we ran into

him in the bazaar in Kiev. He recommended us for a job at the Petrovka station in Kiev.

Q. Did you get that job under your own name?

A. No.

Q. Why not?

A. Because Ukrainians were not accepted for those positions.

Q. So what name did you use?

A. A Russian one.

Q. Were you able to converse in Russian?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you fluent ?

A. Yes, I speak perfect fluent Russian.

Q. Would you describe the job you now had and how long it lasted? First of all, tell us how long it lasted.

A. It was, it was seasonal work. I had it from March to June 1933.

Q. All right. And what was the job?

A. We went as a brigade to Russia; there we loaded produce on the trains and brought it to the Petrovka station in Kiev.

Q. And how far did you travel into Russia?

A. 1,200 to 1,300 kilometers, depending where we were sent.

Q. And on that trip were you able to see people in the countryside and how they lived?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And could you describe how that compared to what you saw when you left Kiev on the trip up there?

A. In Kiev I saw death by hunger. There, I saw life.

Q. There were no people dying of starvation in Russia on that trip up there, that you saw?

A. They were not dying of hunger.

Q. And were you getting rations when you were employed in this position?

A. We were not paid in money. They gave us nature pay. We got flour. We got natural pay.

Q. And did you have enough to eat while you were in that position?

A. When we left, on the way we were given normal products.

Q. And how often did you or how many times over the period that you were employed in that job did you make that trip?

A. My brother and I alternated. When he returned, I went. I was there probably three or four times. Four times.

Q. After you came back to Kiev from, when, from the time that you lived in Russia, which would have been in March of 1933, did you have an opportunity to go to your village and observe what was going on there?

A. Yes, I did, because had I not visited they would have died of starvation.

Q. And how were you able to help them?

A. Because we were paid with natural products, we ate what we needed and everything else we took to our families.

Q. And were you able to observe from your visits to the village whether anybody was dying of starvation and, if so, the number that were dying?

A. I saw not only people dying but I saw them beating those who were almost dead to death.

Q. And when was that? What year?

A. In 1933.

Q. And after 1933 did you have occasion to go back to your village or while you were at your village, to document the people that died?

A. I didn't stay in my village. I remained in Kiev and worked. I did return to my village when it was discovered that I was the son of a kulak. I returned to my village and I worked as a blacksmith in the kolhosp, in the collective farm.

Q. What year was that?

A. This was 1936 and 1937 until the war.

Q. And did you at one time make a list of names of people that died in the famine in your village?

A. Yes, I, I did this documentation, I did it in secret because it was not permitted. But I went and I questioned people, I questioned neighbours in my village and I did document this.

Q. Attached to your oral history, which is in a sworn form, is a two-page list; is that the list you compiled?

A. Yes, it is.

Q. Now, did they have a church in your village?

PRESIDENT: Is this in the documentation?

MR. LIBER: It's attached to his oral history, sir.

PRESIDENT: Okay.

INTERPRETER: It's number 15.

MR. LIBER: Tab three, tab three, paragraph 15. Did they have a church in your village?

A. There were two; one was Orthodox, the other was Roman Catholic.

Q. And what happened to the churches?

A. They destroyed the bell tower, destroyed the church and burned it down. They did the same thing with the Catholic church. And the Germans, since 1942, just finished off the churches; they were no longer useful.

Q. When did they first close the churches down?

A. In 1929.

Q. And who closed them down?

A. There were special brigades sent in and they closed and destroyed the churches.

Q. Those are all the questions I have of this witness, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Then I turn it over to Mr. Hunter.

Cross-examination by Mr. Hunter:

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'm not sure I can pronounce your last name; could you tell me again how you pronounce it?

WITNESS: Pavlo Hlushanytsia.

Q. MR. HUNTER: Mr. Hlushanytsia, I understand that you're 72 years old?

A. Yes.

Q. And that you left the Ukraine on November 7th, 1943?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know the previous two witnesses, Mrs. Sokura and Mr. Borowik?

A. With Mr. Borowik I was in the same battalion before the war.

Q. The reason I ask is all three left in 1943; was there something special about 1943?

A. I, I was evacuated. The Germans evacuated me. And I assume it's the same - at that point I was no longer with Mr. Borowik; he was from a different village.

Q. Now, just before lunch you gave me a copy of this book called, "The Third World War of Pavlo Hlushanytsia."

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And you are the author of this book then?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And I see that it was published in 1986.

A. Yes, it was.

Q. And you published it yourself, did you not?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Tell me this; did you submit it to any commercial publishers for publication?

PRESIDENT: Should we get the translation?

A. I wrote this book at home in Ukraine still. When I was being evacuated out by the Germans, I sent the book out with a family, because families were being evacuated in a safer manner. I hoped they would bring it out for me so when I came to America that I could have it published. No, I paid for it myself and published it myself.

Q. MR. HUNTER: I'll put the question again. Prior to publishing it yourself, did you submit it to any commercial publishers for publication?

A. No, I did not.

Q. Now, the title is, "The Third World War of Pavlo Hlushanytsia." What does that mean; what's the significance of the third world war?

A. What it meant to me was that Ukraine was surrounded by armies; people were dying of starvation. Not 10, 20, 100 or 1,000 but at that time approximately 16 million

and the world did not know. No war took a greater toll than that time took of Ukrainians.

Q. And where did you get the figure of 16 million from?

A. In my village, 42 per cent of the people perished in that year. I used the 42 per cent as a mean and averaged it out to the number of people in Ukraine.

Q. And are you aware that that exceeds the figure given by, I submit to you, any reputable historian or demographer or scholar who studied it?

A. I am speaking as a witness. A historian and a demographer explains it differently.

Q. Do you know Valentyn Moroz?

A. He did the editing for the book.

Q. And did he also write the introduction to the book or the forward - I'm sorry - the forward to the book?

A. Yes, he did.

Q. And did you read it prior to publishing it?

A. I read it.

Q. And did you agree with the conclusions that Mr. Moroz expressed in the forward?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. And I point out to you that Mr. Moroz gives this point about the third world war. He says, and I quote, "The third world war has already transpired and Moscow has been so successful because people absorbed in their

television sets have not even noticed it." Do you share that opinion?

A. Yes, I do.

Q. Now, what is your attitude to the Soviet Union?

A. I no longer have time to think about the Soviet Union. I wrote my book; let others read it and form their own opinions.

Q. Well, you had time to think about the Soviet Union in 1956, did you not, when you accused the Soviet government of faking the voices of your long dead relatives in an attempt to lure you back into the Soviet Union?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And you also, I understand in the Toronto Telegram, accused the Soviet Embassy of being responsible for holding your daughter in the Soviet Union?

A. Yes, I did.

Q. Now, I haven't had a chance to read your book in full but I did have a chance to read part of it over the lunch hour and I'd be interested if you could tell the Commission what your view is about the role and responsibility of the Jewish people for the famine in the Soviet - in the Ukraine.

A. In my opinion, the Jews suffered the same as Ukrainians. In the '20s, in 1920, '21 and 22, many were destroyed. Those Jews who would not co-operate with the Bolsheviks

were destroyed. In my book I mentioned one family, Artyl. When he refused, he refused to go along with the Bolsheviks against the Ukrainians and at age 80 he was destroyed in Bila Tserkva.

Q. Well, let me quote you something else you say in your book on page 169, you say the Russians - and I'm quoting, "The Russians intended to stamp out the Ukrainian nation at whatever cost and preferably with foreign, in this case, Jewish hands. In return, the Jews received many privileges in the Ukraine."

A. Yes. Those who co-operated were privileged.

Q. Let me quote you again from, this time from page 106. You say, "Who is to blame for the genocide in Ukraine between 1928 and 1933? Today this is much debated. Some people say the blame rests with Jews; others, with Karl Marx; still others, with communism." Which do you say?

A. In my personal opinion, the Russians. The communists.

Q. Now, in your book, as well, you describe an occasion when you were able to witness a trial. You've snuck - perhaps you'll start with that. In your book you --

A. Yes.

Q. And I understand you were able to sneak into the back of a village theatre and observe this through a hidden booth.

A. Yes, I did.

Q. And you describe the following party members from the village aktiv as being present: Lysenko, Khidchenko, Khirburt - I can't pronounce the next one - Vitavskyj, Barvitskyj and Batsia.

INTERPRETER: I'm sorry, I can't remember all the names.

Q. MR. HUNTER: Do you recall that?

A. I recall that.

Q. Now, were any of those people Russians?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. Were all of them Russians?

A. No, not all.

Q. Well, which ones were Russian?

A. Falbushenko, Khirburt, Moshko, Khirburt and Babtsia. Their brother who had also changed his name to Khidchenko, had been Khirburt. Lotkov and Kobasov and Malyshov were also Russians.

Q. What role did the village leadership of the Ukrainian village play in these trials?

A. They carried out the orders from these persons.

Q. And what would have happened to them if they hadn't carried out the orders?

A. They would have been tried, they would have been convicted as destroying the five-year plan, collaborating with the kulaks; and they would have been shot.

Q. Is it correct to say then that a lot of village officials did collaborate?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, this period when you went to the Soviet --

PRESIDENT: Prof. Hunter, we should take a recess now. Would that be convenient for you?

MR. HUNTER: Very well.

PRESIDENT: Well, 10 minutes' recess.

(Recess. Upon resuming ..)

PRESIDENT: Okay. Are you ready to proceed, Prof. Hunter?

MR. HUNTER: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Hlushanytsia, just before the break I was asking you about the respective roles of the Russians who were sent to the Ukraine as opposed to the local officials and activists.

A. Yes.

Q. And is - I'm now quoting from page 110 of your book. You say, "These are the people who carried out the genocide of the Ukrainian farmers, including their children and the elderly. The following individuals were sent from Moscow," and then you produce four names. Then you say, "The local activists were," and without giving you all the names I count 10 of them. Would that be about the right proportion?

A. Yes, in our village.

Q. And then you go on to say, "In addition, there were the village paupers, alcoholics and thieves who stalked around the village with sharp iron stakes looking for hidden bread." Now, I take it these village paupers would also be Ukrainians?

A. Yes, they were.

Q. So, in fact, while some of the leadership may have been provided from individuals sent from Moscow, a good many of the people to whom you ascribe responsibility for the genocide were, in fact, local officials and local village paupers, as you've described.

A. But the ones from Moscow directed and the ones from Moscow gave the orders.

Q. Now, as I understand your evidence, you were in the Soviet Union and Russia itself twice in early 1933 and then sporadically when you worked on the railway.

A. Yes.

Q. And on the first occasion I wasn't sure where it was when you worked in the Soviet Union. Where were you working?

A. In Dolo. It's 10 miles from Orekhozuyevo. I worked in a porcelain factory in this little village of Dolo.

Q. And the second time when you were working on the train in Kiev between March and June 1933, as I understand

it, you made several trips on the train into the Soviet Union?

INTERPRETER: Can I apologize? Did you say Soviet Union or Russia?

MR. HUNTER: I said Soviet Union. Russia.

A. Yes.

Q. And did any of your train travels on the second time take you into the North Caucasus or the Volga or the Don or the Kuban or Kazakhstan?

A. No, they did not.

Q. So the area that you're comparing when you say that you saw starvation in the Ukraine and you didn't see it in Russia is simply this route that the train took you, is it?

A. Yes.

Q. You were not intending to suggest, I take it, that the starvation and the hunger were confined to the Ukraine?

A. My intention was to tell people that there was famine in Ukraine.

Q. But it was not your intention to suggest that there was no famine outside the Ukraine?

A. I did not know of famine outside Ukraine. I was writing about my village. I am not a historian.

Q. Finally, let me quote from the conclusion to your book

and ask you if you stand by this, if this represents your view today. You conclude your book by saying, "I have written this testimony not for myself but for you so you will know where the greatest danger lies for you and your descendants. The Russian invader is ruthless and thrives on the blood of innocent people. Never lower your guard on him but protect your birthright as long as you can and before it's too late. Don't be taken in by Russian promises; they give them to those whom they have yet to capture. But once they have you, they will skin you alive and not only you but your descendants for generations to come."

INTERPRETER: Is that the last paragraph?

MR. HUNTER: That's the third last and second last paragraph.

A. Yes, I stand by those conclusions.

Q. Thank you very much. Those are my questions.

A. The witness would like to add that portions of his book are being now printed in the Soviet Union.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Draper.

PROF. DRAPER: Witness, did you volunteer to go to Germany or were you ordered to go to Germany in 1943?

A. Yes, I was forced. I was evacuated.

PROF. DRAPER: By the Germans?

A. Yes, by the Germans.

PROF. DRAPER: Do you have much knowledge of the food situation in, outside the Ukraine in the years 1929 to 1933? Do you have any information on that subject?

A. I have that which I saw in Russia.

PROF. DRAPER: On your journey to work in the porcelain factory?

A. Yes.

PROF. DRAPER: Beyond that did you have any further knowledge of other parts of Russia?

A. He knew the areas of Tambo, Koslo, Orlo and Dolo, Dolo.

PROF. DRAPER: And was the famine in those areas?

A. There was no famine in those areas.

PROF. DRAPER: So in your estimate the famine was confined to Ukrainians in Ukraine?

A. Yes.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Levasseur.

PROF. LEVASSEUR: When you came back to your village in 1933, did anybody amongst the local authorities guess you were a Ukrainian living and working with a Russian name? And were they not aware that was, what was your real name and the Russian one was a false one?

A. They knew my real name but no one knew under which name I was working.

PROF. LEVASSEUR: And they were not surprised he could be working though he was a Ukrainian?

A. They did not know what kind of work I was doing or where I had been. When I returned it was already 1933 and it is when the prisons had been emptied of the prisoners and I returned about that same time. It was a time when many were returning.

PRESIDENT: Okay. In your testimony you referred to a secret edict that's for the repatriation of the Ukrainians from the Republic of Russia. What is the basis of your knowledge of this secret edict? And if it's secret, you shouldn't know about it.

A. The reason we knew about this secret is when people came to work, their numbers had already been drawn and they were immediately sent away. It was a secret of the authorities.

PRESIDENT: So he draws his conclusion about the existence of this edict from the way they were treated?

A. Yes.

PRESIDENT: Does he have any idea from what quarters such an edict would come?

A. It came from Moscow.

PRESIDENT: And what is meant by Moscow in that context?

A. By Moscow, I mean the government in the Kremlin.

PRESIDENT: Not the communist party or --

A. Well, the communist party was in power.

PRESIDENT: But when he uses the term "edict," does he mean a party directive or does he mean an official statute?

A. It means an official, an official directive from the party, in his understanding.

PRESIDENT: In the party hierarchy? Inside?

A. Yes.

PRESIDENT: Okay, thank you. Okay, well, in such case if - Mr. Liber, you don't have any --

MR. LIBER: I have no further questions.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, in such case we thank you for coming and giving your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF PROF. YAR SLAVUTYCH
October 31, 1988.

MR. LIBER: The next witness will be Dr. Yaro Slavutych, S-l-a-v-u-t-y-c-h. Would you take a seat here, please, Doctor. Dr. Slavutych is fluent in the English language so that he'll be able to testify on his own without the necessity of an interpreter.

PRESIDENT: Well, in such case, Prof. Slavutych, please repeat after me this following affirmation. (Witness affirms.) Thank you. Mr. Liber.

Examination-in-chief by Mr. Liber:

Q. Thank you, sir. Dr. Slavutych, would you please tell us what your date of birth is?

A. I was born on January 11th, 1918.

Q. And could you tell me where you were born?

A. I was born on a farmstead within the boundaries of the village of Blahodatne. At that time it was Khersonska hubernia - that means region of Kherson. Now it is in Dolynska rayon, the oblast Khirovhorgrad or region of Khirovhorgrad. Later changed the boundaries.

Q. Can you tell us the size of the village in which you were born?

A. Well, the village was less than 200 families. Well, maybe would be closer to 150 houses. Actually I was

born on a farmstead about two kilometers from the village itself but the farmstead was within the boundaries of the village.

Q. And your father, could you tell us what the size of his landholdings were?

A. Well, in 1928, well, roughly speaking, it was perhaps over 40 or 45 hectares. In 1932, I remember well, well, it was reduced to approximately 20 or 25 hectares.

Q. What was the basis for the reduction?

A. Well, I really don't know because the land was given in accordance with the number within family so two persons were born. However, almost a half of land was taken away so really I don't know why.

Q. And can you tell me whether your father had any employees?

A. No. We worked ourselves, and in 1932 I was already helping my father.

Q. Now, can you tell us when collectivization reached your village?

A. So it reached in the late of 1931 or in the early 1932.

Q. And --

A. However, we were not collectivized in 1932 on - our farmstead was not included yet.

Q. And how was that? Did your father resist collectivization?

A. Well, since we lived separately, that helped. And also my father did not want to join the collective farm.

He was definitely, well, anti-communist, anti-Russian, so everybody knew so we expected something every bad.

Q. Okay. And could you tell us what happened when the farms in the area where you were, if you know, were collectivized; what happened to the people, what did they do with them?

A. Well, almost no one wanted to join the collective farm. Those who resisted were arrested and deported and that, well, lot came to our family.

So, one night our farmstead was encircled; my father and myself were arrested. I was 14 years old at that time, and we were immediately brought to the Vysun railroad station, to the train already loaded by hundreds, perhaps thousands of Ukrainians. My mother and smaller sisters were chased away from the farmstead, which existed for more than 250 years. So it was established in the 17th century.

Q. Now, prior to collectivization, can you tell me whether there were any taxes or grain impositions, quotas put on your, the farm that your father owned?

A. Yes, there were taxes or the so-called quota to household. In 1932 we had the plenty harvest, lots of grain. My father received quota to household in September, I believe it was in the early September, and he was fortunate to fulfil that what was requested for him.

And I do remember that he said to us that what was left was not enough to sustain, not enough to live during the winter. However, two or three weeks later we received another household quota which was bigger than the previous one. So it was obvious that actually there was nothing to give away. And since the second household quota was not fulfilled, that encirclement happened, so my father was arrested and I, 14 years old, was arrested with him.

Q. Who, who was responsible for enforcing the quotas?

A. Well, I guess rayon in co-operation with the head of rural council. So rural council consisted of five villa--- which comprised an entity.

Q. Is that what we call the silrada?

A. Silrada, correct.

Q. All right. And who were the people that were in command at the silrada level?

A. So, there was the name of a fellow Serdiuk, he was sent recently, just a year before he arrived to silrada and he was made the head all of the silrada, the head of the ruler council.

Q. And where was he sent from?

A. Well, from outside. Probably he was a Ukrainian. However, by him there was a Russian outsider who came in approximately 1931. And they always co-operated and

Serdiuk has to do what that Russian told him to do.

Q. And how did you know that the chap that Serdiuk was working with was a Russian?

A. Well, they were always working together; that Russian had revolver by, by himself. And so it was obvious that he was directed by some, someone, and everyone expected something back.

Q. How did you know he was Russian?

A. Well, he spoke only Russian and, well, everybody considered him a Russian. He was definitely not Ukrainian.

Q. All right. And during that period when he arrived, were the quotas then being increased as time went on?

A. Well, he already was about a year before, so he was there, he was there.

Q. Now, during the period of collectivization, can you tell me - prior, before we get to that, can you tell me whether you can give us a structure of the classes in the village where you lived?

A. Well, about that classification or definition of kurkuls and kulaks, it was very vague definition. In my opinion, kurkul or kulak was the one who did not like the Soviet regime. So he could be rich, he could be poor; if it was known that he was against the Soviet regime, he immediately would be defined as kulak or kurkul.

Our family was classifed rather as seredniak - that means well-to-do farmer. Well, we worked hard.

We had everything. We did not hire anyone else. We worked ourselves. I was helping already my father.

Q. And then what you're saying is that the definition, though, of kurkuli was a person whoever fitted the definition that they prescribed at the time; is that what --

A. That's right.

Q. -- you're telling us?

A. That's right.

Q. All right. And what was the fate of people who were classified as kurkulis in your village?

A. They were arrested and deported and so --

Q. Where would they be deported to?

A. Just to northern Russia or Siberia. Well, as my father was arrested and I was with him - may I tell how did I escape?

Q. Well, I don't, I'm not really sure that it's relevant.

PRESIDENT: Sorry, the reporter didn't get it fully. Could you please repeat? Could you please repeat what you said?

A. So my father was arrested and I was arrested with him together. We were put into the railroad car like cattle full of people, and so the train proceeded until the north of the city of Kharkiv, or Kharkov in Russian.

At that very place, a group of us made a hole in the ceiling and we jumped out. My father did not want to escape because he was hit during the arrest at this part of his head and he was half conscious so he blessed me and we jumped on fir trees and those fir trees caught us like mothers are catching children.

Q. MR. LIBER: Then once you were, once you escaped from the train, where did you go?

A. I headed south and it took me almost one month to reach the place where our farmstead existed. And what I have seen, complete ruin, the farmstead over 250 years old was completely destroyed. And I did not know where my mother and five smaller sisters stayed.

Q. And when you got there, did you eventually find someplace where you could work?

A. Well, first of all, I wanted to locate my mother. Fortunately I found because there were hints, I just felt that my mother would move to the city of Kryvyi Rih. There were distance relatives and my mother was fortunate to find a job, like a cleaning woman in the dormitory for miners. So she work there and my smaller sisters were with her. I located in about a week after I returned to the ruined farmstead.

Q. All right, and then what did you do at that point in time? You had to work somewhere, I take it?

A. Well, then I was half legalized. First of all, I changed my name. My real name was at that time Zhuchenko so I changed to Zhuk and I was quite tall fellow so I, instead of 14 years old I looked like 16 years old. And on the advice of my mother and some other good persons, I was able to secure a job in the state farm Skotar. Skotar, not far from the city of Kryvyi Rih. So I tended cows there. Of course, I did not attend any school. I had to tend cows in the state farm, Skotar.

Q. And in the, in your employment on the state farm, did they give you any rations?

A. Well, there were rations. In the morning we had some soup. Well, and in the evening, another soup. And we got approximately 200 grams of bad bread. But, I was fortunate to get some milk, because the milk girls, milk women, taught me how to got some milk so I was able from time to time to drink some milk. And actually that saved me.

Q. Now, at the time that you were working on the state farm, could you get into your village or nearby villages?

A. Yes, I was able to visit my grandfather, who stayed near the farmstead. And I brought him, from time to time, a few slices of bread and a bottle of sour milk because on the way to my father the milk became sour.

Q. All right. Now --

A. And my grandfather died in my hands in May of 1933.

Q. Now, at that time can you tell me what the conditions were like in the village?

A. Well, there were corpses on the way, on the left side, on the right side. Well, many people were wandering aimlessly, swollen. Once, when I was on my way to my grandfather, a tall man was lying on the, on the road, nearby the road. When I approached, he rose and he started to walk toward me. I started to run. And he ran after me. I don't know what he had in mind. But, anyway, he fell down and I was brave enough to stop and to return and to look at him and I recognized a man whom I knew. His name was Lysyi, Ivan Lysyi. I knew him very well. So he was running after me. What he wanted? To take that what I was bringing to my grandfather, or perhaps for my body. Who knows? Because there were killings.

Q. Well, could you tell me were the villagers getting rations similar to the rations that you were getting on the state farm?

A. No, no one got any ration in the village. Only in the state farm, but in state farm there were only those who worked. There were no persons not working.

Q. And then in the village then, when you were working

on the state farm, that was 1933; is that right?

A. Right.

Q. And --

A. Spring of 1933.

Q. And can you tell me then the extent of starvation and death in the villages, if there was any?

A. Oh, yes, definitely. Well, everybody starved. Even in the state farm we were short of food and people were stealing, like myself from time to time, got milk from milking secretly into small bottle, well, or something like that. So everyone was starving. But in those working in state farm were in the better position. They were able to survive, like myself.

Q. And then in the village where you lived, was there a church?

A. In the neighbouring village was a church. In Blahodatne there was no church. There was a church built in 1780 or so. And that church was closed, probably in 1931. The priest was arrested and exiled and the church was - any, any metal, any precious metal was taken away from the church; there were some golden crosses and other things like that. And it was closed and half ruined and I have seen that church 10 years later, in 1943, it was completely ruined by that time.

Q. Now, do you have any recollection of the state of the

harvest in 1932?

A. The harvest in 1932 was plenty. Excellent. My father, I remember, told me, "Oh, God send, send us such, so much grain; what we are going to do with that grain?" It was so much. Well, then quota followed --

Q. So somebody made a decision for you as to what you were going to do with that grain, did they?

A. Right.

Q. And what did they - who made that decision and what did you have to do with it?

A. Well, the grain was taken away and there was so much of that grain that there were not enough railroad cars to carry it out of Ukraine. So the grain was collected in huge piles; some of piles were covered, others were not covered. I have seen with my own eyes huge piles of grain on the railroad station of Kryvyi Rih, on the railroad, smaller railroad station Vysun, and the railroad station Dolynska, huge piles of grain rotting under the rain. Mostly uncovered.

Q. And this was during the famine when the people were starving?

A. That was, that was when people were starving; it was in the spring of 1933.

Q. All right. Now, can you tell me why the people couldn't take some of that grain for themselves?

A. That grain was guarded by soldiers of, or some, well, militia men, and anyone who approached was shot on the spot. There were attempts to, to make revolt - may I tell about that?

Q. Yes.

A. So a group of us gathered together, those who survived, and there was a man who had hunting, well, gun, shotgun. So he was the leader. And during the night we approached one of the pile on the railroad station of Vysun and he used that shotgun - I really don't remember if the guard was wounded or just maybe he fled, he was afraid because there were too many of us. So we used this opportunity to take as much grain, rotten, rather, half-rotten grain as we could to carry away. And there was not far from that spot a forest, Hurivskyi, and I hid it and then later I was able to bring to my mother approximately - well, I don't know how many - well, maybe, maybe 50 pounds or that would be 25, maybe 30 kilograms of grain, which helped a great deal for, to survive, my sisters to survive and my mother. It was a supplement to that what my mother got, got as rations.

Q. And was there any other resistance to the, either the quotas or attempts to, that you're aware of, attempts to take some of this grain that was stockpiled?

A. Yes, there, some farmers initially were hiding grain, well, in the pits, in walls. Well, as it was said here, the grain was searched, sometimes found. That's one thing.

In some other cases, people got together. For example I do remember that not in our village but about in the neighbouring rayon, there was black forest, Chornyi'Lis, and everybody told, and probably there existed a group of insurgents who made some, well, raids to kill communists - of course, Russians - because they were commanding officers at the time.

Q. Now, when did you leave Ukraine?

A. I left in, in the fall of 1943, during the German occupation.

Q. Did you leave on your own or were you taken away by the German Army?

A. I left on my own. I was participating in the Ukrainian underground; we were fighting Germans and Russians alike. Our aim was establishing of a free and independent Ukrainian state. So I left on my own. And, of course, I had many, many documents. Unfortunately for me I was caught by Germans in the city of Katowice in Poland. Fortunately for me, and others, we escaped from, from a temporary camp and I had to cross the border into Czechoslovakia at night, well, and then farther it went.

Q. Then did you end up in the United States of America?

A. Yes, when the Americans came to the southern part of Germany, I was in the American zone, I came to the USA.

Q. All right. Would you tell us what your standard of education was at the time you got to the United States of America?

A. So I graduated from the Teachers' Institute or college of Zaporizhia in 1940. Then when I was in the States --

Q. And what would that be the equivalent of? What would --

A. B.A. - B.Ed., rather. B.Ed. Bachelor of Education.

Q. Then when you got to the United States of America, what did you do?

A. I enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania. I was excellent student so I got fellowship for the first year, for the second year. And then I was able to complete my doctoral studies and in 1955 I got Ph.D. degree.

Q. All right. Let me just back you up a bit. When did you get your Bachelor of Arts degree?

A. Well, I got in the States, Master of Arts degree in 1954, and Ph.D. degree in 1955.

Q. All right, all right. What did you major in to achieve your Master of Arts degree?

A. Well, I was majoring in East Slavic Languages and literature, literatures; particularly Ukrainian language and literature. My Master thesis was entitled, "The Muse in Prison," in which I collected the names of the

persecuted Ukrainian writers.

Q. And what was the basis of that thesis then, or what, what were you --

A. Well, it was, I collected the list of the executed and deported Ukrainian authors - that means poets, writers, literary scholars, scientists - since 1941. And, well, I wrote a thesis; the title is, "The Muse in Prison." It was published, by the way, here in Jersey City in 1956, two years after I defended it at the University of Pennsylvania. That was my Master's thesis.

Q. All right. And that was what? 1954, that you got your Master's?

A. Right.

Q. 1955 you were awarded a --

A. Ph.D.

Q. -- doctorate in what?

A. In Ukrainian literature.

Q. And what was your doctoral thesis?

A. It was the poetry of Mykhaylo Orest, persecuted author, and, and its background. So on the background of the Ukrainian literature and persecution, I analyzed the creativity, the works of this poet named Mykhaylo Orest.

Q. Then following your being awarded a doctorate degree, then what, what did you do?

A. I was invited immediately, one week after I graduated

from the University of Pennsylvania, I was invited to teach Ukrainian at the U.S. Army language school, the City of Monterey, California. And I stayed there for five years, teaching Ukrainian to the American soldiers and officers.

Q. All right. And then following that where, what experience did you have?

A. Following that I came to the University of Alberta because I was looking for broader horizons, and I stayed ever there. I retired in 1983 from the University of Alberta.

Q. And what was your position there?

A. I came as assistant professor; then I became associate professor, then full professor. Now officially I am professor emeritus in Ukrainian studies.

Q. What did you teach?

A. I taught Ukrainian language, Ukrainian literature. I am fluent in Russian, so from time to time I taught Russian literature in Russian because no one else was there to do exactly what I did. But mostly I taught Ukrainian language and literature and also Slavic philology.

Q. Now, Mr. President, if I just may as a word of explanation - I perhaps should have offered this earlier. The reason that I wanted Dr. Slavutych's qualifications before the Commission was I do want to

ask him questions dealing with the fate of the intelligentsia during the period that we're interested in, starting 1929 to 1933.

PRESIDENT: Well --

MR. HUNTER: Mr. Chairman, it's - Mr. President, it's my understanding he wants for that purpose to have Dr. Slavutych qualified as an expert on this part of his testimony and having heard Dr. Slavutych's - I'm right in that, am I not, Mr. Lieber?

PRESIDENT: I'm sorry, I didn't get you.

MR. HUNTER: I believe Mr. Liber wishes to have Dr. Slavutych qualified as an expert for this part of his testimony, that dealing with Ukrainian language and literature and the effect on the institutions.

MR. LIBER: That's correct.

PRESIDENT: That is right.

MR. HUNTER: And with respect to having heard the evidence that Dr. Slavutych has given as to his qualifications, I have no questions to ask and I'm content that he be sworn in as an expert on those topics.

PRESIDENT: You do not object?

MR. HUNTER: I do not object.

PRESIDENT: In such case, you will please, in your

capacity of expert, your affirmation will read slightly differently so if we now switch to his expert evidence, you will please say after me. (Witness affirms.) Thank you. Will you then proceed.

Q. MR. LIBER: Thank you, Mr. President. Dr. Slavutych, what I'm interested in now, and the evidence that I'd like to lead at this time is information that you have, through your research, and an opinion as to the effects or what happened to the intelligentsia in the years, particularly we're interested in from 1929 to 1933, although I understand your research takes you further than that.

A. Perhaps I should mention at the beginning that when my grandfather was dying, I gave promise to him, he took an oath from me to survive and to tell the truth, the whole world, what Moscow is doing to Ukraine. So it was my, I had to fulfil that what I gave to my grandfather.

In 1941, I started to collect a list of persecuted Ukrainian authors. I asked many, since I was a young man at that, during the '30s, I interviewed many persons so I collected a list of persecuted authors. I added to it from time to time, and when I was a graduate student at the University of Pennsylvania, so I collected and

and published that thesis. It was the first book published, the first book dealing with the persecution of Ukrainian authors. In my opinion, the Kremlin, while liquidating peasantry, was liquidating the backbones of the nation. It was peasantry was backbones of the nation.

The Kremlin persecuted and liquidated the Ukrainian authors, the intelligentsia, because the Kremlin wanted to liquidate the mind of the nation. So I felt it was my obligation to collect it, to publish and to tell the world what Moscow, what Kremlin was doing while destroying the Ukrainian nation.

Q. Now, what effect would the - first of all, if I just may back up a little bit. Can you tell us either in numbers or in general quantities the number of academics that were affected in, with the policies that were inflicted on Ukraine between 1929 and 1933.

A. So, first arrests were in 1929, and a year later there was a process of of the so-called Spilka Vyzvolennia Ukrainy, so The Union for Liberation of Ukraine, it was called.

Individuals were arrested. Well, they wanted to warn the other authors if you co-operate with us, with the Soviet system, with the Soviet ideology, with the communist party, so you will survive. If you will

not co-operate, then you will be destroyed. There was even a slogan (witness speaks in Russian). That is in Russian. "If enemy does not yield to our request, we destroy him." That is the translation of that Russian slogan.

And then, of course during this several years there were individual cases of arrest. Who knows? Maybe 100, maybe 150 were arrested and brought to trial. Some of them were deported; others were shot.

Now, in the December of 1934, at least 16 authors were shot during the night from December 15th to 16. Then after that, from time to time, more and more writers were arrested and, in my estimation - I collected a list of approximately, close to 250 Ukrainian writers who were either executed or deported to Siberia or to northern Russia, and disappeared without a trace.

Now, in Kiev, in Kiev --

Q. Now, if I may ask a question here. The 250 names that you collected, over what period of time would the, would that have been?

A. That would be since 1929 to 1940, '41.

Q. All right. And can you tell me how, how many or whether it was, a greater number were in the early years or middle years or later years of this period?

A. Well, the search was in 1934, so immediately after famine they just thought that since backbones of the nation

were destroyed, so let's destroy the mind of the nation so in 1954 - no, no. 1934, 1935, '36, that was, these three years were the worst years.

Q. All right. What about 1929 to 1933?

A. Well, at that times they just started only to do that. Only, not en masse. It was from 1929 to 1933. Only individuals were arrested.

Q. And at that time when they were arresting individuals, what was the, what would the effect be on the academic community and the people?

A. As soon as the writer was arrested, his books were banned. His books were taken away from all libraries. His name was dropped from all publications. In encyclopedias his name was covered with dark ink, so it was impossible to read. So they did not exist anymore, according to their, their wish.

Q. All right. And who, who was it that was carrying out the arrests of the academics and deleting the, any reference to them from any published books and so on.

A. NKVD, Secret Police. Of course, Russians. By the way, there were Jews who participated with Russians and quite a number was of them collaborating with Russians in destroying the Ukrainian writers.

Q. And what would be the purpose of destroying the Ukrainian writers and the academics?

A. Well, just to destroy the mind of the nation.

Q. And what do you mean by that? You've said that a number of times.

A. Well, that means since Ukrainian authors were writing about Ukrainian ideas and mostly the ideas of independence of Ukraine and other things like that, retention of national culture, so these authors were arrested and no one dare to say anything what is considered national, what is considered native. So the authors had to praise Stalin himself, Kremlin as the centre, as the capital of the world, and "We love Moscow," but it was forbidden to say, "We love Ukraine." So that means that I call the killing of the mind of the intelligentsia.

Q. Thank you. Those are the questions I have for Dr. Slavutych Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: These were the questions?

MR. LIBER: Yes, I'm finished examining.

MR. HUNTER: If it's of assistance, Mr. Chairman, I'll be --

PRESIDENT: We're going to have a recess. Would you want to complete before the recess or --

MR. HUNTER: Yes, I will be very brief. I have only a very few questions for Dr. Slavutych. If you wish me to go ahead now.

Cross-examination by Mr. Hunter:

Q. Dr. Slavutych, you swore an affidavit that is before this Commission. In fact, you swore two affidavits, I believe.

A. Right.

Q. If I can deal - I just have two questions with respect to the first affidavit which deals with your own personal history in the Ukraine. You describe in your affidavit and you've also indicated today that there was considerable resistance to the collectivization policy?

A. Correct, that's correct.

Q. And that this peasant resistance, as you say in your affidavit, broke out repeatedly?

A. Right.

Q. And that it included, in the case you described, at least, armed resistance.

A. Well, to some extent. Of course there were not many weapons.

Q. And you indicated in your affidavit that the purpose was to destroy the occupying Russian regime, its police, the local and delegated communist officials.

A. In our rural council - well, no one was, no Russian was killed. However, I know that in neighbouring rayons there were Russians, Russian officials killed by these, by the Ukrainians who revolted.

Q. Now, also in that affidavit, in your penultimate paragraph concluding your affidavit you acknowledge quite fairly that the fact that the famine and the starvation was not confined to the Ukraine, and you mention a number of other areas in which it occurred.

A. Well, famine was in Ukraine only. And famine was in the regions populated by non-Russian, non, by non-Russians. This is not true that they say famine was in Russia, as well.

If the famine was along the Volga River, it was on the territory populated mostly not by Russians but by Tatars, by some Germans. The famine was in Northern Caucasus - that means Kuban region - populated mostly by Ukrainians. But those territories do not belong to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic.

Q. Yeah, they were not within the territorial limits of the Ukraine?

A. Yeah, so that means, that's correct, but actually famine was directed against non-Russians. Not a single Russian died of starvation, in my opinion.

Q. All right. Now, if I can turn to the area in which you've given expert evidence, namely the attack on the intelligentsia. I take it that you would agree that the attack on the intelligentsia was not restricted

to the Ukrainians, either?

A. Yes, there were some persecuted Russian authors who were mostly of non-Russian origin; like Pasternak, most famous, of Jewish origin. While some Russians suffered, those who disagreed with the policy of the communism, with the communist party. However, proportionately taken, there were certain individuals maybe, in my estimation, maybe 30 of Russian authors were persecuted. However, 250 authors, I collected names.

Now, in Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, the Union of the Ukrainian Soviet Writers state that not 250 were, we lost, but almost 500. So my list is definitely incomplete.

Q. I'm not talking about --

A. Because abroad I cannot complete the list.

Q. Well, leave aside the list. Now, among the things you've taught at the University of Alberta, I understand, is Russian literature.

A. Yes, classical mostly.

Q. I'm not an expert on Russian literature but let me mention some books that I have read. I've read, for example, Andrei Siniavskii's, "A voice from the chorus." Are you familiar with that book?

A. Yes, I read it.

Q. And would you agree with me that in that book he describes inhabitants in the Gulag by the dozens who were writers, poets, artists, musicians, who were from all parts of the Soviet Union and outside the Soviet Union?

A. Yes, for example, the Soviet Armenia, in Armenia there, well, I was talking with the member of the Armenian Academy of Sciences. 34 writers were liquidated. How many Armenians? Four million, approximately. Well, 500 authors taken into consideration, that new figure is correct. Well, for 45 or 40 millions of Ukrainians. Now, how many Russians? Over 100, and only approximately 30 authors. You see? Proportionately, Ukrainian cultu- suffered more.

Armenian culture suffered more than Russian culture. But there were definitely certain Russians who were persecuted because they disagree with the communist party.

Q. Well, Dr. Slavutych, let me see if - are you seriously proposing the thesis that the attack on the intelligentsia - to use that phrase - was confined to Ukrainians? You're not suggesting that, are you?

A. Well, mostly, well, of course it was not only the Ukrainians but, as a matter of fact, Ukrainians, Ukrainians suffered more than others.

Q. Well, with respect - leave aside simply the question of writers and artists and poets being executed. What

about writers and artists and poets being imprisoned; you wouldn't suggest that the Gulag Archipelago - which we know about through Solzhenitsyn - he's not a Ukrainian, is he?

A. Well, his grandfather was Ukrainian. He admitted.

Q. What about Bukovskii, in his book, "To build a castle," he describes meeting artists and so on, poets and musicians.

A. Well, they were persecuted. That's correct. I agree.

Q. So you're not then suggesting that the attack on the intelligentsia was limited to the Ukraine?

A. It was not but practically Ukrainians suffered more than Russians.

Q. All right, thank you. Those are my questions.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Any questions from the Commission? Prof. Draper.

PROF. DRAPER: Professor, the Ukrainian peoples, in your view, were the only sufferers from the famine of '32-'33; is that correct?

A. To say correct, that would be the following. Ukrainian peoples and other non-Russians. That means Tatars along the Volga River, some Germans who populated region along the Volga River; then some Don Cossacks who speak Russian. However, they differ ethnically from Russians.

So I should say the correct answer would be Ukrainians and other non-Russians. I repeat once more, in my estimation, in my opinion, not a single Russian died of starvation in the famine of 1932-33.

PROF. DRAPER: Why were the Ukrainians singled out, in your view, --

A. Because --

PROF. DRAPER: -- for the famine treatment?

A. Because the Kremlin wanted to destroy the Ukrainian nation.

PROF. DRAPER: Why?

A. To break the backbone, backbones of the Ukrainian people; to liquidate, to kill the mind and to Russianize Ukrainians, and to take rich Ukrainian fertile soil for Russia; to take Ukrainian coal for Russia; to take Ukrainian - there was at that time oil, there was some oil and other natural resources. That means it was imperialistic policy which was continuation of the Russian Czarist policy. In my estimation, there is, speaking from the viewpoint of national approach, there is no difference between Russian Czarist policy and communist Russian policy. It's the same, the same continuation.

PROF. DRAPER: So, yes, thank you, Professor. In relation

to the Ukraine population, are you saying that the imperialist policies of the Czars of Russia up to the revolution were the exact, were the counterparts or the preliminary --

A. Correct.

PROF. DRAPER: -- of the great Bolshevik attitude to the Ukrainians?

A. Absolutely correct, sir.

PROF. DRAPER: So that the revolution really did not make such a big change?

A. Well, Ukrainians use this opportunity and they exploited the change. So Ukrainians proclaimed independence, and the Ukrainian National Republic in 1918 was proclaimed. So it was not because Russian policy was changed. Just it was the situation that Ukrainians were perhaps smart enough to form a republic, an independent state which existed for approximately three and a half years.

Then in 1920, Soviet Russians invaded Ukraine and destroyed the Ukrainian independence. And then later they wanted to destroy Ukrainian nation by hunger, by execution of Ukrainian authors, and retaining the policy of Russianization, the policy of the Russian Czarist Czars. They just want to change, to kill the nation, to, to make it non-existent. So to create the Soviet nation, they call it (witness speaks in Russian)

"The only Soviet nation." They just wanted to do.

PROF. DRAPER: Could you tell me, Professor, your best estimate of the total Ukrainian ethnic population in the Soviet Union before the great famine of '32-'33?

A. Well, as far as I know - maybe I am incorrect in my figures - but the population was something like 20, 29 million or something like that. However, when I was a student at the Institute of Zaporizhia, I participated in census, in 1937. We were never given the figures. We were told what we had to do. So we were told if someone, ask him if he speaks Ukrainian, then this is not enough to say that he is Ukrainian. Ask him about nationality. He might speak Ukrainian but he might be registered as Russian. So to artificially to bring up the number of Ukrainians, which was terribly low by that time in the census of 1937, so they wanted to create the impression that Ukrainian nation did not suffer much. However, it was about three million or something like that less than it was in, I understand in 1929. But I'm not exactly about figures; I don't have --

PROF. DRAPER: No, no, I understand that, Professor. You were asked for an estimate and you are being quite candid; you're giving us your best estimate. That we appreciate. Now, having worked in the census for 1937 - was it?

A. 1937.

PROF. DRAPER: Yes, when you worked in the census. Did you form any idea, from being inside the census apparatus, of what had been the reduction in the Ukrainian ethnic population from 1929 until the end of the famine in 1933, from starvation, deportations, shooting, et cetera, in total; have you any estimate having worked - I ask you that not only as an educated academic and a professor of distinction, but also because you had an opportunity to work in the census, although we know what you have told us was happening in the census.

A. Well, I was a young student. In 1937 I was 19 years old so I cannot, I didn't study this particular field. However, I know it is established, it is generally acknowledged that in 1937 there were more than three million Ukrainians than it was in 1929. And because of this, this census was cancelled. A new census was, I understand, couple years later, I am not sure. Well, I was not prepared to talk about census.

So then the number of Ukrainians was given bigger number in order to hide the facts that actually it was less. And take into consideration that many Ukrainians were born during the period.

PROF. DRAPER: One last question, Professor, and you're being very patient. During the period of NEP, the new economic policy, did the Ukrainian people get exposed

to any famine measures?

A. No. Well, the famine was immediately after the revolution. I understand that in 1921-22 there was a famine.

PROF. DRAPER: That's when the civil war was on.

A. During - immediately after civil war.

PROF. DRAPER: Yes.

A. However, during the - well, let's say after that, after 1922 until '29, I don't think that there was a famine, no. This was a new economic policy, NEP; it is called (witness speaks in Russian) in Russian. So Lenin introduced this in order to improve the disastrous economic situation.

Well, and actually I should say that people benefited; people prospered because of that policy. There was restructuring. Maybe Gorbachev now would like to introduce that NEP policy, restructuring. Maybe it's related to that; I don't know.

PROF. DRAPER: Why then did the famine start up when the NEP had brought a measure of reasonably good living?

A. Well, it's difficult to say. I think since Stalin wanted to collectivize by all means, so actually it was a forced collectivization, and people, mostly farmers, resisted. I should say almost - well, at least 99 per cent of peasantry resisted that.

And since Ukrainians were very restive, others were very restive, so they invented destruction, they invented forceful collectivization. By the way, Russians gladly were collectivized because before they lived in groups, in so-called obchinas. They were properties of landlords; they were not individually-minded like Ukrainians. Ukrainians are, well, we say great individualists; they are pro-western like in western Europe.

Russian peasantry was like a group, like, well, like a cattle which could be chased to any way; subordinate. So collectivization in Russia proper took quickly; it was, it was good work done. However, in Ukraine it was extremely difficult. People resisted. So Stalin and the communist party pressed, and they used this pressure in order to get final solution, to kill Ukrainian nation by hunger, by killing authors, disperse to make, well, cattles from the Ukrainian, from remaining of the Ukrainian nation.

And, of course, well, any shepherd could rule and give directions. That's the aim of the communist party and the Kremlin and the Russian imperialism itself.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you, Professor.

A. You're welcome, sir.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Verhoeven.

PROF. VERHOEVEN: I would like just to have some more question to the expert now to understand exactly what is your statement. You told us that there is, there was a specific policy of Soviet Union against Ukraine but in your meaning what - is that policy specifically aiming at Ukrainian nation or --

A. And other non-Russians. And other non-Russians.

PROF. VERHOEVEN: Yes, yes, but why? Because, because Soviet Union was against Ukraine or because Soviet Union feels that the nations are dangerous when development became too big to be compatible with the federation? So is the aim specifically against Ukraine or for the Soviet Union?

A. Well, they say Ukrainians are most, well, the great, second greatest nation in the Soviet Union. So to say correctly, we have to say that policy was against Ukraine and other non-Russian republics.

Other non-Russian republics are small. Armenians, four million; Georgia, well, six or I'm not sure, maybe seven million. Well, those republics are small. Baltic republic, just a couple million each of them and still they are very restive like Ukrainians were in the 1920s. In Lithuania, Lithuanians like Jkrainians were in 1920s.

So aim was against non-Russians, against those

who resisted, resisted the policy of Russianization, who resisted the policy of collectivization, and who were enemies of communism. And by the way, in Ukraine the communist party did not exist practically because there were who Russians and Jews who were creating communist party in Ukraine, on the Ukrainian territory.

Do you know that Trotsky wrote his first article in Ukrainian? Kaganovich spoke Ukrainian. They were born in Ukraine and they moved to the stronger master; they were great opportunists. Trotsky immediately moved to Lenin and collaborated with him, and I was told that he has forgotten Ukrainian. Only in Mexico, before he was killed, some Ukrainian visited him and he knew only a few words in Ukrainian.

Kaganovich spoke Ukrainian quite well, and he was such a great opportunist. He lives now in Moscow. And in Ukrainian press, in Kiev quite often it is written, they say, "How soon we bring to justice Kaganovich, the right hand of Stalin, the right hand of the Kremlin, the right hand of the Russian Soviet imperialism?" Well, Gorbachev does not allow. Well, he lets Kaganovich live peacefully, rich and he actually was one who fulfilled that obligation given to Stalin and who, well, organized famine in Ukraine.

PROF. VERHOEVEN: So there is nothing specific to Ukraine except that Ukraine was much more important than the other small republics?

A. Well, Ukrainians are perhaps more nationalistic than other nations. For example, Armenians, they are very small; they could be swallowed by Turks so they reached for defence to Russia. Well, they are between, well, hammer and - how you say? - sickle. Yes. (Witness speaks in Russian) So they are not against Russia. They want their right but they want to be, well, somehow defended by Russians against Turks.

Well, Ukrainians are a big nation; they want to be independent. And they are more nationalistic than others. Well, much destruction was done. However, this nation is still alive. It's struggling now. And actually they are supporting restructuring invented by Gorbachev because this restructuring gives them idea, gives them support in struggle for independence.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Prof. Humphrey.

PROF. HUMPHREY: If my memory is correct, Lenin attached particular importance to the principle of nationality. Is this so?

A. Would you repeat, please?

PROF. HUMPHREY: Lenin attached special importance

to the idea of nationality.

A. Correct, sir.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Now, is there a paradox here? How did this happen that the communist party, which was Leninist, suddenly becomes anti-nationalist?

A. Well, who knows how it would be later? Well, during when Lenin was alive, he played with, well, national approach. He told, he wrote that every Russian living in Ukraine should know the Ukrainian language. He should respect Ukrainian culture. That was Lenin said. Now everybody in Ukraine repeats these words by Lenin.

However, after he died, Stalin changed the policy. In my opinion, Stalin was influenced by new Soviet imperialists; those who continued the policy of Russian Czarist approach to nationalities. And since he had to obtain some support, so he relied on those Russian chauvinists and, of course, Jews were there helping them. They created, they introduced famine. They were destroying the Ukrainian nation. Fortunately, they did not succeed to destroy everything because it's impossible.

Khrushchev admitted that it was impossible to deport every Ukrainian to Siberia, as Stalin, as Stalin demanded. And Stalin said, "Deport all of them." So they killed seven million by starvation. They deported

millions to Siberia. However, still there are, in my estimation, now in Ukraine - who knows? - 40 million Ukrainians, maybe more. But the whole population in Ukraine is over 50 million people. So, let's say there are approximately 10 million Russians and other nationalities, other ethnic groups.

So still nation is alive and struggling for its independence, for its existence.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Thank you. Then the testimony is over. Now, before closing the session, I would in my capacity of chairman like to announce the following.

A letter purporting to have originated with two members of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, and two Ukrainian Doctors of Philosophy, was received via personal courier to the chairman of the Commission from Toronto on October 30.

Because the Commission has not been able to check the identity of the signers or to judge possible prejudice to them, the text is presently embargoed in the Commission records.

However, the major thrust of the communication is first to encourage the Commission in its efforts to ascertain truth; second, to suggest possible assistance

as to sources of information within the USSR; and third, to inform in general as to current research activity by Soviet scientists, historians, economists and demographers as to the 1932-1933 Ukrainian famine.

The writers, "We are convinced that under conditions of Glasnost and the democratization of all facets of Soviet society, this work of research will be carried out."

The letter then asserts a wish for, and I quote, "an honest dialogue, an open discussion, and objective and comprehensive analysis." It continues with an assertion that, and I quote, "the tragic events of 1932-1933 cannot be viewed as premeditated acts of the Soviet government," end quote, but rather as, quote again, "the result of the convergence of various circumstances, the main one being forced collectivization of agriculture, the ruthless policy of the grain procurement, drastic deviation from Lenin's principles, and Stalin's leap towards industrialization," et cetera.

The writers conclude with, primo, a denial that the famine of 1932-1933 could be deemed a conscious anti-Ukrainian act as claimed by the World Congress of Free Ukrainians, the group presently claiming before the Commission. And, secondo, an appeal for the Commission to act in this period of the Helsinki Accords

TESTIMONY OF BENJAMIN CHMILENKO
(Translated by Mrs. Laryssa Temple)
November 1, 1988.

PRESIDENT: Well, good morning. This is the session on Tuesday, November first, 1988, that is now being opened.

The last thing that happened in the session yesterday was that I made allusion to a letter that had been received. On further study of that letter, we have encountered a statement that disturbs us which we must deny. The statement reads as follows: "However, we - that means the undersigned two academicians from the Ukrainian SSR and two Doctors of Philosophy, they say - "However, we cannot but be concerned and attentive to the fact that long before the process of inquiry is to be completed, certain members of the Commission have made public statements alluding to their predisposition towards the theory of famine genocide against the Ukrainian people and thereby predetermining their findings."

This statement does not correspond with the facts. No member of this Commission has made any statement that could be regarded as a predetermination of any issue before us. The purpose of the Commission is solely to establish the historical objective truth and nothing else.

In this context, we must emphasize again the complete independence of the Commission from any group appearing before us.

With this issue closed, we will then proceed to the continued interrogation. And Mr. Liber, do I understand you correctly, you want to call upon Mr. Chmilenko?

MR. LIBER: Chmilenko, sir. Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. LIBER: Thank you, sir.

PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, in such case, let's proceed.

MR. LIBER: Mr. Chmilenko, please. Mrs. Temple. Mr. Chmilenko will require the assistance of an interpreter.

PRESIDENT: Now, Mr. Chmilenko, will you please repeat after me. (Witness affirms.) Thank you. I turn the floor to you, Mr. Liber.

MR. LIBER: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Chmilenko, will you please tell us your date of birth and your place of birth.

A. I was born April 11th, 1922, in the village of Zelenkivka, Nedrehajlivskyj rayon, Sumska oblast.

Q. And could you tell us the size of the village or the area in which you lived?

A. The village where I was born is composed of several

parts. I am not certain of the population but it was approximately 350 to 400 homesteads. But I grew up in the khutir, a section of homesteads outside of the village, and this khutir was made up of 64 homesteads.

Q. Now, can you tell us what the distribution of wealth was and the classes that you had in the area which you lived?

A. The greater number of the peasants, the persons that lived in the area where I did, were of the middle or seredniak class.

Q. What was your father's status as far as landholding and training?

A. My father had five hectares of land. He also was a very good cobbler.

Q. And how was he classified in the economic strata?

A. He was classified as a seredniak; a middle-class peasant.

Q. And could you tell us how you recall your lifestyle up to 1930?

A. Up till 1930 our lifestyle was very comfortable. We had plenty of food, clothing and all necessities.

Q. And did things change in 1930? And, if so, why?

A. After 1930, there were very negative cardinal changes in our lifestyle. This was as a result of collectivization which started in our khutir in 1930.

Q. And do you recall how they were enforcing or who enforced the collectivization program in your village?

A. Even though I was very young at the time, not quite 10, I remember the process well. The authorities called meetings and agitated people to join. People did not wish to join the kolhosp and resisted. These meetings were called by representatives of the rayon. These representatives were members of the 25,000s, the group sent from Moscow. They would keep people in these meetings as long as possible. They would agitate them, they would wear them out; they would try to, any means to make them join the collective farm.

The first of these meetings was not at all successful. The next day they called a second, a third, and slowly wore people down until the majority of the people there realized that they had no other choice.

Q. And now if I just may interject here, Mr. Chmilenko. Could you just clarify for me who were the people responsible for the meetings; that is conducting them, and what language did they speak?

A. These representatives of the rayon worked with the silrada, with the head of the silrada and his committee. I did not attend these meetings but, according to my information, the language used was Russian.

Q. Now, what was your father's position on the question of collectivization?

A. My father resisted collectivization totally. And in spite of all methods used against him, all torture, he resisted it; he never entered the kolhosp. Even though all of our land and all of our holdings were confiscated in 1932.

Q. Who did the confiscation; who actually carried it out?

A. There were specific brigades organized in order to confiscate holdings. These were led by the representatives from the rayon, the members of the 25,000s. They were assisted by local activists.

Q. Now, do you remember the name or names of any of these Russian-speaking people who were sent by the rayon?

A. There were times in the last 50 years that I remembered these names very well. I have since forgotten. The only one that remains in my memory is Shkurat.

Q. Now, was your father, in fact, arrested at some point in time?

A. My father was arrested once but was fortunate enough to escape from the representative of the brigade, of the arresting brigade. There were several other attempts to arrest my father but usually through inside information he managed to avoid them.

Q. Now, while you were at school do you recall ever having to participate in searches for food?

A. In 1932 when the vykachka, the search and seizure team

searching for food began, people tried to save food by hiding it in various places. In order to facilitate the searches for food, the brigades would mobilize third and fourth grade students to take them to the homes that were designated for searches.

I was too young at the time; I was a second grader. But my brother, who was two years older than I was, was mobilized into these brigades and had to go to the designated homes to help the brigades, the search and seizure teams, find the food.

Q. Did they have a church in your village?

A. Yes, there was a beautiful church in our, in our village. It was closed before 1930; the priest was arrested and exiled to Siberia, and in my memory the church stood empty until 1936. And in that year, in that year 1936 they rebuilt the church and made it a club.

Q. And when, I understand that your father's assets were taken away from the home at one point in time. Can you tell me where you were when the family was evicted from the house?

A. In 1931, in early December, in late December, my family was chased out of their home; all of their holdings were sold.

Q. Where were you when this actually took place, though?

A. At the moment my mother and the two small children in

our family, who were born in 1928 and 1931, were evicted, my father was out of the home working in neighbouring villages as a cobbler.

At that time I was in school. It was during this period that my father was running away from escape; therefore he was not at home.

Q. When you got home from school, would you tell us what you found and what you did?

A. The school I attended was five kilometers from my khutir. School lasted all day so I came home with my other friends with whom I attended school, quite late, possibly around 8:00 or 9:00 o'clock in the evening. It was a very cold night. When I got to my house, no one opened the door. When I looked inside the windows, I saw only piles of leather scraps. I then understood that there was no one there, and I understood what happened.

Q. Where did you go and what did you do that night?

A. I went to my friend's home, our next door neighbours. The son, my friend, his parents were co-operating with the activists, with the authorities at the time. I asked about my mother and the younger children. There was no answer for me. They simply ignored me. Soon the mother ordered her own children to bed and blew out the lamp. I realized that I must leave, I was not welcome.

Q. Now, did anybody help you at that time?

WITNESS: Okay. I can continue that, yes. So when I went out --

A. I met my brother outside; he already knew where our mother was but told me that we could not go to join her because she had been taken in by other neighbours and an edict had been issued that you were not permitted to take in anyone who had been evicted from their home because the same fate would come to you. So we went to a stable and spent the night there.

Q. What happened to your family house?

A. Our home was purchased by the state farm. I do not know if they paid for it or not; that was beyond my knowledge. But they did move in there. They also took over our land and all of the holdings and out-buildings there. Most of the out-buildings were wood and they were dismantled for firewood, taken apart, dismantled. One of the out-buildings was clay, was a mud clay building and it remained.

Q. Were you able to continue in school after your family had been evicted from the house?

A. The morning after we spent the night in the stable, we did stop to see our mother. She fed us and we did go back to school; my mother did ask that we not return visibly.

Q. Did you continue going to school?

A. Yes, I continued to go to school. I was regularly called in to the office of the principal who demanded to know where my father was and why my father refused to enter the kolhosp.

Q. Can you tell us what living conditions were like in the village in 1932?

A. At the beginning of 1932, most of the families in our area had already joined the kolhosp. My father, along with three other families, continued refusing. The people were already working as collective farm workers. They were not paid for their work but they were awarded trudodni or work days.

The beginning of 1932 my father still had his land and still had some sowing grain so he did have a small harvest. In the kolhosp the workers waited to be paid until the end of the year. By the end of that year, the taxes on the kolhosp grain were so large that the workers received very little.

There was also a grain tax placed on my father and on those who did not enter the kolhosp. This tax was so large and demanded so much grain that there was no possibility of ever filling these quotas.

In 1932, also, my father returned to the village from having escaped to neighbourhood villages, and we

were permitted to live in that mud, that clay shack which was the only out-building that had remained on our property.

Q. Now, in 1932 was there evidence of hunger and starvation amongst the people who were members of the kolhosp?

A. In 1932, because of the large taxes on grain, my father hid as much food as he could. The brigades that came to search for food confiscated all of this. The members of the kolhosp were allowed to maintain small gardens for personal use. In 1932 they received taxes on the produce from these small gardens and, again, the brigades and the search and seizure teams came to the homes of the kolhosp members and confiscated all of that food, also.

Q. All right. Well then, would I be correct in saying that in 1932 the people who were members of the kolhosp were equally hungry and suffering from lack of food as people who weren't members of the kolhosp?

A. Yes, but you have to consider that 90 per cent of our population entered the kolhosp. This 90 per cent suffered and died just as much as everyone else.

Q. All right. Now, all right. I want to get into 19 - sorry.

A. In 1932 there were already events of death by starvation but not nearly as much as 1933.

Q. Now, I want you to describe what the conditions were like in 1933.

A. In 1933 our khutir was a total cemetary. Everyone was starving. Not one family was secured in terms of food. Even the neighbour, who I mentioned earlier, who was an activist who collaborated with the authorities, they were starving also.

Q. And in 1933, when you were - were you still at school?

A. In 1933, from the spring to the end of the school term, children were not strong enough to attend school any longer and the school almost voluntarily ceased to exist; the children simply could not attend.

Q. Was there a reduction in the number of students as a result of death at that time?

A. The situation was that in September of 1933, when I returned to school, of the 40 children from our khutir who had attended school with me, only two returned.

Q. Now, did conditions ease off by, or improve by 1934?

A. After 1934, people were no longer starving, were no longer dying of hunger. However, there were extreme shortages of food. It was forbidden to mill grain. Our mills were windmills. All of the windmills were destroyed. People began using homemade handmills. The authorities confiscated all of these handmills.

Q. Now, was there any discussion of the famine after 1933? Did people talk about it or did you see it in newspapers or anywhere?

A. After 1933 no one mentioned the famine or any member of their family that died during the famine. In, early in that period when people dared to speak of it, they were arrested for anti-Soviet propaganda. As an example, my mother's youngest sister vanished in 1933, at which time she would have been six or seven years old. No one dared question what had happened to her or where she had gone. In 1938 one day a car pulled up and brought an already grown child back to our khutir; it was my mother's sister. But everyone had been afraid to question where she might be.

Q. I have no further questions of this witness, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. General counsel.

Cross-examination by Mr. Hunter:

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. Chmilenko, I have only a few questions for you. At the time of collectivization in 1930, you would have been eight years old?

A. Yes. I was born in 1922.

Q. And you were, in fact, 11 years old then when the famine ended?

A. Yes.

Q. Now, you indicated that the greater number of people in your village were seredniak, the middle class. Can you tell us if there were any kulaks in your village?

A. Yes, there was one family that fell into this category. They were exiled to Siberia. There were two other families who really did not fall into the category of kulaks but who lived prosperously; they were also exiled to Siberia.

Q. Now, the meetings that you referred to that were called by the leaders of the rayon to attempt to persuade people to join the collective, it's my understanding that you didn't yourself attend these meetings, you were too young?

A. That is correct. I did not attend. My father went several times. When - not more than two times. What happened is that the men tried to send their wives because when this agitation occurred, a wife had less authority to sign these declarations of kolhosp membership. So people tried to find ways of avoiding signing these things.

Q. Now, my friend Mr. Liber asked you what the situation was prior to 1930 and you indicated there was plenty of food and that the change occurred in 1930. And you said that, when you were asked what the reason for that was, that it was a result of collectivization.

A. Absolutely.

Q. And you have no doubt in your mind that it was collectivization that was responsible for the change from plenty of food to inadequate food?

A. Absolutely. I agree with this because when workers started working in the kolhosp, they were paid neither food nor money until the end of the year when taxation had taken most away.

Q. Now, you also indicated that your brother was forced to go to homes to search for food. Who forced him to go?

A. My brother went as a member of the class. They did not select individual children. They took an entire class The class was ordered to do this by the director of the school, and the director was ordered to do this by the representatives from the rayon, the members of these 25,000s. The entire class was taken to search homes.

Q. Now, you've indicated that members of the collective farm were allowed to keep small gardens but that their food was taken from them, as well; is that correct?

A. Yes, this is true. In 1932 there were grain taxes placed on the kolhosp workers just like on those who were not members of the kolhosp.

Q. And you said, and I took it down directly, that they suffered and died just as much as anyone else.

A. Yes, and I keep emphasizing that over 90 per cent of the people entered these kolhosps. These were the majority of the people that were dying of famine.

As in our khutir, out of 64 homesteads, only four remained independent; all of the others became members of the kolhosp.

Q. And similarly, co-operating with the authorities as an activist, as your neighbour did, that didn't guarantee your survival, either?

A. Yes, all of those who co-operated, whether voluntarily or involuntarily; it was my understanding they were always forced to co-operate. They died of starvation just like those who refused to co-operate.

Q. Now, Mr. Chmilenko, you're a witness for the petitioner and it's one of the theses of the petitioner, as put forward in their opening statement, that an explanation of the purpose of the deliberate famine was to crush resistance to the Soviet regime, to Soviet collectivization. Can you explain to us how that thesis accords with what you've testified to; namely that people who co-operated were equally starved and equally crushed whether they co-operated by entering the collective farm or as activists.

A. Those who co-operated in the search and seizure, the Ukrainians who co-operated, most of them were forced to co-operate, did die of hunger; but not one of the representatives from the rayon of those 25,000 died of hunger.

Q. Thank you. Those are my questions.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. I think it is time for a recess but I take it that the witness will remain in the hall and be available in case we would like to put questions.

MR. LIBER: Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT: Yes, okay. Then we take a recess.

(Recess. Upon resuming ..)

PRESIDENT: We resume the proceedings, and there are a couple of questions that will be coming from the Commission. Please turn the floor over to Prof. Humphrey.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you, thank you, Mr. President. I was wondering whether in your school, during the famine, whether any reasons were given for the famine.

A. At school, neither in 1932 nor in 1933, did anyone ever mention the famine.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you. Tell me what were you taught in school at that time?

A. One of the characteristics of our school is that we

had no notebooks or clean paper. We were given library books and expected to write in those. In addition to normal school subjects, such as language and mathematics, much attention was given to the wonderful party and the great leader of the party, Stalin.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you. Now, one more question. You've told us that you were 10 or 11 years old at the time of the famine. Now, with reference to the things you've been telling us about, your evidence earlier, what I would like to know is how much of this was perceived at the time and how much did you learn afterwards? For example, I'll give you an example. You told us something about the remuneration of members of the collective farms; you said they had no salaries, that they had a system of, I think, work days or something, and that the taxes were so heavy that at the end of the year there was nothing remaining. Now, when did you learn about that, for example?

A. Most of what I have said today I know from experience from that time. Of the taxes, of the pay systems, of the collecting of the grains, I remember that this happened in my home; I heard my parents discussing it. I had friends who were my contemporaries, I was in their homes; I heard their families discussing the problems

they were encountering.

Therefore, even though I was only 10 or 11, I was certainly old enough to remember, and the experiences of that period that I tell about, I remember from that period.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you very much.

A. In terms of the collective farm pay, the kolhosp pay which you asked about, I remember that very well because that system continued up to the war. The kolhosp members were never paid during the year; it was at the end of the year that they received their distributions and this system did remain until the war.

I also entered an agricultural institute and there I studied this system. I studied socialist agriculture so I was aware of this system.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Draper.

PROF. DRAPER: Witness, when did you, what age were you when you went to that institute?

A. In 1937. I was 15.

PROF. DRAPER: The worst year of the famine was 1933; is that correct?

WITNESS: Correct.

PROF. DRAPER: But you were then 11 years old?

WITNESS: Correct.

PROF. DRAPER: Did you understand what was going on?

WITNESS: Quite well.

PROF. DRAPER: How was that?

WITNESS: I understood very well.

PROF. DRAPER: Not so much know but understand.

A. Yes, I did.

PROF. DRAPER: At the age of 11, you were able to understand what was going on in regard to the agricultural policy in the country around you?

A. I did understand because it was easy to understand. Our lands, our holdings, everything was confiscated and put into a socialist system. Furthermore, there came out an edict about socialist ownings and socialist property, and we knew these were not things that were available to us. Also in school these things were taught, the socialist system was being taught.

There was an edict, a law about the untouchable social ownership and punishment for breaking this law was death.

PROF. DRAPER: But you were aware of that situation at the age of 11?

A. Yes.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: I would like to put a question to you concerning the situation when you were evicted from, when your family was evicted from its premises. You said that, if I recall it correctly, that people were forbidden to house those who had been evicted as kulaks. What is the basis for this statement? How do you know that they were forbidden? How can you tell that they were not simply fearful from being associated with those who had been singled out for this special treatment?

A. This was not written down but there was this kind of a law. The activists who came to evict the family, who came to evict my mother, said anyone who accepts these families will be treated the same way. In other words, it was told by the representatives who were doing these actions.

PRESIDENT: Does this mean that the activists could perhaps be bragging or overstating or simply enjoying the situation to make themselves more important?

A. No, these activists had full rights to evict these families. They had no responsibilities in front of any other government body for their actions. Therefore, because they had full rights, they didn't have to exaggerate their rights.

PRESIDENT: This may be correct but it doesn't prevent them from exaggerating their rights.

WITNESS: It was - they can do, but why they don't did that, God only knows. Probably there would be so many people on the street, and specially in the, or they might be was busy some other duty that they have to do.

PRESIDENT: Well, I take it that the formal order should really be that you put this in Ukrainian, and I, if you get it, and then Mrs. Temple provides me with a translation, and if you find fault with the translation, you just tell her. However, I think that I can move to the next thing.

In school, as you tell it, evidently there was a class of - what? - originally some - there was a school of originally - what? - some 50 pupils? And when the difficult days came, it dwindled to half a dozen or so. Is that correct?

A. The explanation that I gave was that from my khutir, my little village, 40 students attended the school. And after the famine, when we enrolled in school at the beginning of September of 1933, only two children from my khutir returned to school. This was not a class. There were, there was class A and B in the first grade, class A and B in the second grade. These students from

my khutir belonged to several of these classes but --

PRESIDENT: So this was a big --

A. This was a big school, yes.

WITNESS: A big school.

PRESIDENT: And you said that you were taught the socialist system in school.

A. Yes.

PRESIDENT: At what age were the pupils being taught the socialist system?

A. From about the second grade, as long as you attended the school.

PRESIDENT: And what does that make in age brackets?

A. We began school at seven, so by second grade we should have been nine, 10.

PRESIDENT: The teaching that was provided in school, did that read the contents of the edicts and the ukazes directly or was it simply conveyed in a roundabout way?

A. They did not read the ukazes directly but there was a large system of teaching about the superiority of the socialist system over the capitalist, and this was the basis that they used to teach us.

PRESIDENT: Did this convey an understanding of what was in the ukazes?

A. Yes, the ukazes that had to do with the social lifestyle, they did make us aware of them.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Did they, did this teaching include also edicts from the communist party?

A. The ukazes of the communist party were not separated from the ukazes of the Supreme Soviet in terms of the socialist system. There --

PRESIDENT: They made an integrated whole?

A. They made a, they were integrated.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well, no more questions. Well, in such case, I'm happy to thank you for your evidence and you're released.

WITNESS: Okay. You're welcome.

TESTIMONY OF MARIA WOSHAKIWSKY
(Translated by Mrs. Laryssa Temple)
November 1, 1988.

MR. LIBER: The next witness that we'd like to present is Maria Woshakiwsky.

PRESIDENT: Please come forward.

MR. LIBER: Mrs. Woshakiwsky will also require the assistance of an interpreter.

PRESIDENT: Mrs. Woshakiwsky, will you please repeat after me - it's an eyewitness?

MR. LIBER: That's correct, sir.

PRESIDENT: -- the following affirmation. (Witness affirms.) Thank you. The witness is yours.

Direct examination by Mr. Liber:

Q. Thank you, sir. Mrs. Woshakiwsky, would you please tell us your date of birth and where you were born?

A. I was born October 28th, 1915, in the village of Sukhy Jelanec, Novo Odesky rayon, in the Mykolajiv oblast.

Q. Is that in Ukraine?

A. Yes, Ukraine.

Q. Can you tell me the size of the village in which you were born and lived?

A. It was rather a large village, according to my recollection. Approximately 700 homesteads; approximately 3,000 population.

Q. Can you tell me the, the distribution of wealth in the village?

A. Our village, the main, the main work of people in our village was agriculture. The land was very fertile.

Q. Were the villagers divided into groups or classes, depending on their economic worth?

A. According to my memory, the majority of our village was middle class. All of the really large landholders had been destroyed by this period. The villagers were divided into the kurkuli, kulaks; the seredniaki, the middle; and the bedniaky, the poorer class.

Q. And what were your father's landholdings at that time?

A. My father had eight hectares of land which was granted to him during the NEP period by the authorities. For four people, eight hectares of land.

Q. And did he have livestock?

A. Yes, he had cows, horses, pigs, sheep, some birds.

Q. In what category would you place your father, of the three you just named a minute ago?

A. We were considered seredniaki, according to the amount of land we had.

Q. And can you tell me what your understanding was of the definition of kurkuli?

A. The kurkuli in our area were those who were prosperous, who had more land. In reality, these were good Ukrainian peasants who handled agriculture very well and lived well as a result. Possibly they might have had some assistance in their work but it was said that they were usurping, that they were using others.

Q. Well, was there any, in the definition, as you understood, of kurkuli, was there any amount of land that they had or were there any other characteristics that classified them as such?

A. At that time, land had been apportioned on a per person basis. I am uncertain as to how people got to where they had more land; possibly by working harder. It was not that everybody was very equal.

Q. Now, did you recognize or appreciate any changes taking place in your village starting in approximately 1928?

A. In 1928 there were absolute changes. There was the change of system. During the NEP period people worked individually. After 1928, all holdings were to become collective. This was not a part of the understanding of our peasantry.

Q. And are you telling us then that collectivization started at approximately that time?

A. In 1928 it was just preparation for a collectivization. It actually did not happen until 1929 and 1930. Also

at this time they initiated the class definition system. The kurkuli were exiled to Siberia, and the poor people had no choice but to step into the collective system.

Q. And what was your father's position as to collectivization?

A. Although my father belonged to the middle class, he began to be persecuted just like the more prosperous peasants. He received the taxes and the grain requisition quotas. My father very strongly resisted collectivization and never once went into the collective farm.

Q. Were the grain requisitions imposed on your father greater than they were on people who were members of collective farms?

A. There were a few individual homesteads that did not enter the collectives, and these were taxed extremely heavily. My father tried in all ways to pay these taxes but after a while was unable.

Q. And when he was no longer able to pay these taxes, what happened?

A. There were special commissions and they came to our home. The commissions were made up of komsomol, the committee of communist youth, and rayon representatives. They demanded all of the food we had. My father insisted that he had none, and asked what kind of government is it that has to borrow from the peasantry, that has to extract from the peasantry absolutely everything they had. My father had hidden some food.

When the commission came and began searching, they took everything but it was not just to take the grain. It was to destroy this peasant, to take everything away from this peasant who was resisting collectivization.

One of the komsomol members found some grain which my father had buried. When my father saw the grain being carried away, he jumped at the young man and retrieved it. The komsomol member hit my father very hard and my father was unconscious. This happened many times, not only to my father.

I remember the name of that particular activist; his name was Hudyma. And later I learned from my mother that the peasants chopped off his arm with an axe, this Hudyma.

My father became very ill as a result of this. I cannot say here today that he died as a result but he never got well. He died in 1934 at the age of 48.

Q. Pani Woshakiwsky or Mrs. Woshakiwsky, please, would you help me out here. Did you continue to go to school after your family had been dispossessed?

A. My father sent me to Mykolajiv to live with my uncle, and study, after I completed school in my village.

Q. And did you eventually finish school, living with your uncle?

A. I went to Mykolajiv and completed seventh grade in Mykolajiv. From there I instituted, I entered the

Institute of Pedagogy because at that time there was an absolute shortage of teachers.

Q. Please, Mrs. Woshakiwsky, try and answer the questions so that we can get through this. Now, did you then, after you finished the Institute of Pedagogy, did you then begin to teach somewhere?

A. Yes, when I graduated from Teachers' College, I was sent to teach in the village of the Rozso Khovatka, Khmelivsky rayon, in the Kirovohradska oblast.

Q. While you were at school at the institute, did you receive rations?

A. We did not receive separate rations. There was a cafeteria in the school and they did make a poor kind of soup there for us.

Q. Then when you obtained this teaching position, did you then receive rations?

A. When I began teaching, it was the fall, September of 1932, and to the end of that year I received a salary but no rations.

Q. Were you able to buy food?

A. Yes, I was able to buy some.

Q. Okay, and then what was your situation for food in 1933?

A. By December of 1932, in the Kirovohradska oblast, I had met my husband and I had returned to the Mykolajiv oblast where I was born.

When I returned to Mykolajiv, we were assigned, my husband and I, to a seven-year school. Mykolajiv itself had already become a totally Russified city and the situation we saw in Mykolajiv was not as devastating.

Q. When was that?

A. January 1933.

Q. And then in the spring of 1933, did you leave that village?

A. In the early spring of 1933 we received a letter from my husband's father, a priest, who was starving in the oblast where he was living. He asked us to come and help him because he was no longer able to help himself.

Q. Now, did you, did you go there on this request, on the receipt of this request?

A. While we were teaching in Mykolajiv, we did receive per person rations; we received 16 kilograms of flour per person, two kilograms of sugar, and one litre of oil. After we received this letter, we saved as much of these rations as we could and we went to the oblast where my husband's father was living.

Q. How did you find conditions in the area where your husband's father was living as compared to the area that you had just left which was Mykolajiv?

A. As I said, the situation in the Mykolajiv oblast was not as devastating. The trip to the Kirovohradska oblast, I saw all of the horror of the situation during this

trip. When I talk about Mykolajiv oblast, I'm only speaking of the immediate Mykolajiv area. It was not as devastating. The trip to Kirovohrad, the train trip, for the first time I saw the people, the swollen people, the people trying to get food for their children. I saw all of these horrors during this trip.

Q. All right.

A. From the train station to the village where my husband's parents lived, you had to take wagons or walk, and it was some distance. Along the way we witnessed terrible scenes. People collapsed by the roadsides, swollen people, dying people, people dying of hunger, children begging for anything they could get. I saw villages almost totally destroyed.

Q. Then in the fall of 1933, did you return back to the school where you had been teaching before?

A. No, I did not return to Mykolajiv. We were, we remained in the Kirovohradska oblast; we just went to teach in a different village.

Q. And how were conditions in that village?

A. After the harvest of 1933, the food situation was not as desperate but people continued dying almost from overeating, as if they had eaten too much.

Q. Thank you. I have no further questions of this witness, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: General counsel.

Cross-examination by Mr. Hunter:

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I have only two or three questions. And perhaps you could ask the witness - I believe these questions are all capable of being answered by yes or no, and perhaps you could ask her just, ask her to answer as briefly as possible.

My first question is this: When you were at the Teachers' College in 1932, was there any discussion of the famine at the Teachers' College?

A. You could not even think of the famine; no one dared mention it.

Q. After you left the Teachers' College, you went to teach yourself, and you took some photographs at that time in 1932.

A. Yes, I do. I have them at home.

Q. You have the photographs still, do you?

A. Yes, I have pictures of us in the school with the children.

Q. Do you have any pictures that would reveal the condition of the children in terms of malnutrition?

A. I don't have any individual photographs; only group photographs of the children.

Q. Thank you. Those are my questions.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Oliver.

PROF. OLIVER: Mrs. Woshakiwsky, these komsomol youths that took the food, what was their nationality or ethnicity?

A. Ukrainian.

PROF. OLIVER: And the activist, Hudyma?

A. Hudyma was also Ukrainian.

PROF. OLIVER: In your recollection, or even in your opinion, were these Ukrainians directed by Russians?

A. Ukraine at this time was no longer independent; it was a part of Russia. Russia dictated to Ukraine. All edicts came from Moscow. Ukraine could do nothing independently.

PROF. OLIVER: Yes, I, but I meant more narrowly. I meant on the theatre of operations, who was behind the taking of the food? Who directed the komsomols?

A. The socialist system, the komsomol were the young people being taught by the socialist system. They were already listening to what the socialist system directed them.

PROF. OLIVER: But she doesn't recall whether there were leaders or squadron leaders or directors in the field above the youths? Were the youths --

A. We all knew that the representatives who were sent in were all several nationalities. There were Russians, there were Jews, there were Ukrainians and others.

The komsomol were under their authority.

PROF. OLIVER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Draper.

PROF. DRAPER: Witness, you have had, you are an educated woman who has qualified as a teacher; is that correct?

WITNESS: Yes.

PROF. DRAPER: And you were 18 years of age in 1933?

A. Yes. The witness would like to explain that this was not a university. This was a technikum, an institute. And even when she started school, she did not start with first grade but with third.

WITNESS: Two and a half, three years, this program.

PROF. DRAPER: Did you understand, when you went to the teachers' institute, the system of agricultural policy in the area of Mykolajiv? Did you understand what was going on?

A. I don't believe that I really understood it. We were simply finding a way to survive.

PROF. DRAPER: Were you required to teach about the great things that Stalin had done, to your pupils when you became a teacher?

A. We had no choice. There was no question that we would not do these things.

PROF. DRAPER: Is the answer yes?

A. The answer is yes.

PROF. DRAPER: What did you tell the pupils about what Stalin was doing for the agriculture?

A. We could not teach what we knew. We had to teach the program, and the program was that this was a new system, that it would be paradise, that in the future all things would be wonderful, and we simply had to get over the beginnings.

PROF. DRAPER: Did your teaching include why the present policy was considered to be necessary by Stalin?

A. Yes, we did have to teach this. We were told to teach this.

PROF. DRAPER: And none of you or the teachers made any objection to this; you had to do it, you say?

A. Yes, we had to do it.

PROF. DRAPER: And you knew it was rubbish?

A. Yes, we did know that but we were afraid to even say that to a father or to a husband.

PROF. DRAPER: Did you understand how the system of grain quotas was working against the peasants eating in, for example, the area of the Ukraine Republic?

A. Yes, I understood.

PROF. DRAPER: Yes.

A. But I could mention nothing.

PROF. DRAPER: Right. Did you teach in Russian or in the Ukrainian language?

A. In the Ukrainian language.

PROF. DRAPER: In the Ukrainian language. Did you know who was in charge of the party organization for agricultural matters in the Republic of the Ukraine?

A. The witness mentioned Petrovski but in terms of the agricultural secretary she did not know.

PROF. DRAPER: Had you ever heard, at that time that you were a teacher, of Postyshev?

A. Postyshev. Yes. I knew about him from the press.

PROF. DRAPER: You knew about him from the press at this time of 1933?

A. The witness does not recall the dates. The witness says 1932.

WITNESS: I am not sure.

PROF. DRAPER: Yes. We appreciate it's difficult to recall exactly the year. How did you come to get out of the Ukraine?

A. We left Ukraine almost at the end of World War Two. We had to leave; we were being persecuted. My husband's father was executed in Mykolajiv in 1937 and the rest of the family was destroyed.

PROF. DRAPER: What was your father executed for?

A. My husband's father was executed.

PROF. DRAPER: I beg your pardon. Your husband's father.

A. My husband's father, by origin, was Greek Bessarabian and he had much family in Bessarabia.

PROF. DRAPER: Why was he executed?

A. He was executed because he attempted to maintain contacts with this family and they charged him with co-operation. Bessarabia was not under Soviet control, and they charged him with co-operation with foreigners.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you. One moment more, one question. Did she ever know, in the years 1930 to 1934, who at the top, at the head of the state and the party organization in the USSR, was giving the decisions on the agricultural policy in the Ukraine?

A. I do not remember the name. She does not remember the name.

PROF. DRAPER: Have you any idea now, today, who was responsible?

A. The witness mentions Kaganovich.

PROF. DRAPER: I'm sorry, would you say it again?

A. Kaganovich.

PROF. DRAPER: That she has learned, that she has learned since she left the Ukraine?

A. No. I knew him earlier.

PROF. DRAPER: While you were --

WITNESS: He was very known.

PROF. DRAPER: While you were in the Ukraine during the years of famine, did you know of the name of Kaganovich in regard to this policy?

A. Yes, from the newspapers.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Humphrey.

PROF. HUMPHREY: I think that at one point you told us that your father sent you to live with your uncle. How was it that he was able to receive you?

A. My uncle worked in a factory in Mykolajiv. He had a place to live and I lived with him. My father at that time was still an individual farmer and he did bring us some food.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Now I'm not sure about this but it seems to me that you said that you and your husband taught in a school in an area that had become Russified, if I can use that expression. Now, in answer to an earlier question, you said that you were teaching in Ukrainian. Did you have Russian-speaking students in that school?

A. Mykolajiv was a very Russified area but it had both Russian speaking and Ukrainian speaking schools. Now this was the period of Ukrainianization and even at recesses we were told to speak Ukrainian with the children. The school that I taught in was a Ukrainian speaking school.

PROF. HUMPHREY: Thank you very much.

PRESIDENT: I would like to put a question concerning the grain tax collection. You were, at the time, in your teens and I wonder in a general way if you were familiar with the grain tax system.

A. Concretely I don't remember. I remember simply that every week they received a notice from the silrada to pay and pay and pay more.

PRESIDENT: Is she sure it was every week?

A. I can't concretely say every week but I remember that it was very often.

PRESIDENT: Could she recall how many crops the land yielded a year?

A. Only once a year.

PRESIDENT: Only once; only one crop a year?

A. One crop, yes.

PRESIDENT: Were they - you said previously that after

your father had refused to join the collective, he was taxed extremely heavy. Now, a grain tax, if I understand it, must be paid out of grain that has been harvested. What does she mean by taxed extremely heavy? Is it a hundred per cent of the harvest, or what does she mean by extremely heavy?

A. The main tax was on grain but there were others. There was a tax, a money tax; there were tax on milk products. You even have to - meat products - and you even had to report how many eggs your chickens laid.

PRESIDENT: Now, in taxation context it is not abnormal that those who are liable to pay the tax understate the amounts out of which they're supposed to pay the tax. And the authorities normally would be aware of this tendency. And at times they would impose a tax rather on what they believed is the correct figure than on the figure that is given by the taxpayers. It seems from your statements here that your father hid grain sometimes successfully, sometimes not. Could you comment upon the situation of understating harvests and over-collecting taxes, and how it worked in practice?

A. It was not a stable, it was not a stable law system. you paid, they turned around and placed another tax. It was not a stable government system as we

understand it here. And because of that, there were no norms. It was simply, they were at whims; they were not necessarily norms.

PRESIDENT: Is she sufficiently familiar with the system as it was, to state this for a truth?

A. It depended on the director of the particular system; it depended on the local authorities. Of course, they received directives but they continued to do as they pleased.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. In such case we break for lunch.

TESTIMONY OF ANASTASIA VOSKRESSK

[Translated by Mrs. Lavinia Temple]

November 1, 1988.

PRESIDENT: And we are then prepared to proceed.

It's half past 4:00. The next witness will be much

cast be?

MR. LIBERA: If I can just have one minute, I have two

more survivor witnesses. One comes from Rochester,

New York, and the other comes from New Jersey. And

it's just a question of which one will be least

inconvenienced by staying overnight.

PRESIDENT: Well, you are anticipating - you are

anticipating that they will, we will not be able to

finish by 5:00?

MR. LIBERA: I'll do my best.

PRESIDENT: And does the - is one witness available

tomorrow morning?

MR. LIBERA: They're both available tomorrow morning;

it's just a question of which one, if we could get through

with one tonight, that would --

PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, in such case, you're most

familiar with what they have to say and the circumstances,

so you please suggest.

MR. LIBERA: All right. Well then, if there's the case

TESTIMONY OF BENJAMIN NESENJUK
(Translated by Mrs. Laryssa Temple)
November 1, 1988.

PRESIDENT: And we are then prepared to proceed. It's half past 4:00. The next witness will in such case be?

MR. LIBER: If I can just have one minute, I have two more survivor witnesses. One comes from Rochester, New York, and the other comes from New Jersey. And it's just a question of which one will be least inconvenienced by staying overnight.

PRESIDENT: Well, you are anticipating - you are anticipating that they will, we will not be able to finish by 5:00?

MR. LIBER: I'll do my best.

PRESIDENT: And does the - is one witness available tomorrow morning?

MR. LIBER: They're both available tomorrow morning; it's just a question of which one, if we could get through with one tonight, that would --

PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, in such case, you're most familiar with what they have to say and the circumstances, so you please suggest.

MR. LIBER: All right. Well then, if that's the case,

I'd like to take them out of order then and - I'd like to take them out of order, and I'd like to have the witness scheduled to testify last, Benjamin Nesenjuk testify tonight.

PRESIDENT: Nesenjuk. Okay, please, is he present?

MR. LIBER: And Mrs. Temple.

MR HUNTER: Mr. Liber, what number is that, what tab?

MR. LIBER: He's, he's tab nothing. It should be 11 but there's no tab for him.

MR. HUNTER: Is there no affidavit?

MR. LIBER: Yes.

PRESIDENT: What tab?

MR. LIBER: It's, there's no tab, sir; it should be 11 but there's no number on it.

MR. HUNTER: Oh, I'm sorry. Nesenjuk. I have it. Thank you.

MR. LIBER: Nesenjuk, that's N-e-s-e-n-j-u-k.

PRESIDENT: Okay. You are Mr. Benjamin Nesenjuk?

WITNESS: That's right.

PRESIDENT: Will you please then repeat after me. (Witness affirms.) Thank you. Mr. Liber, the witness is yours.

Direct examination by Mr. Liber:

Q. Mr. Nesenjuk, when were you born?

A. I was born October 26th, 1917.

Q. And would you give us the name of the village and the rayon or the village and oblast in which you were born and raised?

A. It was the village of Kheylovo, Kheylovo, Popeliansky rayon, oblast of Zhytomyr.

Q. And can you tell us the size of that village?

A. Approximately 300 homesteads.

Q. And how many people would that be?

A. Approximately 1,200 to 1,300.

Q. And were the families in that village designated as either bidnyaks, seredniaks or kurkuli?

A. Our village was divided into kurkuli, kulaks, pre-kurkuli, which is under-kulaks; seredniaki and bidnyaki.

Q. And can you tell me how many were classified as either kulaks or under-kulaks?

A. Three families were kulaks; under-kulaks were approximately five to six families.

Q. And could you tell us what your understanding is of the definition of kulak?

A. Kurkuli, the kulaks were those who lived better, in a wealthier manner.

Q. And was this a fairly flexible definition? In other words, was it expanded from time to time or was it fairly strictly applied?

A. In different rayons they took a different approach to this.

Q. And how was your father classified?

A. My father was a kulak.

Q. And what was the, the government, the local government structure?

A. Head of the silrada, the village council, a secretary, and other elected authorities.

Q. And who were these people that formed the council, the head of the council, the secretary and the other elected authorities? Were they local people or did they come from somewhere?

A. At the time when I was in my village, they were still local people.

Q. When did you leave your village?

A. In 1929.

Q. All right. And why did you leave in 1929?

A. We were dekulakized and we were to be sent to Siberia. There were three families like that. My father first sent me away and then escaped himself in order not to be sent to Siberia.

Q. And by this time was he dispossessed of his property?

A. Not by 1929.

Q. When was he dispossessed?

A. I have to answer that question in two parts. The first time my father was dispossessed during the revolution. The second time in 1929, they chased us out of our home only in what we had on.

Q. And where did you go from there?

A. My father sent me to Kiev.

Q. Once you had been dekulakized, as you put it, or, were you then entitled to go to school?

A. I was in school in my village but to the seven-year school I was no longer allowed to attend it because I was the son of a kulak.

Q. So then you moved to Kiev and who did you live with in Kiev?

A. My brother was studying at the university; I stayed with him and I attended school there.

Q. And how, how many years did you go to school in Kiev?

A. Four years.

Q. And that would be 1929 to 1932, then?

A. In 1933 I finished the seven-year school and later I went to evening school.

Q. Now, when you were living in Kiev and going to school in 1930, can you tell me what living conditions were

like? That is did you have rations and were you able to feed yourself?

A. In 1930 everyone there had food rations. I had food rations. There was very little food but you could live on it.

Q. And do I take it your brother had similar rations?

A. My brother was already a teacher. Therefore, the system was graded. He was allowed 400 grams of bread; I was allowed 100 grams of bread as his ward.

Q. And then in addition to the rations that you got, what else did you get to eat? Did you get anything at the school?

A. At school I did get soup for lunch, and in the evenings I would leave school quickly in order to attend the young pioneers because they also served some food.

Q. And then during the following years, 1930 to 1932, can you tell me how you fared? In other words, was there an increase, decrease in your rations, or did they stay the same?

A. The ration system was lessened.

Q. And can you tell me what your observations were of people in Kiev during those years, 1930, 1931, 1932?

A. The witness asks for clarification.

Q. Well, what did the people look like and did it appear to you that perhaps they were suffering from some problems

that were universal through the city?

A. In general the people were all hungry. Of course, the authorities did not have food shortages. Those who worked in heavy industry had more food; also the intelligentsia and the teachers had more food. But the general public was hungry.

Q. During the time that you were in Kiev in 1930, '31 and '32 and into '33, did you get back to your village at all?

A. No.

Q. So you're not in a position to tell us what conditions were like in, in your village in those years?

A. I can only tell you what conditions were like after 1942.

Q. And in 1933 when you were in Kiev, in 1932 and 1933, did you see any evidence of people dying?

A. The first time I saw a corpse, someone who had actually died of hunger, was in March of 1933 when they began selling commercial bread.

Q. And did you see evidence of people dying after that?

A. I saw many corpses. They lay throughout the streets. And during the nights, when I stood in the line-ups for the commercial breads, the large platform wagons would come around; the corpses were tossed on these wagons and taken away.

Q. And who would be the people that would be gathering

p the corpses?

A. They were ordinary workers; this was their job.

Q. And then in 1935 did you have occasion to see your village?

A. I had no more close family in the village and I wanted no contact with my village because I did not wish to be relieved from my position in Kiev should they discover who I was in Kiev, that I was from that village.

Q. I have no further questions of this witness.

PRESIDENT: Prof. Hunter.

Cross-examination by Mr. Hunter:

Q. Thank you. I just have two questions. You referred in your evidence, Mr. Nesenjuk, to the, there being approximately three families of kulaks in your village and five or six under-kulaks. Are under-kulaks the same as sub-kulaks

INTERPRETER: I'm ry, but I think that refers to translation, the question. What I referred to as under-kulaks was translation. I could have said sub-kulaks. So I think, I can clarify that.

MR. HUNTER: Thank you.

A. According to the answer, the under-kulaks, sub-kulaks were those who were slightly wealthier than the seredniaki. They were also dekulakized but they were not exiled.

Q. Thank you. And in 1930, I believe the witness had a friend named Boris Kassiuk?

A. Boris Kassiuk, yes.

Q. And his father was the secretary to the communist party in the area?

A. Yes, he was.

Q. And what happened to him, to the father?

A. I ran into my friend, Boris Kassiuk, in 1934 and I saw that he looked impoverished. I asked about his condition and he told me at the time that his father had been shot by a firing squad for being a Ukrainian communist.

Q. So as secretary to the local communist party, his father was a Ukrainian?

A. Yes, he was Ukrainian.

Q. And, I'm sorry, I didn't quite get the reason why he was executed.

A. I know only what his son told me. His son told me that as a Ukrainian nationalist communist he was shot by a firing squad.

At that time, very many people were being shot by firing squads.

Q. Thank you. Those are my questions.

PRESIDENT: Questions from the Commission? Prof. Draper.

PROF. DRAPER: I believe you returned to your village

in 1936; is that correct?

A. I returned in 1942.

PROF. DRAPER: In '42.

A. In '42, 1942.

PROF. DRAPER: What did he find of his village?

A. When I returned to my village, conditions were normalized because this was already during the German occupation. I did find out who had died during the famine and I did find out about cannibalism during the famine.

The 1935-36 visit refers to a different village where he was at a resort, visiting a resort.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you. Could he tell me about that village in 1936?

A. I was, I was visiting a vacation, a vacation resort and there was a worker in the kitchen, and a dog ran by. When it came by, she said how did that dog remain. When I questioned her why, she said that all of the dogs and the cats had been eaten and very few remained. I asked about which village; she told me, and then I went to visit this village.

PROF. DRAPER: And what did you find?

A. I walked through one street of this village. All of the buildings were decrepit; there were weeds throughout;

the doors and windows were broken out. There were only maybe five families remaining in these buildings. Everything else was overgrown.

PROF. DRAPER: This was 1936?

A. 1935.

PROF. DRAPER: I beg your pardon. 1935. Were there any people living there? Just five families, you say?

A. In 1935, approximately, only five families.

PROF. DRAPER: Were all the other homesteads empty then?

A. I did not visit the entire village. I walked through only one street. I could not look at anymore of this and I left.

PROF. DRAPER: Were other people living there, fresh people?

A. In 1936 my friend visited the same vacation resort and I asked him to visit this village. He did and when he returned, he told me the village had been repopulated with Russians.

PROF. DRAPER: That's non Ukraines?

A. Non Ukrainians.

PROF. DRAPER: Thank you very much. Thank you, witness.

PRESIDENT: Let me put one question to you. It seems

that when you were forced to leave your home and went to Kiev, you succeeded to get yourself into school and receive some kind of schooling there; is that right?

A. Yes.

PRESIDENT: And do I understand it correctly that you had an anonymous existence or, at least, that there was no identity control so that you could survive in the school without ever being identified with one who shouldn't be there?

A. I had received a very good report card from the director in my school in the village. In Kiev they did not question children very much and did not try very hard to identify.

PRESIDENT: So this report card was really his passport through Russia?

A. At that time, yes.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. Well, if there are no more questions, would it be the best, in the best interest of the proceedings to terminate the session now?

MR. LIBER: Yes, yes. The witness, the remaining witness is going to stay overnight in any event so that we have no difficulty in having him here tomorrow morning.

PRESIDENT: Thank you. In such case the session is adjourned.