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— Ukraine and the Ukrainian People: ~~Read.~~

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# UKRAINE AND THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE



# UKRAINE

## **CAPITAL:**

Kiev (Ukrainian: Kyiv), population 2,297,000 in 1983.

## **TERRITORY:**

232,000 square miles. Ukraine is bordered by the Black Sea on the South, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania on the west and southwest, and by Byelorussia and Russia on the north and northeast.

## **POPULATION:**

Approximately 50,000,000 (about 75% Ukrainian, with Russian, Jewish and Polish minorities).

## **HISTORY:**

The first period of Ukrainian statehood lasted from the ninth through the thirteenth centuries, when Ukraine was known as Rus'. During this era of vigorous activity Ukraine accepted Christianity (in 988) and developed close ties with the rest of Europe. Following the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century, parts of Ukraine came under Polish-Lithuanian rule. In the mid-seventeenth century, however, the Ukrainian Cossacks created their own state and managed to maintain it until the end of the eighteenth century, when Eastern Ukraine was finally absorbed into the expanding Russian Empire. During the nineteenth century, the Ukrainian national movement in the Russian Empire and Austria-Hungary (Galicia, Bukovyna, and Transcarpathia) stimulated a Ukrainian cultural and political revival. Writers such as Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko raised Ukrainian literature to new heights. The Tsarist Russian government carried on intense suppression of the Ukrainian renewal, even banning printing in the Ukrainian language. With the collapse of the Russian Empire, a popularly-elected congress, the Ukrainian National Republic, and its successors fought both Bolshevik and monarchist Russian imperialism. In the formerly Austro-Hungarian Ukrainian lands, the Western Ukrainian Republic was declared on November 1, 1918, but was immediately attacked by Poland. After the loss of the war of independence, the Ukrainian lands were annexed by the Soviet Union, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. Following a short period of concessions in Soviet Ukraine, the Communists persecuted Ukrainian patriots. Repression culminated in 1933, when Stalin engineered a famine which caused the death of seven million Ukrainian villagers.



The Poles and Rumanians also oppressed their Ukrainian population.

The Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union brought massive destruction and loss of human life, with Ukraine trapped between two totalitarian dictatorships. Following the Soviet annexation of Western Ukraine after World War II, guerrilla resistance continued into the 1950's.

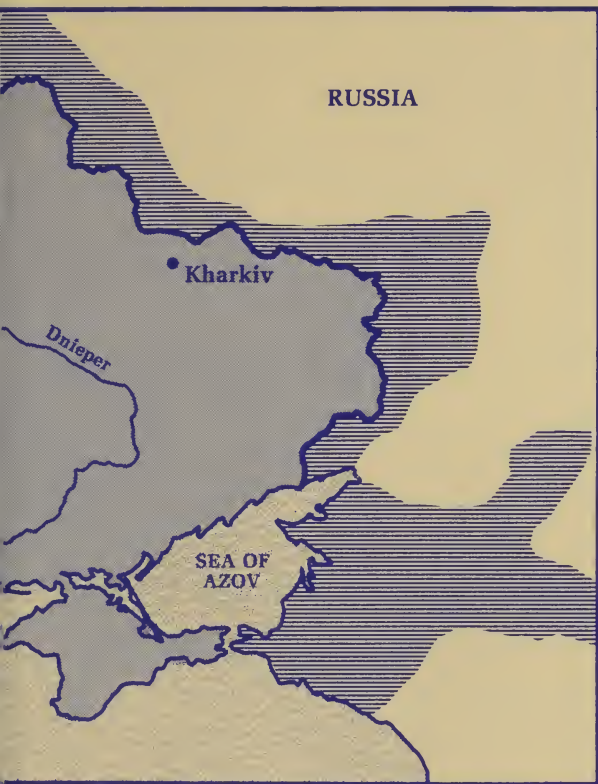
At present, Ukrainian rights are defended by scores of dissidents—intellectuals and cultural activists who criticize the Soviet regime for its policy of Russification. Almost half of all political prisoners in the USSR are Ukrainians.

#### **PRESENT POLITICAL STATUS:**

Although Ukraine has its own officially separate Soviet government and is a founding member of the United Nations, the Ukrainian SSR has almost no real autonomy.

#### **NATURAL RESOURCES AND ECONOMY:**

Ukraine, known as "the bread basket of Europe" for its natural fertility and wheat production, also has huge quantities of coal and iron, as well as substantial



reserves of oil, natural gas and various strategic minerals. Ukraine is highly industrialized, with heavy industry concentrated in the Donets Basin and Kryvyi Rih regions. If independent, Ukraine would be one of the major economic powers in the world.

#### **MOST IMPORTANT CITIES:**

Kiev, Kharkiv, Odessa, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Poltava, Chernihiv, Chernivtsi, Uzhhorod.

#### **UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE:**

Ukrainian is the native language of over 40 million people, which makes it the second-largest of the Slavic group of Indo-European languages. Modern literary Ukrainian employs its own version of the Cyrillic alphabet with 33 characters.

#### **UKRAINIAN CHURCHES:**

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church is dominant in Central and Eastern Ukraine, while the Ukrainian Catholic Church is dominant in Western Ukraine. Protestant groups such as the Ukrainian Baptist Church and Ukrainian Evangelical Alliance are also active.

All Ukrainian churches are severely persecuted in the USSR, and the Ukrainian Orthodox and Catholic Churches have forcibly been incorporated into the Russian Orthodox Church.

### **THE UKRAINIAN STUDIES FUND (USF) AND THE HARVARD UKRAINIAN RESEARCH INSTITUTE (HURI)**

The Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute was created in 1973 through the joint efforts of leading Ukrainian scholars in the West and the Ukrainian Studies Fund, a non-profit, fund-raising organization representing the Ukrainian community in America. The Institute and the USF promote every aspect of Ukrainian studies. Their activities include the publication of a monograph series and a scholarly journal, the development of the Ukrainian collection in the Harvard library system, the training of young scholars and the yearly organization of a Ukrainian summer school at Harvard. Their offices are located at 1583 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

For more detailed information on Ukraine consult the following sources (in English):

UKRAINE: A CONCISE ENCYCLOPEDIA, 2 vols., Toronto, 1968-71.

UKRAINE: A BRIEF HISTORY by R. Szporluk. Detroit, 1982.

UKRAINE, 1917-1921: A STUDY IN REVOLUTION, ed. Taras Hunczak, Cambridge, 1977.

UKRAINIAN NATIONALISM by J. Armstrong. New York, 1980.

USF and HURI-sponsored series on the 1933 Famine.

HARVARD UKRAINIAN STUDIES, the journal of the Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University (volume 1 appeared in 1977).

Based on

UKRAINE—A CONCISE ENCYCLOPEDIA  
University of Toronto Press

Compliments of

HARVARD UNIVERSITY—UKRAINIAN STUDIES FUND



