

SCHOLARSHIP

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SCHOLARSHIP

Introduction

The Scholarship section presents a broad selection of views on the famine by prominent scholars in North America, Europe, Ukraine, and Russia. Earlier works were usually based on eyewitness and survivor testimony; more recent writings are based largely on once-secret Soviet government and Communist Party documents that have supplemented the accounts of eyewitnesses and survivors. We have removed footnotes from the excerpts (with one exception) to save space.

The section opens with an article by the pioneering American scholar James Mace, who devoted much of his life and career to researching the Holodomor as genocide. The article, published in 1984 to much controversy, offers a summary of his views. Robert Conquest's *Harvest of Sorrow* details the Stalin regime's attack on Ukrainian intellectuals and civic leaders in the years 1929–32 and the resistance of Ukraine's communist leaders, especially Mykola Skrypnyk, a long-time Bolshevik who supported Ukrainian political and cultural autonomy. Liudmyla Hrynevych's article demonstrates that national sentiment was widespread in Ukraine before and during the famine and that it colored Ukrainian perceptions of Stalin's policies.

The section continues with a selection from the work of Terry Martin, who argues that the famine had a national dimension, but, like R. W. Davies, Stephen G. Wheatcroft, and Viktor Kondrashin, disputes the view that it was genocide. As Kondrashin writes, "Stalin's famine of 1932–33 was a general tragedy of the peoples of the former USSR, a tragedy of all the Soviet countryside, a crime of the Stalinist regime." The writings of these prominent scholars from the United States, Great Britain, Australia, and Russia provide an excellent counterpoint to the views of other experts in this section.

Four contributions by the French historian Nicholas Werth, the Italian historian Andrea Graziosi, the Ukrainian historian Yurii Shapoval, and the Canadian political scientist David Marples treat the Ukrainian-Kuban famine as distinctive within the context of the pan-Soviet famines of 1931–33. In contrast to Conquest and Mace, Werth, Graziosi, and Shapoval draw on recently uncovered archival sources. As Werth concludes, the "specifically anti-Ukrainian assault makes it possible to define the totality of intentional political actions taken from late summer 1932 by the Stalinist regime against the Ukrainian peasantry as genocide." Marples reaches the same conclusion as the others by means of a variable-centered political science analysis.

The question of death tolls is raised by two demographic studies, one by Oleh Wolowyna, an American of Ukrainian descent, and the other by the French demographer Jacques Vallin and his colleagues at the Institut national d'études démographiques in Paris. Wolowyna discusses the difficulties of establishing demographic losses caused by the Holodomor and concludes that they amounted to 4–5 million in Soviet Ukraine in 1932–34. Vallin and his colleagues arrive at a figure of 4.6 million.

Of particular historiographic interest is the selection by the senior Ukrainian historian Stanislav Kulchytsky. He began studying the Holodomor when he still shared the official viewpoint, but, after examining relevant archival documents, he became increasingly convinced that the famine was genocide. In his book *The Price of the Great Turning Point* (1991), Kulchytsky concluded that "Famine and genocide in the countryside were preprogrammed." His article ends with an assessment of the reasons why Russian historians and the Russian political establishment are opposed to the genocide definition of the Holodomor.

James E. Mace, “Famine and Nationalism in Soviet Ukraine,” *Problems of Communism* 33 (May–June 1984). Excerpts, pp. 44–49.

James E. Mace (1952–2004) was an American historian who specialized in Soviet Ukrainian history. He was one of the first Western scholars to focus on the Holodomor as genocide. In 1986–90, Mace served as executive director of the U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine. He was the author of *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918–1933* (1984).

The famine of 1932–33 came about primarily as a result of excessive grain procurements. Since the Ukrainian harvest of 1932 was better than that of the worst NEP year, it is clear that without the forced procurements of grain there would have been no starvation. The procurement quotas that were being imposed by Union authorities on Soviet Ukraine in conjunction with collectivization were clearly discriminatory....

The Ukrainian Party leadership appealed for lower quotas to the delegates from Moscow at the Third All-Ukrainian Party Conference in July 1932. [Lazar] Kaganovich and Viacheslav Molotov listened to one official after another tell of the hardships the quotas had caused. [Stanislav] Kosior, [Mykola] Skrypnyk, and Panas Liubchenko all told of villages where everything had been taken and where there was no longer anything to eat. Molotov responded that the quotas, which had already been lowered by 18 percent from the previous year (to 6.6 million tons), would remain in place, and the Party conference duly included the figure in its resolution. However, Ukrainian warnings about the dire consequences of what Kosior called the “mechanistic” enforcement of quotas, without regard for areas where the harvest had been poor, show that officials on the scene were giving Moscow ample warning of what was to come....

Stalin’s public response was to disbelieve the reports....

Portraits of village life during succeeding months emerge from the files of the Harvard University Refugee Interview Project, which was conducted during the early 1950s. It should be stressed that the interviewers were not particularly interested in the famine and that the information was therefore given without any prompting while the respondents were relating their life experiences. One rather typical account (Case 128) is the following:

“...there was the famine in the Ukraine in 1933. We saw people die in the streets; it was terrible to see a dead man, when I close my eyes I can still see him. We had in our village a small church which was closed for services and in which we played. And I remember a man who came in there; he lay down with his eyes wide open at the ceiling and he died there! He was an innocent victim of the Soviet regime; he was a simple worker and not even a kulak. This hunger was the result of Soviet policy.”

Other accounts are more graphic, as this one by a Russian woman (Case 373): “Well, in 1933–34 I was a member of a commission sent out to inspect wells. We had to go to the country to see that the shafts of the wells were correctly installed, and there I saw such things as I had never seen before in my life. I saw villages that not only had no people, but not even any dogs and cats, and I remember one particular incident: we came to one village, and I don’t think I will ever forget this. I will always see this picture before me. We opened the door of this miserable hut and there...the man was lying. The mother and child already lay dead, and the father had taken the piece of meat from between the legs of his son and had died just like that. The stench was terrific, we couldn’t stand it, and this was not the only time that I remember such incidents, there were other such incidents on our trip...”

Nor were such horrors confined to the countryside. Cannibalism occurred even in the cities, as a worker (Case 513) described: “I remember a case in 1933. I was in Kiev. I was at that time at a bazaar—the bazaar was called the Bessarabian market. I saw a woman with a valise. She opened the valise and put her goods out for sale. Her goods consisted of jellied meat, frozen jellied meat, which she sold at 50 rubles a portion. I saw a man come over to her—a man who bore all the marks of starvation—he bought himself a portion and began eating. As he ate of his portion, he noticed that a human finger was imbedded in the jelly. He began shouting at the woman and began yelling at the top of his voice. People came running, gathered around her and then seeing what her food consisted of, took her to the militsia (police). At the militsia, two members of the NKVD went over to her and, instead of taking action against her, they burst out laughing. ‘What, what, you killed a kulak? Good for you!’ And then they let her go.”....

The All-Union Central Committee weighed in with two decrees, on December 14, 1932, and January 24, 1933, the first demanding that Ukrainization be carried out “properly” and that “Petliurists and bourgeois nationalists” be dispersed, the second declaring that Ukrainian authorities were guilty of laxity in failing to meet the procurement quotas. The January decree was tantamount to Moscow’s taking direct control of the Ukrainian Party apparatus by appointing Pavel Postyshev (a non-Ukrainian former obkom secretary who had been transferred to Moscow some years earlier) as second secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee and obkom secretary in Kharkiv.... This meant placing Ukraine directly under Moscow’s control through the person of Postyshev, who acted as Stalin’s viceroy....

While the published sections of the January decree referred only to the failure of the Ukrainian procurement campaign to meet its quota, Postyshev later indicated that the decree also dealt with nationality policy. Other Soviet officials never contradicted him on this. In any case, a campaign against an initially unidentified Ukrainian national deviation was begun, and it was conducted in a manner reminiscent of the campaign against a “right deviation” that had preceded attacks on Nikolai Bukharin in 1929. On February 28, 1933, a major government reshuffle was announced, transferring Skrypnyk from his post as commissar of education to that of deputy premier and head of the Ukrainian State Planning Commission.... Clearly, a final assault against Skrypnyk was being prepared. This came at the Ukrainian Central Committee’s June plenum. Skrypnyk’s speech was never published, but according to accounts that leaked out, he denied that hitherto loyal communists were guilty of national deviation and of intentionally sabotaging the grain procurement campaign. He asserted that opposition was the inevitable consequence of the policies imposed by Moscow, the restrictions on Ukraine’s autonomy, and the famine, for which he laid the blame squarely at Moscow’s door.

Postyshev’s speech, on the other hand, was published under the telling headline: “We Are Mobilizing the Masses for the Immediate Delivery of Grain to the State.” He defended the compulsory procurements policy and made it clear that it was Skrypnyk who had been the target of his campaign against “national deviations.” He portrayed Skrypnyk as a leader of nationalist heretics, the protector of “nationalistic wreckers” responsible for the inadequate fulfillment of grain procurements. Interestingly, the only specific charge against Skrypnyk in Postyshev’s stream of abuse was Skrypnyk’s advocacy of orthographic changes tending to make Ukrainian spelling more distinct from Russian, something that “served only the annexationist designs of the Polish landlords.”....

Skrypnyk, who committed suicide on July 6, 1933, was no longer alive when Nikolai Popov, a secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee since March 1933, linked the struggle to extract grain to the struggle against Skrypnyk, both apparently being equally necessary to

transform Ukraine into a model Soviet republic: “The task of raising our agriculture cannot be accomplished unless we correct errors which have been permitted in the national question, unless we purge our party, our state, cultural, agricultural, collective-farm and other institutions of bourgeois nationalists, without mobilizing the entire party mass to fight nationalism, without strengthening our efforts to bring the masses up in the spirit of internationalism.... Bolshevik nationality policy, most intimately connected with all our party’s tasks...will be a mighty weapon for the consolidation of Soviet Ukraine as an indivisible part of the Soviet Union.... We face here and now the task of making Soviet Ukraine into a model Soviet republic.”

By then Postyshev had already set about making Soviet Ukraine a model Soviet republic. In March 1933, the Ukrainian deputy secretary of agriculture and 22 others were shot for alleged attempts to sabotage agriculture. Other alleged conspiracies were connected with the old revolutionary Ukrainian parties, the Poles, and the underground Ukrainian Military Organization in Western Ukraine. Virtually all prominent communist dissenters from the past were arrested at this time in what become known as the “Postyshev terror.” Arrests of writers became a wholesale process; and of the 259 Ukrainian writers whose works were published in Soviet Ukraine in 1930, only 36 had their works still printed after 1938.

Visible reminders of Ukraine’s distinctiveness began to disappear. For example, Vasyl Ellan-Blakytyn had been revered as a sort of founding saint of Ukrainian proletarian literature. His statue stood at a principal intersection in Kharkiv—until one day a truck ran into it. The statue was not replaced. As time passed, not only statues but also artistic and architectural monuments to the Ukrainian past either fell prey to trucks or were removed to make way for new projects, many of which never materialized.

In the remaining months of 1933 many of the organizations and individuals that had been central to Ukraine’s intellectual life in the 1920s simply disappeared. Linguists, fiction writers, historians, poets—virtually everyone who had anything to do with creating a distinctly Ukrainian cultural scene in the 1920s—disappeared. Ukrainization became a dead letter. Concessions to Ukrainian national identity came to an end.

Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986). Excerpts, pp. 217–24.

Robert Conquest (b. 1917) is a British-American historian specializing in the history of Stalinism. He is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He is the author of many books, including *The Great Terror: Stalin’s Purge of the Thirties* (1968, rev. ed. 1990, 40th anniversary ed. 2008), *The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (1970), *Inside Stalin’s Secret Police: NKVD Politics, 1936–1939* (1985), and *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (1999), and *The Dragons of Expectation* (2005).

At the same time that Stalin made his move to crush the peasantry in 1929–30, he resumed the attack on the Ukraine and its national culture which had been suspended in the early 1920s....

...A great nation lay under Communist control. But not only was its population unreconciled to the system: it was also true that the representatives of the national culture, and even many Communists, only accepted Moscow’s rule conditionally. This was, from the Party’s point of view, both deplorable in itself and pregnant with danger for the future.

In 1929–30, having crushed the Right, and having embarked on a collectivization and dekulakization policy which hit the Ukraine with especial severity and met the strongest resistance there, Stalin was at last nearly ready to give effect to his hostility to all such centrifugal tendencies.

As early as April 1929, the OGPU was bringing charges of Ukrainian nationalist plotting against small groups. During the year there were public attacks on the most distinguished Ukrainian academics. In July mass arrests took place of some 5,000 members of an alleged underground organization, the Union for the Liberation of the Ukraine (SVU)....

From 9 March to 20 April 1930, a whole cycle of faked cases against Ukrainian personalities began with the set-piece public trial in the Kharkiv Opera House of forty-five alleged members of this organization. They were mostly former political figures of extinct parties, now engaged in work as scholars, critics, writers, linguists, with some students, lawyers, and especially priests, thrown in.

Their leading figure was Academician Serhii Yefremov, a linguistic scholar and lexicographer....

Another was Zinovii Margulis, a Jewish lawyer and member of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The bulk of the other leading figures were academics or writers of the same background...men who had supported the independent Ukrainian Republic: such as the historian Yosyp Hermaize, the writers Mykhailo Ivchenko and Liudmyla Starytska-Cherniakhivska, the linguist Hryhorii Holoskevych, and others....

Confessions had been obtained, by the usual methods, and the accused were sentenced to long jail terms. It was announced in connection with the trial that the linguistic institutes of the Ukrainian Academy had been closed down and a number of scholars arrested. The charges in the SVU trial included, in addition to conspiring to seize power, that of working to make Ukrainian as distinct as possible from Russian. This was, in fact, much the same linguistic aim as that of [Mykola] Skrypnyk and other Ukrainian Communists....

In February 1931, a further series of arrests of leading intellectuals took place—mainly prominent figures who had returned from exile in 1924 or 1925. They had supposedly formed a “Ukrainian National Centre” with the country’s most distinguished figure, the historian [Mykhailo] Hrushevsky, as leader, and [Vsevolod] Holubovych, former Premier of the independent Ukraine, among the major plotters.

...Most of the accused were sent to penal camps, though Hrushevsky himself was merely removed from the Ukraine under house arrest.

These moves were crucial in the assault on Ukrainization. They amounted to the crushing of that old intelligentsia which had become reconciled to the Soviet regime on a programme of Ukrainian cultural identity. In 1931 the Ukrainian Communist intelligentsia in turn came under attack....

This first assault on the Ukrainian intelligentsia preceded the general attack on the peasantry. Stalin clearly understood that the essence of Ukrainian nationhood was contained in the intelligentsia who articulated it, but also in the peasant masses who had sustained it over the centuries. The “decapitation” of the nation by removing its spokesmen was indeed essential.... But Stalin seems to have realized that only a mass terror throughout the body of the nation—that is, the peasantry—could really reduce the country to submission. His ideas about the connection between nationality and the peasantry are clearly put: “The nationality problem is, in its very essence, a problem of the peasantry.” And in fact one of the aims of collectivization in the

Ukraine had been officially stated as “the destruction of Ukrainian nationalism’s social base—the individual land-holdings.”

The SVU “plot” was...extended to the villages. Many village teachers are reported shot in connection with it. In one district the head of the Executive Committee, the District’s chief doctor, and others including peasants were shot as SVU conspirators. And there are scores of such reports.

[Stanislav] Kosior was to sum up after the struggle: ‘the nationalist deviation in the Communist Party of the Ukraine...played an exceptional role in causing and deepening the crisis in agriculture.’ Or, as his Police Chief [Vsevolod] Balytsky is quoted as saying, “In 1933 the fist of the OGPU hit out in two directions. First at the kulak and Petliurist elements in the villages and secondly at the leading centres of nationalism.”

Thus the kulak was blamed as a bearer of nationalist ideas, the nationalist as a sponsor of kulak attitudes. But in whichever capacity the Ukrainian peasant was considered, he had certainly proved particularly troublesome to the regime. Resistance to collectivization is always reported as stronger, or rather more militant, in the Ukraine than in Russia proper....

But it was not only the peasants who were inadequately subdued. The Ukrainian Communists, too, presented obstacles to Stalin. Even in 1929 the Ukrainian Party and Soviet organizations had been particularly stubborn in arguing against unrealistic grain targets, and particularly remiss in discovering kulaks....

In normal circumstances, the Ukraine and the North Caucasus had provided half of the total marketable grain. In 1926, the best harvest before collectivization, 3.3 million tons of grain (21% of the harvest), was taken from the Ukraine. In the good harvest of 1930 it was 7.7 million tons (33% of the harvest); and although the Ukraine only accounted for 27% of the total Soviet grain harvest, it had to supply 38% of grain deliveries.

In 1931 the same 7.7 million tons was demanded of the Ukraine, out of a harvest of only 18.3 million tons; that is, 42% (about 30% of the grain had been lost in the inefficiencies of collective harvesting)....

Only 7 million tons was actually collected. But this already meant that what amounted...to a famine was afflicting the Ukraine in the late spring of 1932: for only an average of c. 250 pounds of grain per capita was left for the Ukrainian rural population.

Needless to say, the lapses produced further Party purges.... Complaints about the whole Ukrainian position, as “disgracefully behind” and so on, became endemic in the central Moscow press. I note fifteen in *Pravda* alone between January and July 1932.

In July the vital decisions were taken which were to lead to the holocaust of the next eight months. Stalin had again ordered a delivery target of 7.7 million tons.... After considerable argument, the Ukrainians finally managed to get the figure reduced to 6.6 million tons—but this too was still far beyond the feasible.

This took place on 6–9 July 1932, at the “Third All-Ukrainian Conference” of the Ukrainian Communist Party, with Molotov and Kaganovich representing Moscow. Kosior opened the Conference. Some areas, he said, were already “seriously short of food”....

Skrypnyk told the Conference frankly that peasants had told him that “we had everything taken from us.” And Kosior, Vlas Chubar, and others also argued that the grain targets were excessive....

However, Molotov called attempts to blame unrealistic plans for the failures “anti-Bolshevik,” and concluded by saying, “There will be no concessions or vacillations in the problem of fulfillment of the task set by the Party and the Soviet government.”....

So, on Stalin's insistence, a decree went out which, if enforced, could only lead to starvation of the Ukrainian peasantry....

Things were already bad in July 1932, and they got worse....

To enforce the decree on "the protection of socialist property"... watchtowers were now erected in the fields....

The towers were manned by guards armed, as a rule, with shotguns.

The first procurements were carried out in August, and in many areas by great effort the norms were met. But this virtually exhausted the countryside....

On 12 October 1932 two senior Russian apparatchiks were sent from Moscow to strengthen the local Party: [Ivan Alekseevich] Akulov, who had been Deputy Head of the OGPU, and [Mendel Markovich] Khataevich, earlier prominent in Stalin's collectivization on the Volga—a portent of more to come.

At the same time a second procurement was announced, though there was now almost nothing available....

People were already dying. But Moscow, far from relaxing its demands, now launched into a veritable crescendo of terror by hunger.

Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001). Excerpts, pp. 302–8.

Terry Martin (b. 1963) is an American historian specializing in Russian, Soviet, and Central European history. He is George F. Baker III Professor of Russian Studies at Harvard University. He is coeditor of *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Building in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (2001).

The National Interpretation of the Grain Requisitions Crisis

[Lazar] Kaganovich completed his second trip to the North Caucasus on November 25 [1932]. At the same time, [Viacheslav] Molotov completed his commission's work in Ukraine and also returned to Moscow. Molotov's commission had presided over an intensification of the grain requisitions terror in Ukraine, only slightly less severe than in Kuban. In the month of November and the first five days of December, under Molotov's supervision, the Ukrainian GPU arrested 1,830 individuals from the leadership of various collective farms. In addition, 327 communists were also arrested. By December 15, approximately 16,000 individuals had been arrested, including 435 Party members and 2,260 collective farm officials. Of these, 108 had been sentenced to be executed. After the return of Kaganovich and Molotov, the Politburo convened on December 14 and issued a secret decree on grain collection in Ukraine and the North Caucasus. This decree was the most important central intervention on nationalities policy since the 1923 decrees that first codified the Soviet nationalities policy. It marked the first time that the Soviet leadership officially declared that the 1923 policy of *korenizatsiia* [indigenization], as implemented in Ukraine and the North Caucasus, had not disarmed nationalist resistance as was intended, but rather had intensified it.

The December 14, 1932 Politburo decree articulated the national interpretation of the 1932 grain requisitions crisis. Ukraine and the North Caucasus were singled out for their lack of vigilance, which had allowed "kulaks, former officers, Petliurites and supporters of the Kuban *rada* [council] to penetrate the collective farm leadership." Likewise, their lack of vigilance empowered "the most evil enemies of the Party, working class and kolkhoz peasantry, the

saboteurs of grain requisition with Party tickets in their pocket.” In both Ukraine and the North Caucasus, the Politburo blamed this lack of vigilance on Ukrainization:

TsK [Central Committee] and Sovnarkom [Council of People’s Commissars] note that instead of a correct Bolshevik implementation of the nationalities policy, in many Ukrainian regions Ukrainization was carried out mechanically, without considering the specifics of each district, without a careful choice of Bolshevik Ukrainian cadres. This made it easy for bourgeois-nationalist elements, Petliurites and others to create a legal cover [*prikrytie*] for their counterrevolutionary cells and organizations.

The verdict on Ukrainization in the North Caucasus was much harsher:

TsK and Sovnarkom instruct the North Caucasus *kraikom* [regional committee] that the light-headed [*legkomyslennaiia*], non-Bolshevik “Ukrainization” of almost half the North Caucasus districts did not serve the cultural interests of the population, and with the total absence of surveillance by *krai* [regional] organs of the Ukrainization of schools and the press, gave a legal form to the enemies of Soviet power for the organization of opposition to Soviet power by kulaks, officers, re-emigrated Cossacks, members of the Kuban *rada* and so forth.

In short, the grain requisitions crisis was the product of resistance by traitors within the soviet and Party apparat, and many of them received their positions due to the policy of Ukrainization. This represented the national interpretation of the grain requisitions crisis.

Three series of events converged to produce this interpretation. First...an anti-*korenizatsiia* hard-line stance that maintained *korenizatsiia* was exacerbating rather than disarming nationalism gradually emerged in response to the perceived defection of national communists such as Oleksander Shumsky to a position of nationalism, the perceived influence of cross-border ethnic ties in causing such defections, as well as the cultural revolution terror campaigns against the national *smenovekhovstvo* [previously anti-Soviet] intelligentsia and the centralizing thrust of the socialist offensive. The December 14, 1932 Politburo decree represented the first central endorsement of the anti-*korenizatsiia* hard-line position that, at least in this one case, *korenizatsiia* had exacerbated rather than contained the threat of nationalist counterrevolution. Second...Ukraine’s effort to annex neighboring RSFSR regions and to serve as the patron of the RSFSR Ukrainians both exacerbated central concerns about Ukrainian national communism and created a perceived political link between the Soviet Union’s two most important grain-growing regions: Ukraine and the North Caucasus. Third, collectivization both elicited more violent resistance in the Soviet Union’s non-Russian border regions, further exacerbating central concerns about national separatism, and resulted in a major political crisis in the fall of 1932 that made the perceived separatist threat in Ukraine intolerable.

The national interpretation, then, was not a cause of the grain requisitions crisis and famine. Rather, it emerged as a consequence of it. Although Ukrainization had lost momentum by 1932, there were no signals in Ukraine that the policy was being called into question in a fundamental way prior to December 14, 1932. In fact, on the eve of that decree, the Ukrainian Commissariat of Education had just launched another campaign to verify the implementation of Ukrainization. Likewise, as noted earlier, *Pravda* published an article in defense of Ukrainization in the North Caucasus only two days before Kaganovich’s commission departed for Rostov. Most strikingly, in the available internal correspondence concerning grain requisitions in Ukraine, the national factor is mentioned only once prior to November 1932. From his letter to Kaganovich, we know that by August 11, Stalin had already linked Ukrainian nationalist infiltration of the Party with the grain requisitions crisis in Ukraine, but not yet with the crisis in

Kuban and the North Caucasus. We have also seen that Kaganovich alluded briefly to counterrevolutionary sabotage by groups from Ukraine in a speech delivered on his arrival in Rostov on November 1. However, aside from that stray comment, Kaganovich overwhelmingly blamed the crisis on the kulaks, the Kuban Cossacks, and rural communists.

The available evidence suggests that the national interpretation emerged in full form and received central sanction after the initial missions of Molotov and Kaganovich to Ukraine and the North Caucasus in early November. Molotov and Kaganovich both returned to Moscow for extensive consultation with Stalin from November 12 to 16. After these meetings, Molotov returned to Ukraine and Kaganovich traveled to both Ukraine and the North Caucasus. During these repeat visits, the Ukrainian question received much greater emphasis. On November 18, Molotov told the Kharkiv Party *aktiv* that, “you must fight with those remnants of bourgeois nationalism in the form of Petliurites and half-Petliurites; one must understand that not only is the internal enemy at work here, but also...the enemy from across the border.” The same day, two Ukrainian TsK decrees both referred to the need to fight the *Petliurovshchina* and “to liquidate kulak and Petliurite nests.” Likewise, as noted earlier, Kaganovich began to emphasize the role of Ukrainian counterrevolutionaries in Kuban. The Ukrainian factor provided a convenient explanation for why Ukraine and the North Caucasus (and, above all, Kuban) were the Soviet Union’s two most delinquent grain-producing regions. Nor was this interpretation unpopular with local communists in the North Caucasus, who eagerly seconded Kaganovich’s attacks on Ukrainian counterrevolutionaries. As we have already seen, they greatly resented Ukrainian attempts to annex their territory and to promote RSFSR Ukrainization. Moreover, they were relieved that central terror was now being deflected somewhat on to national targets. Likewise, the 1933 nationalities terror in Ukraine focused on Ukrainian cultural and educational institutions, as well as on political émigrés from Galicia, and away from rank-and-file communists.

The Politburo’s development of a national interpretation of their grain requisitions crisis in late 1932 helps explain both the pattern of terror and the role of the national factor during the 1932–33 famine. The 1932–33 terror campaign consisted of both a grain requisitions terror, whose primary target was the peasantry, both Russian and non-Russian, and a nationalities terror, whose primary target was Ukraine and subsequently Belorussia. The grain requisitions terror was the final and decisive culmination of a campaign begun in 1927–28 to extract the maximum possible amount of grain from a hostile peasantry. As such, its primary targets were the grain-producing regions of Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and the Lower Volga, though no grain-producing regions escaped the 1932–33 grain requisitions terror entirely. Nationality was of minimal importance in this campaign. The famine was not an intentional act of genocide specifically targeting the Ukrainian nation. It is equally false, however, to assert that nationality played no role whatsoever in the famine. The nationalities terror resulted from the gradual emergence of an anti-*korenizatsiia* hard-line critique combined with the immediate pressures of the grain requisitions crisis in Ukraine and Kuban, whose particularly intense resistance was attributed to Ukrainization. The December 14 Politburo decree formalized this national interpretation and authorized an additional nationalities terror against Ukraine and Kuban. A second Politburo decree, on December 15, formally abolished Ukrainization throughout the entire RSFSR. A third Politburo decree, a day later, extended the nationalities terror to Belorussia as well.

My analysis explains why the 1932–33 grain requisitions terror embraced both Russian and Ukrainian territories and also why the terror was worse in Kuban and Ukraine than in the

Lower Volga. The Lower Volga was visited by an extraordinary Politburo commission headed by Pavel Postyshev in December 1932, which did unleash a wave of terror against both the peasantry and local communists, but the level of terror never reached that of Ukraine and Kuban. By March 1933, as a result of the grain requisitions terror, there were 90,000 individuals in Ukraine's jails and concentration camps, 75,000 in those of the North Caucasus, and 29,000 in those of the Lower Volga. These numbers understate the actual difference, since 30,000 individuals had been transferred out of the North Caucasus camps in January, and Ukraine's camp population had already been reduced in late November.

Above all, my analysis explains why Ukraine and the Kuban were singled out in a January 22, 1933 TsK circular that called for the closing of the Ukrainian and North Caucasus borders to peasant out-migration:

TsK VKP/b/ and Sovnarkom have received information that in the Kuban and Ukraine a massive outflow of peasants "for bread" has begun into Belorussia and the Central-Black Earth, Volga, Western, and Moscow regions. TsK VKP/b/ and Sovnarkom do not doubt that the outflow of the peasants, like the outflow from Ukraine last year, was organized by the enemies of Soviet power, the SRs and the agents of Poland, with the goal of agitation "through the peasantry" in the northern regions of the USSR against the collective farms and against Soviet power as a whole. Last year the Party, Soviet, and Chekist organs of Ukraine were caught napping by this counterrevolutionary trick of the enemies of Soviet power. This year we cannot allow a repetition of last year's mistake. First, TsK VKP/b/ and Sovnarkom order the kraikom, krai executive committee, and OGPU of the North Caucasus not to allow a massive outflow of peasants from the North Caucasus into other regions or the entry into the North Caucasus from Ukraine.

Second, TsK VKP/b/ and Sovnarkom order TsK KP/b/U, the Ukrainian Sovnarkom, as well as [Vsevolod] Balytsky and [Stanislav] Redens not to allow a massive outflow of peasants from Ukraine into other regions or the entry into Ukraine of peasants from the North Caucasus.

Third, TsK VKP/b/ and Sovnarkom order the OGPU of Belorussia and the Central-Black Earth, Middle Volga, Western and Moscow regions to immediately arrest all "peasants" of Ukraine and the North Caucasus who have broken through into the north and, after separating out the counterrevolutionary elements, to return the rest to their places of residence.

Fourth, TsK VKP/b/ and Sovnarkom order the OGPU to give a similar order to the OGPU transport organs.

65Sh. Molotov, Stalin

This directive once again points to Stalin's concern over the political impact of Ukrainian out-migration. It is impossible to determine how many Ukrainian and North Caucasus peasant lives might have been lost due to this directive, but it clearly shows that Ukraine and Kuban were singled out for special treatment specifically because of the national interpretation of the famine....

Conclusion: The Aftermath of the December 1932 Politburo Decrees

In retrospect, it is clear that the December 14, 1932 Politburo decree marked a decisive turning point in the evolution of the Soviet nationalities policy. At the time, however, this was not at all clear. The decree did not condemn Ukrainization wholesale, but rather its "mechanical" implementation and the failure to make "a careful choice of Bolshevik Ukrainian cadres." The

suggested solution was not russification, but rather “serious attention to the proper implementation of Ukrainization” and “the careful choice and education of Bolshevik Ukrainian cadres.” Only time would tell what exactly the shift to “Bolshevik” Ukrainization would mean. It is true that the December 15 Politburo decree abolished Ukrainization throughout the entire RSFSR, and this was an unambiguous policy innovation. However, given the high levels of assimilation among the RSFSR Ukrainians, it could easily have been understood as a single exception that proved the rule (as it in fact was for four years). Moreover, the decree was issued in the midst of a major political crisis, which involved a large-scale year-long terror campaign. That campaign was officially brought to a halt on May 8, 1933. At that point, the December 14 decree could easily have been allowed to lapse, especially since it was never published. This did not occur. Instead, the December 14 decree initiated a series of far-reaching changes in the Soviet nationalities policy, the onset of Soviet ethnic cleansing and the emergence of the category of the “enemy nation”; a fundamental revision, but not abolition, of *korenizatsiia*; a shift from ethnic proliferation to ethnic consolidation, accompanied by an administrative russification of the RSFSR; and, finally, the rehabilitation of the Russians and traditional Russian national culture as part of the process of establishing a revised Soviet national constitution, whose organizing metaphor would be the Friendship of the Peoples.

Liudmyla Hrynevych, “Stalins'ka ‘revoliutsiia zhory’ ta holod 1933 r. iak faktory polityzatsii ukraïns'koï spil'noty” (Stalin’s “Revolution from Above” and the Famine of 1933 as Factors in the Politicization of Ukrainian Society), *Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* (Ukrainian Historical Journal), 2003, no. 5. Excerpts, pp. 50–53, 56–63. Translated by Maksym Motorenko and Bohdan Klid.

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...[T]he determining factors in the politicization of Ukrainian society were the forced collectivization of agriculture initiated by the Stalin leadership at the end of the 1920s and the Holodomor of 1933. This successive “agricultural experiment” of the Bolshevik leadership was at the same time an imperious offensive against the foundations of the very existence of the Ukrainian ethnos, causing it actively to resist the political regime in place to the extent that this was possible, given the existence of the Communist Party dictatorship and total terror....

...[A]ctions of mass protest in Ukraine had their own specificity, which consisted in the closest intertwining of social and national motives.... [A]lmost all the social cataclysms that accompanied Bolshevik rule in Ukraine were assessed by a large section of Ukrainian society through the prism of national feelings and national interests.

In March 1928 the leader of the [Ukrainian] republic’s Party organization, Lazar Kaganovich, speaking at the plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine, had to admit that the beginning of the grain-procurement campaign in Ukraine had caused a “strengthening of chauvinism,” moreover, “not only from the upper strata, but from the lower ones as well.”.... And indeed, such “inconvenient” questions for the rulers as “Where did they take the grain harvested in Ukraine?”; “Why is the grain-growing republic starving now?”; “Who is guilty of the ongoing robbery of the Ukrainian village and the rapid

impoverishment of the town?” were not only being most actively discussed among various strata of the population but also, on the level of social consciousness, were sharply raising the problem of the direct and extremely close connection between Ukraine’s impending tragedy and its existence as a component of the USSR, a republic wholly dependent on the Union center (Moscow)....

...“It would be better if Ukraine separated from Russia. We would live better—but now, give bread to Russia, and Russia sells it abroad. So it turns out that Ukraine is like a milch cow”; “...It would be better for the peasantry if Ukraine were independent. Then we ourselves would direct our country and people”; “The USSR is agitating for the Soviet Union because it is afraid of losing Ukrainian bread”; “...Why would we need socialism if Ukraine could be independent?”... “[Symon] Petliura’s administration really struggled for the interests of Ukraine, but now all instructions come from Russia, which is living at Ukraine’s expense,” some peasants said. “Petliura did not have enough time to manifest himself, and nobody knows how things would have turned out had he stayed in power.” “If we had had Petliura, there would have been enough of everything in Ukraine,” insisted others.

As the food situation in the republic deteriorated sharply, particularly in the famine conditions of 1928–29, national feeling among the Ukrainian masses grew ever more acute, and manifestations of national discontent spread not only in villages but in towns as well. In May 1928, at factories in the Odesa region, workers could be heard saying such things as: “The government ships bread abroad, but we are starving”; “Moscow eats white bread, which it takes from Ukraine.”....

The beginning of the authorities’ resort to violence objectively called forth a tendency toward the consolidation and self-organization of the Ukrainian peasantry.... This tendency did not go unnoticed by the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, whose head, Vsevolod Balytsky, in a memorandum of July 1928 addressed to Lazar Kaganovich, the general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine, titled “On the Revival of the Ukrainian Counterrevolution,” noted “the appearance of new anti-Soviet activists directly among peasant elements and, especially lately, among youth.”.... It was extremely telling that the national and political platform of all neutralized groups did not derive from the idea of achieving equality for Soviet Ukraine within the USSR but was based on an understanding of the need to establish an independent Ukrainian state on the model of the Ukrainian People’s Republic....

The tendency toward the consolidation of Ukrainian society and the activation of its mobilizing forces made itself apparent, in particular, in the sharp increase of anti-Soviet leaflets in the villages. A significant number of them appealed precisely to the national feelings of Ukrainians, calling on them to rise up against social and national oppression. If in the course of 1928 only 150 leaflets of this type were discovered in Ukraine by the security services, during the period from 20 November 1929 to 7 April 1930 there were 349 leaflets (834 copies); from 20 November 1929 to 1 January 1930, 29 (34 copies); from 1 January to 1 March 1930, 86 (111 copies); from 1 to 7 March 1930, 39 (48 copies); from 7 to 17 March, 72 (121 copies); and from 17 March to 7 April, 123 (472 copies).

The central theme of the nationalist leaflets was the accusation that the ruling Party and the Union center were ruining “Mother Ukraine” and an appeal to fight for its liberation from “foreign rule.”....

The activities of “counterrevolutionary groups,” whose numbers kept increasing in the villages at this time, were imbued with efforts to incite the peasant masses to armed struggle against the Stalin regime. According to information from Balytsky, between 21 January and 9

February 1930 11,865 men were arrested in the Ukrainian countryside, and 334 “counterrevolutionary organizations and groups” were liquidated, members of which “were capable of playing the role of ‘ideologues’ and organizers of counterrevolutionary actions.” We should note that, according to the report of the head of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, the main slogans of the liquidated insurgent organizations were of a “Ukrainian chauvinist” and “Petliura” type....

Mass arrests of “kulak-Petliura elements” conducted at the beginning of 1930 and the deportation to the north of tens of thousands of “kulak families” weakened the anti-Soviet peasant movement, largely depriving it of its organizational base. However, the fact that, despite the arrests and deportations, the security services recorded 1,716 mass peasant actions in 41 districts of Ukraine between 20 February and 2 April 1930 indicated that this movement still had significant potential....

The fact that the ideology of the Ukrainian national-liberation movement resonated in the collective consciousness of Ukrainian society was also confirmed in a number of districts by the appearance of farmers opposed to Soviet rule, armed with pitchforks, axes, and sawed-off rifles, singing the national anthem, *Shche ne vmerla Ukraïna* (Ukraine has not yet perished)....

An extremely interesting phenomenon that testified to the actualization in public consciousness of the idea of reestablishing an independent Ukrainian People’s Republic, as well as the ongoing spontaneous self-organization of anti-Soviet activists, was the voluntary, demonstrative support of peasant participants in various anti-Soviet actions for the “Union for the Liberation of Ukraine,” which had been “uncovered” by the GPU and whose alleged members had been tried in Kharkiv from 9 March to 19 April 1930....

...[O]n 30 March 1930 the head of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, Vsevolod Balytsky, reported in a letter to Stanislav Kosior, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine, that mass peasant disturbances under the slogans “Long live the SVU [Union for the Liberation of Ukraine]” and “Although the SVU has been arrested, its mission lives on” had been observed in several villages of the Tulchyn, Berdychiv, Shepetivka, Vinnytsia, and other districts.

Although in spring 1930 the Stalin regime managed to extinguish the flames of peasant uprisings in Ukraine and relieve the existing political tension in the Ukrainian countryside, it was unable to do so in society at large.... Observing the mass arrests of rebellious peasants, workers at one of the factories in the Kyiv district were heard to say: “...The tsar drove Ukrainians to Siberia, and the Soviet authorities to the Solovets Islands...” In the countryside, assessments of the Soviet authorities’ offensive against Ukrainian “kulaks” were even harsher. Peasants from the village of Stupychne in the Mokro-Kalihorsk raion, Shevchenko district, declared that “The *katsapy* [literally billy-goats, a derogatory term for Russians] have made a plan to enslave Ukraine...”.... Although all repressive actions of the Soviet authorities were officially conducted under the watchword of struggle against “kulaks,” the populace was not misled by this tactical measure. “...Conscious Ukrainians are being persecuted by the GPU services, which accuse them of being ‘kulaks’ or ‘bourgeois’”: such was the categorical conclusion about the situation in Ukraine voiced by a worker who was lucky enough to make his way from Podilia to Czechoslovakia at the end of 1930....

Further destruction of the Ukrainian village and the resulting famine, which had already claimed tens of thousands of victims by the spring of 1932, produced a new outburst of negative political attitudes connected with the problem of Ukraine’s colonial status. One of the concrete factors provoking this was the mass exodus of Ukrainian peasants to Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk

and other industrial centers, which, being better supplied, contrasted with the situation in Ukraine. There the Ukrainian peasant could buy a life-saving loaf of bread... Many letters addressed to the authorities were full of surprise, indignation, and protest against such injustice. One 23-year-old worker, who did not give his name, wrote to the Zaporizhia city Party committee: "You have destroyed Ukraine, bringing it to the point where Ukrainians travel for bread to Petrograd and Moscow, from which there was always an influx for our bread."....

Sensing the approach of disaster, the Ukrainian village fought desperately for its life.... In the course of protest actions, as in previous years, national slogans resounded alongside social ones.... The situation was also tense in the cities at this time.... Letters to the political leadership from outraged workers attest to the growth of national discontent among the proletarian masses. "...In the Russian part of the USSR, the system of food supply is good...workers are even given white bread, and there is no talk of lack of bread for families there," wrote one of the depot workers in Liubotyn to Kosior. "Among Ukrainian workers national hatred is becoming evident.... We can now say with confidence that 99 percent of the Ukrainian population has become anti-Soviet."....

...On 23 December 1932 Balytsky sent a report to Stalin about the activities of numerous Petliurist elements and groups in sixty-seven counties of Ukraine—both in the countryside (on collective farms, state farms, and even machine-tractor stations) and in the towns, among the "chauvinistically inclined intelligentsia."....

In winter–spring 1933, Ukraine was in agony from the terrible famine. At the same time, the GPU services continued a most active struggle against "kulaks" and "Petliurism." On 16 January 1933 the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union CP(B), meeting in closed-door session, decided to approve a proposal from Kaganovich and Balytsky to deport 500 "kulak families" from the Odesa oblast; a proposal from Kosior to deport 300 families from the Chernihiv oblast and 400 families from the Kharkiv oblast; and a proposal from the CC of the CP(B) of Ukraine to deport 700 families from the Dnipropetrovsk oblast. Finally, in March 1933, the CC of the All-Union CP(B) voted by secret ballot to propose that the OGPU deport all "Petliurite elements" from the Kyiv oblast—about a thousand families....

...[F]rom the fall of 1932, a wide-ranging offensive against "Ukrainian nationalism" was undertaken in the republic. It was officially proclaimed the "principal threat," indicating that the Stalin regime clearly understood the risk posed by the rapid politicization of Ukrainian society to its retention of power in general and the successful communization of the Ukrainian countryside in particular. Attempting to overcome this threat, the Stalin regime resorted to suppressing the national movements in Ukraine, and terror by hunger became one of its most effective instruments. The rejection after 1933 of previous concessions on the nationality question...became a logical extension of this type of power politics.

R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931–1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004). Excerpts, pp. 431–36, 439–41.

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Wheatcroft (b. 1947) is professor in Russian and Soviet history at the University of Melbourne. He is one of the main editors of the major Russian publication of archival materials, *The Tragedy of the Soviet Village, 1927–1939*. He is the author of *The Economic Transformation of the Soviet Union, 1913–1945* (1994, with R.W. Davies and M. Harrison) and of *Challenging Traditional Views of Russian History* (2002).

...In the second half of the 1920s, the Soviet Union embarked on rapid industrialisation, enforced through the consolidation of the centralised planning system....

The first five-year plan, approved by the Party and government in the spring of 1929, sought to increase the production of food and consumer goods *pari passu* with the growth of capital goods.... This policy failed completely, as the example of grain illustrates (million tons):

| | 1927/28 Actual | 1932/33 Plan | 1932/33 Actual (from grain budget IV) | 1932/33 Actual (from grain budget III) |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Grain production | 73 | 106 | 56.8 | 62.6 |
| Extra-rural grain | 8 | 20 | 15.2 ^a | 15.4 ^a |
| Remainder in countryside | 65 | 86 | 41.6 ^a | 47.2 ^a |

Note: ^a Grain collections plus sales on kolhoz market amounted to 19.3 million tons (190.5 in grain budget III), but 4.1 million tons of this was returned to the countryside as seed and food loan, allocations to timber, peat and fisheries, and special allocations to agriculture.

The amount retained by the peasants for food in 1932/33 was estimated...at between 20 million and 25 million tons, compared to 27 million tons in 1927/28. The lower figure is much more plausible, as is confirmed by the data on food consumption. The grain consumption per head of the rural population declined substantially; and the consumption per head of meat and dairy products declined even more rapidly.

The state also failed to secure adequate food for the towns....

...[T]he absolute lack of food was the background to the famine. Shortage of grain and other foods in the towns resulted in widespread malnourishment; the acute shortage of grain in the countryside resulted in widespread starvation....

The fundamental cause of the deterioration of agriculture in 1928–33 was the unremitting state pressure on rural resources. Following the grain crisis in the winter of 1927–28, investment in industry, which already exceeded the pre-war level, approximately doubled between 1927/28 and 1930.... Simultaneously, state grain collections increased from 11 million tons after the 1927 harvest to 16 million tons after the 1929 harvest, even though the 1929 harvest was lower than the harvest of 1927.... To obtain this increase, an elaborate system of coercion was established.

The removal of grain from the countryside was a major factor in the decline in livestock, which began in 1929 and continued until 1933....

...In 1929, against the background of the tension between peasant and state, the Soviet authorities concluded that the implementation of the industrialisation programme would be impossible if agriculture was not brought under firm control....

Collectivisation, coupled with dekulakisation, brought agriculture under state control. But its introduction brought with it enormous difficulties.... The difficulties were made worse by the inability of most communists, from Stalin to the Party members sent into the countryside, to understand agriculture and the peasants, and offer sensible means of coping with the transformation of the countryside. In 1930, collectivisation proceeded at a breakneck pace, and impracticable schemes were enforced for the wholesale socialisation of livestock as well as grain.... Most agricultural difficulties were not attributed to mistakes in policy, or even treated as a necessary cost of industrialisation. Instead, the machinations of kulaks and other enemies of the regime were blamed for the troubles, and the solution was sought in a firmer organization of agriculture by the state and its agencies.

The chaos in administration and in agriculture, and the demoralisation of many peasants, were the context in which grain production deteriorated.

...In 1930, the year in which collectivisation was launched, the weather—and the harvest—were particularly favourable. The good harvest in a year of turmoil undoubtedly strengthened the illusion among the political leaders that agricultural difficulties would easily be overcome....

Confronted by the poor harvest of 1932, the Soviet authorities were in great difficulty. Even before the harvest, their partial recognition of the parlous state of agriculture led in May 1932 to the introduction of the policies known as ‘neo-Nep,’ including a reduction in the grain collections below the amount planned for 1931. At this time the Soviet leaders followed their usual practice of overestimating the harvest. But as early as the end of June 1932 they already conceded that it would amount to only about 75 million tons.... This was far below the 90 million tons planned in January 1932, and still further below the five-year plan target of 106 million tons. This put the reduced collection plan of May 1932 in jeopardy. Our work has confirmed...that the grain campaign in 1932/33 was unprecedentedly harsh and repressive.... In response to pressure from the local authorities and the peasants, the Politburo reluctantly made large, though insufficient, reductions in planned collections between August 1932 and January 1933, amounting to as much as 4 million tons. Eventually, 5 million tons less than planned were collected....

...[T]he amount of grain available for internal use was still substantially less in 1932/33 than in the previous year. The Politburo decided that the grain must be concentrated on the hungry towns, and ruled firmly that no allocations from the state collections would be made available to the countryside for seed, food or fodder. But, in fact, in a very large number of piecemeal Politburo decisions, nearly 2 million tons were issued for these purposes, including 330,000 tons for food (about 194,000 tons of which was for Ukraine).

In spite of the reduction in the collections, and the issue of grain to the countryside, the grain available in Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the Volga regions was not sufficient to prevent the deaths of several million people from famine....

Our study of the famine has led us to very different conclusions from Dr. Conquest’s. He holds that Stalin ‘wanted a famine,’ that ‘the Soviets did not want the famine to be coped with successfully,’ and that the Ukrainian famine was ‘deliberately inflicted for its own sake.’ This leads him to the sweeping conclusion: ‘The main lesson seems to be that the Communist ideology provided the motivation for an unprecedented massacre of men, women and children.’¹

We do not at all absolve Stalin from responsibility for the famine. His policies towards the peasants were ruthless and brutal. But the story which has emerged in this book is of a Soviet leadership which was struggling with a famine crisis which had been caused partly by their wrongheaded policies, but was unexpected and undesirable. The background to the famine is not simply that Soviet agricultural policies were derived from Bolshevik ideology, though ideology played its part. They were also shaped by the Russian pre-revolutionary past, the experiences of the civil war, the international situation, the intransigent circumstances of geography and the weather, and the *modus operandi* of the Soviet system as it was established under Stalin. They were formulated by men with little formal education and limited knowledge of agriculture. Above all, they were a consequence of the decision to industrialise this peasant country at breakneck speed.

¹ Conquest (1986), 344. In correspondence Dr Conquest has stated that it is not his opinion that ‘Stalin purposely inflicted the 1933 famine. No. What I argue is that with resulting famine imminent, he could have prevented it, but put “Soviet interest” other than feeding the starving first—thus consciously abetting it’ (September 2003).

Andrea Graziosi, “The Soviet 1931–1933 Famines and the Ukrainian Holodomor: Is a New Interpretation Possible, and What Would Its Consequences Be?” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 27 (2004–5): 97–115. Excerpts.

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Between the end of 1932 and the summer of 1933, famine in the USSR killed, in half the time, approximately seven times as many people as the Great Terror of 1937–38. It was the peak of a series of famines that had started in 1931, and it constituted the turning point of the decade as well as Soviet prewar history’s main event. With its approximately five million victims (I am not including the hundreds of thousands, possibly more than a million, who had already died in Kazakhstan and elsewhere since 1931), compared to the one to two million victims of 1921–22 and 1946–47, this also was the most severe famine in Soviet history and an event that left its mark for decades. Its effect was felt in countries inhabited by immigrant communities from the Russian Empire and the USSR, and its importance, political as well as historical, is still strong today. Since 1987–88, the rediscovery and interpretation of the Famine have played a key role in Ukraine in discussions between supporters of the democratization process and those who still adhere to a procommunist ideology. The *Holodomor* (the word coined to mean hunger-related mass extermination, implying intentionality) thus moved to the center of the political and cultural debate, becoming part of the process of state and nation building in Ukraine.

Yet until 1986, when Robert Conquest published his *Harvest of Sorrow*, historians had almost completely ignored this extraordinary event....

That is why Conquest’s book, the outcome of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute project, has been of crucial importance: it forced a reluctant profession to deal with a fundamental question, and it did so by stressing the connection between famine and the national question, while properly differentiating the Kazakh case. It can thus be maintained that historiography on the famines and the Holodomor starts with Conquest, even though other authors, such as Sergei Maksudov or Zhores Medvedev, were by then seriously dealing with these events. The book’s significance is even greater in light of the polemics that it raised. Because their level was much superior to that of previous polemics, they grew into a positive phenomenon, which may be viewed as part of the process through which historians finally became aware of these events’ extraordinary human and intellectual dimensions. This process was, and still is, especially painful because it took and is taking place *after* a historical judgment had already been made and a “collective memory” had set in, all *without* the Soviet famines entering the picture. This was both a consequence of the successful Soviet attempt at concealment and a manifestation of one of the European twentieth century’s key features—the logic of “taking sides” that dominated the discussion. Therefore, the famines had to, and today still have to, be brought into our representation of the past at the price of a complete restructuring of commonly held beliefs.

Then came the 1991 archival and historiographical revolution. It allowed the accumulation of new knowledge and caused a leap in the quality of polemics, which, with few exceptions, then grew into serious controversies. True scholarly spirit and a firm moral

commitment, born of an awareness of the immensity of the tragedy they deal with, animate the two camps in which it is possible to group today's existing positions at the price of some simplification and much schematization. One can thus contemplate these past few years, during which Conquest's conclusions have been integrated and in part surpassed, with a sense of satisfaction and find in them some reason for optimism.

By means of yet more simplification, the positions of these two camps may be summed up in the following way (I am paraphrasing from a letter that a brilliant young Ukrainian scholar recently sent me). On one side there are what we could call "A" people. They support the genocide thesis and see in the Famine an event artificially organized in order to: (a) break the peasants and/or (b) alter (destroy) the Ukrainian nation's social fabric, which obstructed the transformation of the USSR into a despotic empire. On the other side we have "B" people, who, though fully recognizing the criminal nature of Stalin's policies, deem it necessary to study the Famine as a "complex phenomenon," in which many factors, from the geopolitical situation to the modernization effort, played a role in Moscow's intentions and decisions.

I believe that today we have most of the elements needed for a new and more satisfactory interpretive hypothesis, capable of taking into account both the general and complex Soviet picture and the undeniable relevance of the national question. This hypothesis can be put together using the excellent works of Ukrainian, Russian, and Western scholars as building blocks, thus breaking the wall that still partially separates their efforts....

In order to formulate this new interpretation, we need first to define the object of our investigation. As should be clear by now, we are in fact dealing with what it would be more correct to call, on a pan-Soviet level, the *1931–33 famines*, which had, of course, common causes and a common background, but included at least two very different and special phenomena: the Kazakhstan famine-*cum*-epidemics of 1931–33 and the Ukrainian-Kuban (the latter area, though belonging to the Russian republic's province of the Northern Caucasus, being mostly inhabited by Ukrainians) Holodomor of late 1932 to early 1933.

Many past misunderstandings have been caused by the confusion between these two *national* tragedies and the general phenomenon that provided their framework. In a way, it is as if students of Nazism would confuse Nazi repression in general with quite specific and crucial cases, such as the extermination of Soviet prisoners of war, or that of Poles and Gypsies—not to mention the Holocaust, an exceptional phenomenon that cannot be explained simply as an aspect or element of Nazi killings at large, and yet certainly was also a part of them. Both Nazi repression in general and such "specific" tragedies existed, and both must be studied, as in fact they are, in and of themselves as well as in their connections.

A very clear distinction between the general phenomenon and its republic-level or regional manifestations should therefore be introduced in the Soviet case. However, most "A" supporters are in fact speaking specifically of the Holodomor, while many of the "B" proponents think on a pan-Soviet scale. If we analytically distinguish what they are doing, we end up discovering that in many, albeit not all, ways they are correct in their respective domains.

The second step toward a new interpretation consists of yet another analytical distinction. We must separate the 1931–32 "spontaneous" famines—they too, of course, were direct, if undesired, consequences of choices made in 1928–29—from the post-September 1932 Famine, which took on such terrible features not least because of human decision. (Events in Kazakhstan followed an altogether different pattern and I will therefore only make some passing references to them.) Finally, the third step we need to take is to gather and combine useful elements from both "A" and "B" and drop their unsatisfactory parts.

“A” people are right in drawing our attention to the national question. Anyone studying the Soviet Union should be acutely aware of its importance, as Lenin and Stalin themselves were (after all, the former decided not to call the new state Russia, and the latter, who initially opposed such a choice, never reversed the decision in later years). One should be equally aware of the Ukrainian primacy in this matter. In late 1919 Lenin started the shift towards indigenization (*korenizatsiia*), until that time considered to be a request of “extreme nationalists,” because of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks’ defeat of 1919, and Stalin gave a new spin to *korenizatsiia* in late 1932 because of the Ukrainian crisis. But in Ukraine, at least up to 1933, the national question *was* the peasant question. This is what both Lenin and Stalin thought, and rightly so. “A” people seem instead to be wrong in thinking that the “Famine” (meaning also the pan-Soviet one) was organized (“planned”) to solve the Ukrainian national, or rather peasant, problem.

“B” people give us a detailed reconstruction of the causes and wider context of the Famine on a pan-Soviet scale, with all its complexity, and are thus able to criticize convincingly the simplistic views of the “A” camp. However, they seem unable to fully understand or accommodate the national factor; that is, to “descend” from the pan-Soviet to the republic level. “B” people also do not always seem capable of seeing that Stalin, even when he did not initiate something willfully, was always very quick to take advantage of “spontaneous” events, giving them a completely new turn.... One can thus use good “B” data for the development of the pan-Soviet crisis, stressing however that at this level, too, Stalin at a certain moment decided to *use* hunger to break the peasants’ opposition to collectivization. For a number of reasons, such opposition was stronger in non-Russian areas, where events soon started to follow their own course....

What can therefore be said? From 1931 to 1933 scores, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of people died of hunger throughout the USSR. In Kazakhstan, Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus, and the Volga basin (Povolzh'e), however, the situation was completely different. But for Western Siberia, these were the country’s most important grain-growing regions, where the post-1927 state-village conflict over the crop was strongest. Since 1918–19, moreover, the war between the regime and peasants and nomads there had been particularly brutal because of the intensifying role of national and religious factors, and in the Volga because of both the Russian peasant movement’s strong traditions and the presence of German colonists.

Except in Kazakhstan, the phenomenon’s causes were *similar* across these areas: the devastating human toll, as well as the toll on the capacity for production, taken by dekulakization—a de facto nationwide, state-led pogrom against the peasant elite; forced collectivization, which pushed peasants to destroy a large part of their inventories; the kolkhozes’ inefficiency and misery; the repeated and extreme requisition waves originated by a crisis-ridden industrialization, an urbanization out of control, and a growing foreign debt that could be repaid only by exporting raw materials; the resistance of peasants, who would not accept the reimposition of what they called a “second serfdom” and worked less and less because of both their rejection of the new system and hunger-related debilitation; and the poor weather conditions in 1932. Famine, which had started to take hold sporadically already in 1931 (when Kazakhs were dying in mass), and had grown into solid pockets by the spring of 1932, thus appears to have been an undesired and unplanned outcome of ideology-inspired policies aimed at eliminating mercantile and private production. Based on the results of the 1920–21 war communism policy, the Famine should not have been difficult to foresee. Yet if one analyzes the Famine’s origins and pre-autumn 1932 developments on a pan-Soviet level, it seems arduous to claim that famine was the conscious goal of those policies, as it is maintained by those who

support the hypothesis that famine was willfully implemented to break the peasant resistance or to execute a Moscow- (sometimes meaning Russian-) planned Ukrainian genocide.

However, the intensity, course, and consequence of the phenomenon, which new studies and new documents allow us to analyze, were undeniably and substantially *different* in different regions and republics. Out of the six to seven million victims (demographers now impute to 1930–31 part of the deaths previously imputed to 1932–33), 3.5 to 3.8 million died in Ukraine; 1.3 to 1.5 million in Kazakhstan (where deaths reached their peak in relation to the population size, exterminating 33 to 38 percent of the Kazakhs and 8 to 9 percent of the Europeans); and several hundred thousand in the Northern Caucasus and, on a lesser scale, in the Volga, where the most harshly hit area coincided with the German autonomous republic.

If we consider annual mortality rates per thousand inhabitants in the *countryside*, and make 1926 equal to 100, we see them jump in 1933 to 188.1 in the entire country, 138.2 in the Russian republic (which then still included both Kazakhstan and the Northern Caucasus), and 367.7—that is, *almost triple*—in Ukraine. Here life expectancy at birth dropped from 42.9 years for men and 46.3 for women registered in 1926 to, respectively, 7.3 and 10.9 in 1933 (it would be 13.6 and 36.3 in 1941). Also, in Ukraine there were 782,000 births in 1932 and 470,000 in 1933, compared with an average of 1.153 million per year in the period from 1926 to 1929. The extreme figures for Ukraine are explained by the Famine’s different course there, for which different Moscow policies were largely responsible....

In those places where the “peasant question” was complicated—that is, strengthened and thus made more dangerous by the national one (let us remember that Stalin explicitly linked the two questions in his writings on nationalism, and that the Soviet leadership had seen this hypothesis confirmed by the Ukrainian countryside’s great social and national revolts of 1919, repeated, albeit on a lesser scale, in early 1930)—the resort to hunger was more ruthless and the lesson much harsher. According to demographic data, in Ukraine, too, mortality depended on residency, urban or rural, and not on nationality, meaning that people living in the countryside suffered independently of their ethnic background. Yet one cannot forget that, as everybody knew, in spite of the previous urbanization-*cum*-Ukrainization, villages remained overwhelmingly Ukrainian, while cities had largely preserved their “alien” (Russian, Jewish, Polish) character. In Ukraine, therefore, the countryside was indeed targeted to break the peasants, but with the full awareness that the village represented the nation’s spine....

Famine thus took on forms and dimensions much bigger than it would have if nature had followed its course. It was less intense, in terms of both drought and the area it affected, than the 1921–22 famine (the 1932 crop, though quite low, was still higher than the 1945 crop, when there were no comparable mass hunger-related deaths), yet it caused three to four times as many victims—essentially because of political decisions that aimed at saving the regime from the crisis to which its very policies had led and at assuring the victory of the “great offensive” launched four years previously.

The awareness that in Ukraine and Kuban the peasant question also was a national question determined the need to deal with and “solve” these questions together. In order to make sure that such a “solution” was there to stay, it was complemented by the decision to get rid of the national elites and their policies, which were suspected, as we know, of abetting peasants....

... These measures were accompanied, and followed, by a wave of anti-Ukrainian terror, which already presented some of the traits that were later to characterize the 1937–38 “mass operations.” Thus ended the national-communist experiment born of the civil war, with the

suicide in 1933 of important leaders such as Mykola Skrypnyk and writers such as Mykola Khvyliovyy as well as the repression of thousands of its cadres.

The adoption of the term Holodomor seems therefore legitimate, as well as necessary, to mark a distinction between the pan-Soviet phenomenon of 1931–33 and the Ukrainian Famine *after* the summer of 1932. In spite of their undeniable close relationship, the two are in fact profoundly different. The same applies to the famines' consequences, which also were partially similar yet essentially different. Whereas throughout the USSR the use of hunger broke peasant resistance; guaranteed the victory of a dictator whom people feared in a new way and around whom a new cult, based on fear, started to develop; opened the door to the 1937–38 terror; marked a qualitative change in the lie that had accompanied the Soviet regime since its inception; allowed, by means of the subjugation of the most important republic, the de facto transformation of the Soviet federal state into a despotic empire; and left a dreadful legacy of grief in a multitude of families that were prevented from dealing with it (Gorbachev too lost three paternal uncles then) because of the Famine taboo and the dogma about life having become “more joyous”—in Ukraine and in Kazakhstan famine dug even deeper....

The number of victims makes the Soviet 1931–33 famines into a set of phenomena that in the framework of European history can be compared only to later Nazi crimes. The course of events in Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, and the link this course had to both Stalin's interpretation of the crisis and the policies that originated from this interpretation, reintroduce, in a new way, the question of its nature. *Was there also a Ukrainian genocide?*

The answer seems to be *no* if one thinks of a famine conceived by the regime, or—this being even more untenable—by Russia, to destroy the Ukrainian people. It is equally *no* if one adopts a restrictive definition of genocide as the planned will to exterminate *all* the members of a religious or ethnic group, in which case only the Holocaust would qualify.

In 1948, however, even the rather strict UN definition of genocide listed among possible genocidal acts, side by side with “killing members of the group, and causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group,” “*deliberately inflicting on members of the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part*” (emphasis mine). Not long before, Raphael Lemkin, the inventor of the term, had noted that, “generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation.... It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups.”

Based on Lemkin's definition—if one thinks of the substantial difference in mortality rates in different republics; adds to the millions of Ukrainian victims, including the ones from Kuban, the millions of Ukrainians forcibly Russified after December 1932, as well as the scores of thousands of peasants who met a similar fate after evading the police roadblocks and taking refuge in the Russian republic; keeps in mind that one is therefore dealing with the loss of approximately 20 to 30 percent of the Ukrainian ethnic population; remembers that such a loss was caused by the decision, unquestionably a subjective act, to use the Famine in an anti-Ukrainian sense on the basis of the “national interpretation” Stalin developed in the second half of 1932; reckons that without such a decision the death count would have been at the most in the hundreds of thousands (that is, less than in 1921–22); and finally, if one adds to all of the above the destruction of a large part of the republic's Ukrainian political and cultural elite, from village teachers to national leaders—I believe that the answer to our question, “Was the Holodomor a genocide?” cannot but be positive.

Between the end of 1932 and the summer of 1933:

1. Stalin and the regime he controlled and coerced (but certainly not Russia or the Russians, who suffered from famine too, even though on a lesser scale) consciously executed, as part of a drive directed at breaking the peasantry, an anti-Ukrainian policy aimed at mass extermination and causing a genocide in the above-mentioned interpretation of the term, a genocide whose physical and psychological scars are still visible today.

2. This genocide was the product of a famine that was not willfully caused with such aim in mind, but was willfully maneuvered towards this end once it came about as the unanticipated result of the regime policies (it seems that the even more terrible Kazakh tragedy was “only” the undesired, if foreseeable, outcome of denomadization and colonial indifference towards the natives’ fate).

3. It took place within a context that saw Stalin punishing with hunger, and applying terror to, a number of national and ethnosocial groups he felt to be actually or potentially dangerous. As all the quantitative data indicate, however, the scale of both punishment and terror reached extreme dimensions in Ukraine for the reasons I listed, thus growing into a qualitatively different phenomenon.

4. From this perspective, the relationship between the Holodomor and the other tragic punishments by repression of 1932–33 do in a way recall the already-mentioned relationship between Nazi repressions and the Holocaust. The Holodomor, however, was much different from the Holocaust. It did not aim at exterminating the *whole* nation, it did not kill people *directly*, and it was motivated and constructed theoretically and *politically*—might one say “rationally”?—rather than ethnically or racially. This different motivation at least partially accounts for the first two differences.

5. From this perspective, the Holocaust is exceptional because it represents the purest, and therefore qualitatively different, genocide imaginable. It thus belongs in another category. Yet at the same time it represents the apex of a multilayered pyramid, whose steps are represented by other tragedies, and to whose top the Holodomor is close.

Stanislav Kulchytsky, “Why Did Stalin Exterminate the Ukrainians? Comprehending the Holodomor. The Position of Soviet Historians.” *The Day Weekly Digest* (Kyiv), nos. 35 and 37, 8 and 22 November 2005. <http://www.day.kiev.ua/152116>; <http://www.day.kiev.ua/153028/>.

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...I spent 11 years working at the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, where I studied the history of the nation’s economy, moving from one time period to the next. I then transferred to the Institute of History to prepare a doctoral thesis within the framework of the so-called interwar period: from 1921 to 1941. When I received my doctorate and was appointed to chair the Department of Interwar History, my scholarly specialty and position required me to study the 1933 famine once it became a widely discussed topic.

Other people in the department were studying the history of the peasants before and after collectivization, while I specialized in the problems of industrialization and the history of the working class. Like everybody else, I knew about the famine. Moreover, I had access to

demographic data that was locked away in special repositories and knew that the Ukrainian countryside had lost millions of people, and that this loss could not be attributed to urbanization. But I could not understand the causes of the famine. Even in my worst nightmare I could not imagine that the Soviet government was capable of exterminating not only enemies of the people (at the time I never questioned the legitimacy of this notion), but also children and pregnant women....

Before the worldview transformation caused by my study of the Holodomor, I was a *Soviet* scholar like everyone else. That is, I looked at history from the class point of view, viewed capitalism and socialism as socioeconomic formations, considered uncollectivized peasants to be representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, believed that collective ownership of production facilities was a viable option and that collective farms were the peasants' collective property.

I considered it a normal thing that there were special repositories in libraries and archives, i.e., I accepted the division of information into classified and public. But for this very reason I could not understand why the 1933 famine was a forbidden topic. Since there was no one in Ukraine who didn't know about it, why did this information have to be classified? An older colleague, who also chaired a department at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR, confided in me that in his village everybody knew who had eaten whom. They spent the rest of their lives with this knowledge.

When some important individuals on the staff of the CPU's Central Committee, whom I knew well, got word of a US congressional commission on the Ukrainian famine, they went into a state of continuing stress. The Feb. 11, 1983, report by the Central Committee's secretary in charge of ideology and the Ukrainian KGB chief contained a recommendation addressed to our specialists abroad: Do not enter into polemics on the famine. It was clear that this polemic would be a losing proposition under any circumstances. At the time, however, they could no longer bury their heads in the sand.

In the fall of 1986 the CC CPU formed a so-called "anti-commission." I found myself among its members. We scholars were expected to produce studies that would "expose the falsifications of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists."

I had worked in special repositories before but received clearance to access "special files" of CPU committees only once I began working as a member of the commission. Soviet archives had one special characteristic: a researcher could have access to 99.9 percent of all files, yet all crucial information relating to the history of this totalitarian state was contained in the 0.01 percent of inaccessible files.

After six months of working in the archives, I learned about the agricultural situation in the early 1930s. After this, some causes, which I had taken for granted since my school years, changed places with consequences. The new cause-and-effect relationships often coincided with what I got to read in the so-called "anti-Soviet" literature.

While I was working in the archives, the commission's work was proving fruitless. Perhaps those upstairs realized that the scholars had been given an unrealistic assignment. I sent an analytical report under my own name to the Central Committee with a proposal that the famine be officially recognized.

Now I understand that I was demanding something impossible from the Central Committee.... How could they possibly admit that Stalin had succeeded in using the system of government, which everybody called "people's rule," to exterminate the people, i.e., to commit genocide? In exposing famine, the rhetoric about Stalinist vices would not hide the organic flaws of the Soviet government behind the great chieftain's broad back.

I remember writing that report at a time when I still had not given up many stereotypes of the official concept of history. Now I understand that this helped me formulate my arguments in such a way that my report would not appear too explosive to those in a position to make the political decision to recognize the famine.

I think this report was only about recognizing the fact that famine had really occurred. While I, an expert on the history of the interwar period, still could not interpret this mysterious famine as genocide in 1987, our chiefs in the Party committees were even farther from such an interpretation. Granted, we knew that books had been published in the West in which the victims of the 1933 famine said that the government had intended to destroy them. But such stories were always rejected in the USSR as anti-Soviet propaganda.

While rereading the text about the ability or inability of our government officials of the time to recognize the fact of the famine, I caught myself in a contradiction: while I state that I was demanding the impossible of the members of the Central Committee, I am insisting that they could not identify the famine with genocide....

I think, however, that even people who are not expert historians but have enough life experience can recall exactly what they thought about the 1933 famine a decade and a half ago, and how their views have changed now that thousands of horrifying documents have been published.

Those who were in power in the late 1980s had access to such documents even in those days. I dare say, however, that they could not evaluate them properly because they were not Stalin's contemporaries and did not contribute to his crimes. Like me, they were products of the Soviet school....

Thus, I am certain that none of the CPU leaders realized the true essence of the events of 1933, but they all knew that something horrible and monstrous had happened. On the other hand, they felt that the Stalinist taboo on the word famine could no longer continue.

For several months my report wandered from office to office at the Central Committee. Finally, they allowed me to submit it as a scholarly article to *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* [Ukrainian Historical Journal], but only once a political decision to recognize the famine as a historical fact was publicized. That event was scheduled for Dec. 25, 1987, when Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, the first secretary of the CC CPU, was slated to deliver his report on the 70th anniversary of the Ukrainian SSR.

In the meantime, the liberalization of the political regime, which started with Gorbachev's announcement of his policy of perestroika, was becoming more and more pronounced. The conspiracy of silence surrounding the famine began to disintegrate by itself. On July 16, 1987, the newspaper *Literaturna Ukraïna* [Literary Ukraine] carried two articles that mentioned the famine matter-of-factly as a well-known fact. Discussions of the famine began in Moscow. On Oct. 11, 1987, the famous scholar Viktor Danilov of the Institute of Soviet History at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, who had already experienced much unpleasantness within the Party organs for his "distorted" portrayal of Soviet agrarian history, published a statement in the newspaper *Sovetskaia Rossiia* [Soviet Russia], stating that famine had claimed a huge number of lives in the winter and spring of 1933. In his short article entitled "How Many of Us Were There Then?" published in the December issue of the magazine *Ogonek*, the Moscow-based demographer Mark Tolts blew the lid off the suppressed union-wide census of 1937, revealing that its organizers had been repressed for malicious underestimation of the population. Tolts pointed to the 1933 famine as the cause of this "underestimation."

On Nov. 2, 1987, CPSU Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev delivered a report in the Kremlin pegged to the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. Aleksandr Yakovlev recalled that the conservatives and liberals on Gorbachev's team prepared several versions of the same report. A conservative version of this assessment of the country's historical path got the upper hand, and Gorbachev did not mention the famine.

Volodymyr Shcherbytsky could not follow his Moscow patron's example because what had raged in Ukraine was not merely famine but manmade famine, or the Holodomor. Moreover, the US congressional commission was about to announce the preliminary results of its investigation. For this reason Shcherbytsky's anniversary report contained six or seven lines about the famine, which was allegedly caused by drought. For the first time in 55 years a CPSU Politburo member broke the Stalinist taboo on the word "famine." This created an opportunity for historians to study and publish documents on the Holodomor.

My article, "Concerning the Evaluation of the Situation in Agriculture of the Ukrainian SSR in 1931–33," was published in the March 1988 issue of *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal*. Its abridged version had already been published in January 1988 in two Soviet newspapers for Ukrainian emigrants: the Ukrainian-language *Visti z Ukraïny* and the English-language *News from Ukraine*. In May 1988 the Foreign Ministry of the Ukrainian SSR received the materials of the US congressional commission via the Soviet Embassy in the US and passed them on to the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR. The English-language version of my article was almost entirely quoted and analyzed. James Mace concluded, "The scale of the famine is minimized, the Communist Party is depicted as doing its utmost to improve the situation, while the actions of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, which exacerbated the famine, have been ignored."

This is an objective conclusion, for I had deliberately excluded materials that had already been discovered in Party archives from this article, which in fact was my report to the CC CPU. I could not afford to make things difficult for Shcherbytsky to render a decision that was coming to a head under the conditions of increasing glasnost and which was necessary in the face of the investigation being pursued by the US Congress.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian writers were bringing the subject of the famine to the forefront of civic and political life. On Feb. 18, 1988, *Literaturna Ukraïna* published Oleksa Musiienko's report to a meeting of the Kyiv branch of the Writers' Union of Ukraine. Welcoming the new CPSU leadership's policy of de-Stalinization, Musiienko accused Stalin of orchestrating a brutal grain procurement campaign in the republic, which resulted in the Holodomor of 1933. The word "Holodomor" used in this report was coined by the writer Ivan Drach.

In early July 1988 the writer Borys Oliinyk addressed the 19th CPSU conference in Moscow. Focusing on the Stalinist terror of 1937, he surprised those present with his conclusion: "Because repressions in our republic started long before 1937, we must also determine the causes of the 1933 famine, which killed millions of Ukrainians; we must list the names of those who are to blame for this tragedy."

In a November 1988 interview with the Moscow weekly *Sobesednik* [Interlocutor], the writer Yurii Shcherbak, the founder of the Green movement in Ukraine, devoted much attention to the problem of the famine. He was convinced that the 1933 famine was the same kind of method for terrorizing peasants who opposed collective farm slavery as dekulakization. At the same time, he was the first to speculate that Stalin's policy of repressions in Ukraine was also aimed at forestalling the danger of a large-scale national liberation movement. The peasantry, he said, was always the bearer of national traditions, which is why the 1933 famine was a blow

aimed against the peasants. In the summer of 1993 James Mace published his analytical article “How Ukraine Was Permitted to Remember” in the American journal *The Ukrainian Quarterly*. In describing the process of how the Holodomor was understood, I have followed this article to some extent and in separate instances, while making independent evaluations. I cannot agree with one of his statements.

In July 1988 the Writers’ Union of Ukraine instructed Volodymyr Maniak to prepare a memorial book comprised of testimonies of Holodomor survivors. Mace wrote that Maniak was not allowed to address the famine eyewitnesses in the press; this mission was entrusted to me. In December 1988 I appealed to the readers of *Sil's'ki visti* [Village News] and published a questionnaire.

In fact, neither Maniak nor I were instructed to prepare a memorial book. This problem did not concern the republican leadership. The initiative was Maniak’s. After enlisting the support of the Writers’ Union, he came to the Institute of History at the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR with a proposal to join forces. At the time we were actively searching for documents relating to the famine, which had been amassed in the archives of Soviet government agencies. We collected so many sensational materials that we processed them in parallel form: memoirs *and* documents. We could not immediately publish the manuscripts we had prepared. Radians'kyi Pys'mennyk [Soviet Writer] published the colossal book of recollections, *Famine '33: The People’s Memorial Book* compiled by Maniak and his wife, Lidiia Kovalenko, only in 1991. In 1992 and 1993 *Naukova Dumka* [Scholarly Thought] published a collection of documents from the Central State Archive of the Highest Organs of Government and Administration of Ukraine, compiled by Hanna Mykhailychenko and Yevheniia Shatalina.

In the meantime, the substance and even the words from my article that appeared in *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* became the target of harsh criticism in the press immediately after its publication in March 1988. Only one year after its publication society was viewing the fundamental questions concerning Soviet reality in a completely different way.

In 1988 I wrote a brochure for the Znannia [Knowledge] Society of the Ukrainian SSR. While the brochure was being prepared for publication, I obtained permission from the society to publish it in *Literaturna Ukraïna*. At the time this newspaper was most popular among radical intellectual circles and in the diaspora. The text, published in four issues of the newspaper between January and February 1989, was the product of 18 months of archival work. Complete with photographic evidence, the story of Viacheslav Molotov’s extraordinary grain procurement commission shocked the public.

In June 1989 *Znannia* published 62,000 copies of my brochure entitled *1933: The Tragedy of the Famine*. Surprisingly, it was published as part of a series entitled *Theory and Practice of the CPSU*. The art editor designed an original cover depicting a cobweb with the brochure’s title centered in red and white lettering. As I reread it now, I can see that it is an accurate portrayal of the socioeconomic consequences of forced collectivization of agriculture, the major one being famine in many areas of the USSR. However, at the time I still did not understand the specifics of the Ukrainian famine. In particular, the brochure listed all the clauses of the Nov. 18 decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine and the Nov. 20 decree of the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, both of which were approved as dictated by Molotov. These decrees were the spark plug of the Holodomor. The brochure also cited the most disturbing clause, calling for the imposition of penalties in kind (meat, potatoes, and other foodstuffs). However, at the time I still had no facts about the consequences that stemmed from that clause. For this reason the Ukrainian famine was

considered the result of a mistaken economic policy, not a deliberate campaign to seize food under the guise of grain procurements....

A detailed analysis of my own brochure was necessary to provide background to the story about the major accomplishment of the Soviet period, which was being quickly consigned to the past. I am speaking about the book *The Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: Through the Eyes of Historians and the Language of Documents*. The book was published in September 1990 by Polityvydav Ukraïny [Political Publishers of Ukraine] as an imprint of the Institute of Party History at the CC CPU. It contained four articles, including one of mine, but I will discuss the documents from the archival funds of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist (Bolshevik) Party and the CP(B)U. The documentary section was compiled by Ruslan Pyrih, head of the team of compilers that included A. Kentii, I. Komarova, V. Lozytsky, and A. Soloviova. The official pressrun was 25,000, but the real number of published copies was ten times smaller. When it became clear that the book would be published, somebody decided to turn it into a bibliographic rarity.

I saw the documents discovered in the Party archives of Moscow and Kyiv by Pyrih's team one year before their publication. Some of them are reason enough to accuse Stalin of committing the crime of genocide....

A battle over this manuscript broke out at the highest political level in the republic—in the Politburo of the CC CPU. The Politburo meeting in January 1990, to which I was invited as an expert, took a long time to discuss the expediency of publishing this book. I got the impression that those present heaved a sigh of relief when Volodymyr Ivashko, the first secretary of the CC, assumed responsibility and proposed publishing the documents.

Why did the Politburo decide to publish such explosive documents? There are at least two reasons. First, in 1988–89 the originally bureaucratic perestroika was already evolving into a popular movement. Constitutional reform had divested the ruling Party of its power over society. In order to remain on top of the revolutionary wave, Party leaders had to distance themselves from Stalin's heritage. Second, the US congressional commission had already completed its work and published a conclusive report that contained many impressive details. The Politburo members were familiar with the specific results of the work carried out by Mace's commission. I am so sure of this because I have this particular volume, 524 pages, published in Washington in 1988, in my own library. The book's cover bears the red stamp of the CC CPU's general department, identifying the date of receipt as Sept. 5, 1988. I obtained the book during the transfer of Central Committee documents to the state archive after the Party was banned (as material foreign to the compiler of the funds).

The above-mentioned Politburo meeting of Jan. 26, 1990, approved a resolution "On the 1932–1933 Famine in Ukraine and the Publication of Archival Materials Relating to It." The Politburo identified the immediate cause of the famine as the grain procurement policy that was fatal to the peasants. Yet this statement did not correspond to the truth, much like Shcherbytsky's statement about the drought.

Mace came to Ukraine for the first time in January 1990. He brought me a computer printout of the famine survivors' testimonies recorded by the US congressional commission. The three volumes of testimonies on 1,734 pages were published in Washington only in December 1990. In the first two weeks of that month the journal *Pid praporom leninizmu* [Under the Banner of Leninism] published my article "How It Happened (Reading the Documents of the US Congressional Commission on the 1932–33 Ukraine Famine)". My own experience of analyzing archival documents and the testimonies recorded by the American researchers enabled me to

reach the following conclusion: “Alongside grain procurements and under their guise, a repressive expropriation of all food stocks, i.e., terror by famine was organized.” Now the conclusion about genocide was no longer based solely on the emotional testimony of Holodomor eyewitnesses but on an analysis of archival documents.

March 1991 saw the publication of my summary volume *Tsina velykoho perelomu* [The Price of the Great Turning Point]. The final conclusion was formulated in no uncertain terms: “Famine and genocide in the countryside were preprogrammed” (p. 302)....

Reviewing the book a decade and a half later, I have reconsidered its merits and shortcomings. Its merit lay in the detailed analysis of the Kremlin’s socioeconomic policy that resulted in an economic crisis capable of disrupting the political equilibrium. This explained why Stalin unleashed terror by famine against Ukraine in one particular period—a time when the economic crisis was at its peak. The monograph’s shortcoming was the lack of an analysis of the Kremlin’s nationality policy. Without such an analysis the conclusion of genocide was suspended in midair.

In those distant years Mace and I often engaged in sharp polemics. However, these polemics were disinterested, i.e., they concerned problems, not specific persons. I criticized him for his inadequate attention to the Kremlin’s socioeconomic policy, and he criticized me for my inattention to its nationality policy. Time has shown that establishing that the Holodomor was an act of genocide requires an equal amount of attention to both the socioeconomic and nationality policies.

However, Mace had an advantage in this polemic. He did not have to change his worldview the way I had to change mine, one that was inculcated in me by my school, university, and my entire life in Soviet society, and to do so posthaste in the face of irrefutable facts. He saw in me an official historian, which in fact I was. However, in the above-mentioned article, “How Ukraine Was Permitted to Remember,” Mace concluded the chapter on the evolution of my worldview with these words: “He approached the development of the topic [of the famine] as a Soviet historian whose works were as political as they were scholarly. When the possibilities for studying archives expanded, he stopped being a Soviet historian and became simply a historian.”....

Discussions with Russian Scholars

The attitude of the Russian public and government to the events of 1932–33 is another important issue. Even if we substantiate with facts that the 1932–33 famine in Ukraine was an act of genocide, we will have to face a different interpretation of our common past at the international level....

For many years I have been conferring with a small community of scholars in Russia and the West who are studying the Ukrainian Holodomor, and I know their way of thinking. For this reason I have to offer a thought-out and clear position on the subject of genocide....

These discussions were touched off by the May 1993 informational and analytical conference organized by the Ukrainian Embassy in Moscow, which was entitled “The Holodomor of 1932–33: Tragedy and Warning.” Both sides were represented by scholars, politicians, and journalists. We spoke about terror by famine, which the Kremlin used against Ukraine, while they claimed that the Stalinist repressions had no national component. Only Sergei Kovalev, a former dissident who in 1993 chaired the Human Rights Commission in the Russian parliament, summoned the courage to say “Forgive us!” while addressing the Ukrainian side.

Then a Moscow newspaper carried an article by the journalist Leonid Kapeliushny, who wrote it after reading the book by Volodymyr Maniak and Lidiia Kovalenko, *33: Holod: narodna knyha-memorial* [Famine '33: The People's Memorial Book]. In the book the journalist saw "eyewitness testimonies that have legal force, testimonies of genocide witnesses."

Kovalev's "Forgive us" and Kapeliushny's conclusion were reinforced by papers presented at the international scholarly conference "The Holodomor of 1932–33 in Ukraine: Causes and Consequences," which took place in Kyiv on Sept. 9–10, 1993 and was attended by the president of Ukraine. While President Kravchuk blamed the tragedy of the Ukrainian nation on the Stalinist government, Ivan Drach, who took the floor after him, placed this problem in a different dimension. "It is time to fully understand once and for all that this was only one of the closest to us—surviving and now living Ukrainians—stages in the planned eradication of the Ukrainian nation. Intolerance of this nation is deeply rooted in the descendants of the northern tribes, to whom our people gave its own faith, culture, civilization, and even its name," Drach said.

The Russian experts on the problems of collectivization and famine—Ilia Zelenin, Nikolai Ivniitsky, Viktor Kondrashin, and Yevgenii Oskolkov—wrote a collective letter to the editors of a historical journal of the Russian Academy of Sciences, expressing their concern over the fact that most conference participants insisted on "a certain exceptionality of Ukraine, a special nature and substance of these events in the republic as opposed to other republics and regions in the country." They claimed that the famine in Ukraine was no different from famines in other regions, whereas the anti-peasant policy of the Stalinist leadership had no clearly defined national direction.

In an attempt to substantiate their position, the Russian colleagues emphasized the socioeconomic aspects of the 1932–33 famine, quoting my paper presented at that conference. Without a doubt, the Kremlin's economic policy did not distinguish among the national republican borders, and in this respect their arguments were flawless. However, the rejection of the Ukrainian specifics of the famine led the Russian colleagues, whether they wanted to or not, to state that the Kremlin had no nationality policy or repressive element of such a policy....

In recent years the Institute of Ukrainian History has established cooperation with the Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and through it with experts at other Russian institutions as part of the Russian-Ukrainian Commission of Historians (co-chaired by the Ukrainian academician Valerii Smolii and the Russian academician Aleksandr Chubarian). On March 29, 2004, Moscow hosted the commission's meeting, attended by numerous prominent Russian experts on agrarian history. They discussed the book *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukraïni: prychny ta naslidky* [The Famine of 1932–33 in Ukraine: Causes and Consequences], published in 2003 by the Institute of Ukrainian History to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the Holodomor. Thirty authors collaborated on this large-format volume of 888 pages supplemented with a 48–page section of illustrations.

Several copies of the book were sent to Moscow long before the commission's meeting. Yet it failed to convince the Russian historians. Soon after that meeting Viktor Danilov and Ilia Zelenin publicized their views of the problem discussed in an article that appeared in *Otechestvennaia istoriia* (History of the Fatherland, no. 5, 2004). The gist of their position is reflected in the title of their article: "Organized Famine. Dedicated to the 70th Anniversary of the Peasants' Common Tragedy."...

Summing up the results of our meeting on March 29, 2004, Danilov and Zelenin came to the following conclusion: "If one is to characterize the Holodomor of 1932–33 as 'a purposeful

genocide of Ukrainian peasants,' as individual historians from Ukraine insist, then we must bear in mind that it was in equal measure a genocide of Russian peasants." The Ukrainian side can accept such a conclusion. After all, we are not saying that only Ukrainians were Stalin's victims....

In Ukrainian society only marginal right-leaning politicians insist that present-day Russia is responsible for the Ukrainian Holodomor and demand moral or even financial compensation. However, the fact that Russia has been recognized as the legal successor of the USSR does not burden it with responsibility for the crimes of the Bolsheviks, White Guards, or any other regimes that controlled Russian territory in the past. Even the attempts of the Kremlin leadership to associate itself with certain attributes of the former Soviet Union, as evidenced by the melody of Russia's state anthem, are not reason enough to put forward such claims. After all, nostalgia for the Soviet past is equally present in Ukrainian and Russian societies, mainly in the older generations.

Russia is freely publishing documentary collections that reflect the state crimes of the Stalinist period. In fact, it has become possible to build the concept of the Ukrainian Holodomor as an act of genocide only on the basis of documents publicized in Moscow. At the same time, Russia's attempts to inherit the achievements of the Soviet epoch, especially the victory in World War II, are forcing Russian officials to throw a veil over Stalin's crimes as much as this can be done in the new conditions of freedom from dictatorship. This applies particularly to the crime of genocide, even though the Dec. 9, 1948 Convention does not place responsibility on the legal successors of criminal regimes.

Naturally, if Russia wants to inherit the accomplishments of the Soviet epoch, it must also inherit its negative aspects, i.e., the obligation to utter Kovalev's "Forgive us." The European Parliament hinted at this "liability" in 2004, when it found the deportation of the Chechens to be an act of genocide. However, few would like to inherit moral responsibility for the crimes of previous regimes, unless absolutely necessary.

This is why Russia is a decisive opponent of recognizing the Ukrainian Holodomor as an act of genocide. In August 2003 Russian Ambassador to Ukraine Viktor Chernomyrdin said in an interview with BBC's Ukrainian Service: "The Holodomor affected the entire Soviet state. There were no fewer tragedies and no less pain in the Kuban, Ural, and Volga regions, and Kazakhstan. Such expropriations did not happen only in Chukotka and the northern regions because there was nothing to expropriate." Russia's official representatives at the UN did everything possible to have the definition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide excluded from the Joint Statement of 36 nations on the 70th anniversary of the Ukrainian Holodomor....

Yurii Shapoval, "Understanding the Causes and Consequences of the Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: The Significance of Newly Discovered Archival Documents." Originally published in *Famine in Ukraine, 1932–1933: Genocide by Other Means*, ed. Taras Hunczak and Roman Serbyn (New York: Shevchenko Scientific Society, USA, 2007), pp. 84–97; revised text online at <http://faminegenocide.com/print/resources/shapoval.htm>.
Excerpts.

Yurii Shapoval (b. 1953) is a Ukrainian historian specializing in twentieth-century Ukrainian history. He is director of the Center for Historical Political Studies at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv). He is the editor of *The Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933 in Ukraine* (2005) and coeditor of *Commanders of the Great Famine* (2001, in Ukrainian). He is the author,

in Ukrainian, of *The CHEKA-GPU-NKVD in Ukraine: People, Facts, Documents* (1997) and *Ukraine in the Twentieth Century: People and Events in Difficult Times* (2001).

...Newly discovered archival documents provide grounds for the following conclusion: **it was the meticulous organization of the execution of Ukrainian peasants that invested the Holodomor, i.e., forced starvation, in Ukraine with the character of a genocide....**

Thanks to recently uncovered archival documents, scholars are now able to picture in a more systematic fashion, without simplification or onesidedness, the exact methods that were used to strike a “decisive blow” against Ukrainian villages.

Fines in kind. These penalties were introduced by a resolution “On Measures for Intensifying Grain Procurements,” passed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine on 18 November 1932. In particular, the resolution authorized the levy of fines in kind from independent homesteads not fulfilling the grain delivery plan: these took the form of a fifteen-month quota of meat deliveries and a yearly quota of potatoes, on top of grain deliveries.

On 20 November 1932 the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR approved a decision to introduce fines in kind for collective farms that “had allowed the theft of collective farm grain and were maliciously wrecking the grain procurement plan.” These fines in kind appeared to be “additional tasks” requiring a fifteen-month quota of meat deliveries that a given collective farm was to supply in the form of both collectivized cattle and cattle belonging to collective farm members. In other words, the principle of both individual and collective responsibility was being introduced here. As one Ukrainian researcher has precisely noted, “In Soviet Communist Party resolutions on fines in kind, only meat, fatback, and potatoes are mentioned.” They made no mention of long-storage products. Yet within two months after the publication of the 18 November resolution “malicious debtors” were issued fines in kind in full. Holodomor survivors have confirmed this. With the exception of 1,500 farms, all the collective farms in Ukraine were branded as “malicious debtors.”

Ban on trading food. On 1 December 1932 the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR banned the trade in potatoes in raions that were maliciously refusing to fulfill their contract duties and the inspection of current stores of potatoes on collective farms. Twelve raions in the Chernihiv region and four raions each in Kyiv and Kharkiv oblasts were listed. On 3 December trading in meat and animals was banned in a number of raions in Ukraine. In keeping with a resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine and the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR of 6 December 1932, these villages began to be entered on so-called “blacklists.”

Stoppage of deliveries of manufactured goods. As early as 30 October 1932 Molotov wrote in a telegram to Stalin: “We are using manufactured goods as an incentive, and the deprivation of a portion of manufactured goods as repression of collective farms, particularly independent homesteads.” Sources confirm that no detail was too small for Stalin’s premier. For example, on 20 November 1932 Molotov sent a telegram to Stanislaw Kosior from Henychesk: “Until now the order concerning the sale of matches, salt, and kerosene has been in effect in all raions. There is a telegram about this from Bliakher, dated 9 November. It is necessary to rescind it immediately and make sure that this is carried out.”

On 15 December 1932 the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine confirmed a list of eighty-two raions where deliveries of manufactured goods had been suspended because these raions had not carried out the grain procurement plan.

Ban forbidding peasants to flee the famine. In the fall of 1932 and the winter of 1933 a food blockade was set up on the borders of Ukraine, which was enforced by Interior troops and the militia. The blockade prevented peasants from leaving the Ukrainian SSR, thereby dooming them to death by starvation. At the same time there was a ban on food “reverses,” i.e., private individuals were forbidden to bring food from Russia into Ukraine without the state’s permission.

On 22 January 1933 Stalin and Molotov sent a directive to Party and Soviet organs, which emphasized that the migration processes that had begun among the peasantry as a result of the famine were being organized by “enemies of the Soviet government, S[ocialist] R[evolutionarie]s, and agents of Poland with the goal of conducting agitation against the collective farms and generally against the Soviet government ‘through the agency of the peasants’ in the northern raions of the USSR.”

In this connection governmental and GPU organs of the Ukrainian SSR and the Northern Caucasus were ordered to prevent mass departures of peasants to other raions. Appropriate instructions were issued to the transport departments of the OGPU USSR.

One detail is striking: the famine did not affect any Russian oblasts bordering Ukraine. This is why starving Ukrainian peasants—those who were able to cross the designated borders—traveled there to barter and buy bread.

Introduction of the passport system. On 15 November 1932 the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) approved a decision “On the Passport System and Relieving Cities of Superfluous Elements,” which noted that with the goal of “relieving Moscow and Leningrad and other large urban centers of the USSR of superfluous elements not connected to manufacturing and institutions, as well as of kulak, criminal, and other anti-civic elements that are hiding in the cities,” it was essential to introduce a single passport system throughout the USSR with the concomitant elimination of all other types of identification.

On 27 December 1932 the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR approved a joint resolution “On the Creation of a Single Passport System throughout the USSR and the Obligatory Registration of Passports.” A few days later, on 31 December, the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR passed a congruent resolution.

On 28 April 1933 the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR passed a resolution on the issuing of passports to Soviet citizens residing everywhere on the territory of the USSR. The resolution declared, “citizens who reside permanently in rural areas do not obtain passports.” Registration of the population in these areas was carried out according to settlement lists of villages and village councils controlled by raion administrations of the militia. In this manner the Soviet regime in fact “bound” the peasants to this or that territory, transforming them into neo-serfs.

Purchase of valuables from peasants. The All-Ukrainian Bureau TORGSIN, i.e., the All-Union Association for Trade with Foreigners, was created on 29 June 1932. The system of TORGSIN stores was in operation earlier. Besides foreigners, it catered to citizens of the USSR: for hard currency, they could purchase food products and other items. Gradually the objective of the TORGSIN system was made more exact: these stores were relied on to extract gold and valuables from the population, and the network of stores was expanded accordingly. By October 1933 in the Ukrainian SSR there were 263 such stores consisting of a system of shops, receiving points, and branches.

In 1931, the TORGSIN system generated 6 million currency *karbovantsi* (rubles) for the Soviet treasury; in 1932, nearly 50 million, and in 1933—107 million. Peasants would bring to the TORGSIN stores the crosses they wore around their necks, rings, earrings, family valuables, etc. In one working day some receiving points purchased up to 800 kilograms of gold, which they would accept according to a single standard and then record a different standard in the registry books.

Eighty-six out of the above-mentioned 107 million *karbovantsi* collected in 1933 represented internal revenue. In addition, the TORGSIN stores were a type of “litmus test” for the GPU: if peasants brought in gold coins, they were immediately detained. The Chekists also demanded lists of “gold suppliers” with their addresses and surnames. Directors of TORGSIN stores were obliged to remit currency valuables to the fund for industrialization.

Actions of the communist special service in villages. Archival documents provide evidence that this service crushed genuine peasant resistance in the places where it was occurring, and also fabricated various types of cases as a preventive counteraction to the peasant discontent. At the same time the GPU was the very structure that knew the truth about the realities of the famine. On 16 February 1933 a Party-state directive was issued: “Categorically forbid any kind of organization to record cases of famine-related swelling and death, with the exception of the GPU organs.” Village councils were instructed not to indicate the cause of death in the registers. In 1934 a new instruction was issued: all Registry Office books concerning the registration of deaths for the period 1932–33 were to be sent to special sections, where they were most probably destroyed...

What made the situation in Ukraine radically different from what was happening, say, in Russia or Kazakhstan, were changes in nationality policy. On 14 December 1932 Stalin and Molotov signed a resolution of the CC of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR in connection with the execution of the grain procurement campaign. This document stipulated the “correct implementation of Ukrainization” in Ukraine and beyond its borders in regions densely settled by Ukrainians. The document also included a categorical imperative to wage a struggle against Petliurite and other “counter-revolutionary” elements. This spelled the end of the limited policy of “Ukrainization” and the beginning of anti-Ukrainian purges.

This was confirmed by the events of 1933, when cadre changes took place in the Party-state leadership of the Ukrainian SSR. The most important change was the appointment of Pavel Postyshev as second secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine and first secretary of the Kharkiv oblast Party committee of the CP(B)U. Postyshev simultaneously retained his post as secretary of the CC of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik). Newly discovered archival materials indicate that throughout 1933 Postyshev and his “team” (his closest associates, as well as Party workers who had come from Russia for “support”) implemented the Kremlin’s economic line for obtaining grain, and carried out a large-scale purge of Petliurites and Ukrainian nationalists from all social spheres. The latter were soon accused of organizing the famine.

In his speech at the joint Plenum of the CC and the Central Control Commission of the CP(B)U in November 1933 Postyshev drew up a political summary of the events of 1932–33. Underlining the fact that collective farms in Ukraine had been turned into Bolshevik ones, he also emphasized that “errors and shortcomings committed by the CP(B)U in implementing the Party’s nationality policy were one of the chief causes of the decline in Ukrainian agriculture in 1931–32. There is no doubt that without the liquidation of errors in the implementation of the

Party's nationality policy, without the crushing defeat of nationalistic elements that had lodged themselves in various areas of social construction in Ukraine, it would have been impossible to liquidate the lag in its agriculture.”

The Plenum approved a resolution that noted, “[A]t the present moment the chief danger is local nationalism that is uniting with imperialist interventionists.” This “present moment” would be extended over a period of many years, thus legitimizing the rollback of the Ukrainization policy and the beginning of the campaign of mass repressions, which in Ukraine began as early as 1933, in time becoming an organic part of the history of Yezhov’s “Great Terror” of 1936–38.

To summarize, archival documents that have been uncovered in the last few years incontrovertibly attest to the fact that the famine-genocide was a desirable and effective device for transforming Ukraine into a “model republic,” to use Stalin’s euphemism. According to these new documents, the actions of the Stalinist regime reveal special anti-Ukrainian accents whose significance and profound consequences will serve to expand the range of scholarly discourse on the Holodomor.

Nicolas Werth, “The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932–33,” in *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, 18 April 2008. Online at <http://www.massviolence.org/The-1932-1933-Great-Famine-in-Ukraine>. Excerpts.

Nicolas Werth (b. 1950) is a French historian specializing in the history of the Soviet Union. He is director of research of the Institut d’histoire du temps présent at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique in Paris. He is the author of fourteen books on Soviet history (with a focus on Stalinism), including *La Terreur et le désarroi. Staline et son système* (2007) and *L’ivrogne et la marchande de fleurs. Autopsie d’un meurtre de masse, 1937–1938* (2009). He is coauthor of *Cannibal Island: Death in a Siberian Gulag* (2007) and *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (1999).

Over four million people starved to death between the fall of 1932 and the summer of 1933 in Ukraine and the Kuban, an administrative unit of the Russian Republic in the northern Caucasus populated largely by Ukrainians. Up until Gorbachev’s *perestroika*, this tragedy was never spoken of in the USSR. The 1932–33 famine was officially recognized in Ukraine only in December 1987 during a speech given by Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, on the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Ukrainian Republic. Since then, the opening up of once inaccessible archives has brought to light a number of documents that have made it possible to analyze and better understand the political mechanisms behind the genesis and aggravation of the famine in Ukraine and the Kuban, and the role of the Soviet leadership in this process. These sources include secret resolutions passed by the Politburo or the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Stalin’s correspondence with his closest collaborators, [Viacheslav] Molotov and [Lazar] Kaganovich, and secret police reports on the situation in the countryside, in particular at the “collection fronts.” The documents also help to delineate the particular characteristics of the Ukrainian famine vis-à-vis other famines that ravished a slew of regions in the USSR in 1931–33, including Kazakhstan, where between 1.1–1.4 million died (or almost one-third of the indigenous Kazakh population), and western Siberia and the Volga area, with several hundred thousand victims....

The Mechanisms of a Murderous Famine: Prologue (First Half of 1932)

In 1931, Soviet state collection agencies managed to extract a record quantity of grain (almost twenty-three million tons) from a very mediocre national harvest (sixty-nine million tons), five million of which was exported. Owing to poor harvests in western Siberia and Kazakhstan, the three most important grain-producing centers of the country, i.e., Ukraine, the northern Caucasus and the central black earth region, were targeted for particularly heavy contributions that year. Thus in 1931, more than 42 percent of Ukraine's total harvest was taken, an exceptionally large levy that would disrupt a production cycle already seriously shaken by the forced collectivization and de-kulakization begun the year before. Many kolkhozes were forced to give up some of the seed required for the following year's crop, seriously undermining future yields. Beginning in February–March 1932, reports by the Secret Political Department of the OGPU sent to the chief Soviet leaders mentioned “isolated sites of food problems.” These reports were confirmed by [Stanislav] Kosior, the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, in a letter to Stalin on April 26, 1932. According to Kosior, these “isolated cases of starving villages” were the result of “excesses and deviations by local officials who had gone a little too far in the last collection campaign....” He added, “One must categorically reject all talk of a supposed “famine” in Ukraine.”

In the course of the following weeks, which coincided with the traditional “gap” between two harvests, the food shortage deteriorated to such an extent that [Hryhorii] Petrovsky, the President of the Executive Committee of Ukrainian Soviets, and Vlas Chubar, the head of the Ukrainian government, decided to each address a long letter to Stalin and Molotov on June 10, 1932. Both letters described the now critical situation in the Ukrainian countryside: “At least 100 districts (as opposed to sixty-one in May) need emergency food assistance,” wrote Chubar, adding, “I visited many villages and I saw people starving everywhere... Women were crying, even the men sometimes.” Criticism was pointed: “Why have you created this artificial famine? We had a harvest, why did you confiscate it all? Even under the old regime, no one would have done this!” Like Petrovsky, Chubar blamed the situation on “excesses” and the “giddiness of success” among local officials, remaining silent on the fact that these officials were simply obeying specific orders to fulfill the plan at all costs. Both warned of danger ahead: If the *muzhik* [peasant] was too weak to work, the 1932 harvest would be catastrophic. Chubar asked for emergency assistance, albeit modest, of one million poods (16,000 tons) of grain. Petrovsky boldly requested a little more, one and a half million poods (24–32,000 tons).

These requests met with no response. Addressing an assembly of top Party officials on June 12, 1932, Molotov, the head of the Soviet government, declared: “Even if we are confronted today with the specter of famine, mostly in the grain-producing zones, the collection plans must be fulfilled at all costs.” A week later, on 18 June, Stalin shared his opinion with Kaganovich. In Stalin's view, the situation in Ukraine was the product of a “mechanistic approach to the last collection plan.... The real situation of each kolkhoz had not been considered.” He explained that it was out of the question, however, to ease the 1932 plan. On June 21, Stalin and Molotov sent a very firm telegram to the leadership of the Ukrainian Communist Party, reminding it that “no decrease in deliveries owed by the kolkhozes and the sovkhoses will be tolerated, and no extension of the deadline is granted.”

The Mechanisms of a Murderous Famine: The Second Phase (July–October 1932)

At the Third Conference of the Ukrainian Party, which assembled in Kharkiv between 6–10 July, the vast majority of speakers (secretaries of district or regional committees) deemed Moscow's collection plan “unachievable.” Nevertheless, the delegates ratified the 1932 plan, under pressure

from Molotov and Kaganovich, who had been rushed to Kharkiv for the occasion. The two intervened brutally in the debates, not hesitating to declare that “any attempt to ease the plan is fundamentally anti-Party and anti-Bolshevik.” Ukraine was required to provide 356 million poods of grain, or about six million tons. However, in July 1932, the first month of the new “levy,” “grain is not coming in,” and at the end of July, barely 48,000 tons were delivered, or seven times less than the year before! The opposition demonstrated by the Ukrainian chiefs did not, of course, go unnoticed by Stalin, as his recently published correspondence with Kaganovich shows: on August 11, Stalin sent Kaganovich a long letter that helps to illuminate the history of the Ukrainian famine. According to Stalin:

The most important thing now is Ukraine. The current situation in Ukraine is terribly bad. It's bad in the Party. They say that, in two regions in Ukraine (Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk), some fifty district committees have spoken against the collection plan, declaring it unrealistic. Things are no better in the other district committees. What does it sound like? It's no longer a party, it's a parliament, a caricature of a parliament. Instead of leading, Kosior has been maneuvering between the directives of the Party Central Committee and the requests of the district committees: now he's squeezed into a corner. Things are bad with the soviets. Chubar is not a leader. The situation with the GPU is not good. [Stanislav] Redens is not up to leading the struggle against the counter-revolution in a republic as large and particular as Ukraine. If we do not immediately take charge of straightening out the situation in Ukraine, we could lose Ukraine. Bear in mind that [Józef] Piłsudski never rests, his espionage capabilities in Ukraine are much stronger than Redens and Kosior realize. And remember too that, in the Ukrainian Communist Party (500,000 members, ha ha!), we find no few (no, no few!) rotten types, conscious and unconscious “Petliurites,” as well as direct agents of Piłsudski. As soon as things get worse, these elements will lose no time in opening up a front within (and outside) the Party, against the Party. The worst of it is that the Ukrainian leaders are oblivious to these dangers.

Continuing, Stalin proposed that Kaganovich take charge of the Ukrainian Party, that [Vsevolod] Balytsky replace Redens at the head of the GPU, and Chubar be dismissed. The letter ended with: “Ukraine must be transformed as soon as possible into a true fortress of the USSR, into a truly exemplary republic. Spare no effort. Without these measures (economic and political reinforcement of Ukraine, firstly in the border districts, etc....), we risk losing Ukraine.”

For Stalin, Ukraine was vulnerable, but not because of the imminent famine that threatened to kill millions of Ukrainians. It was vulnerable politically, the weak link in the system. Stalin had not forgotten that, two years earlier, the Soviet regime had lost control for several weeks of some 100 border districts along the Polish frontier, following the greatest wave of consecutive peasant uprisings against forced collectivization; that Ukraine alone had been the site of almost half of the some 6,500 peasant riots and disturbances reported by the OGPU in the course of the single month of March 1930; that the peasant insurgents had demonstrated under explicit banners proclaiming *Shche ne vmerla Ukraïna!* (Ukraine still lives!). The situation had to be reined in through the submission of the Ukrainian peasantry to the demands of the global development of the USSR. In the immediate term, that meant the fulfillment, within set deadlines, of the First Five Year Plan, which depended largely on a program of agricultural exports. Commenting on the situation, Sergei Kirov...observed that, in this context, the annual collection campaign was “the touchstone of our strength or our weakness, of the strength or weakness of our enemies.”

On the collection front, September and October 1932 were catastrophic. In September, only 32 percent of the monthly target was reached in Ukraine and 28 percent in the northern Caucasus. In October, deliveries shrank again: On October 25, only 22 percent of the mandatory levy fixed for that month was collected in Ukraine, and 18 percent in the northern Caucasus. The confidential reports of the Secret Political Department of the OGPU throw light on the various strategies employed by the peasants, often in complicity with the kolkhoz administration, to withhold some of the harvest from the state: grain, barely harvested, buried in “pits,” hidden in “black granaries” (secret storage sites scattered around village lines), ground the traditional way in “hand mills,” overturned on the way to silos or at weighing points; children, women and the elderly—“who the peasants thought might enjoy some lenience before the law”—sent, often by cover of darkness, to cut down some stalks (they were referred to in the countryside, with some derision, as “the barbers”). It was these acts of resistance, this “kulak sabotage,” that the Politburo set out to break when it decided, on October 22, to send out two “plenipotentiary commissions” to Ukraine and the northern Caucasus—one headed by Molotov, the other by Kaganovich.

The Mechanisms of a Murderous Famine: The Third Phase (November 1932–January 1933)
During the course of three decisive months (end of October 1932–end of January 1933), these commissions, involving the highest-level chiefs of the OGPU (notably [Genrikh] Yagoda, the head of the Soviet secret police), played a critical role in aggravating the famine. Crucial documents, now declassified, vividly elucidate the political and ideological arguments advanced by Stalin’s envoys, the escalation of repressive measures, and the increasingly resolute use of hunger as a weapon to crush the resistance of the Ukrainian peasantry: telegrams sent to Stalin by his two “plenipotentiaries,” dispatches exchanged between the chiefs of the Ukrainian Communist Party, speeches given by Molotov and Kaganovich before local assemblies of Party movers as well as before kolkhozes, and the travel journal of Kaganovich—taken together, they paint the picture of the unfolding famine.

Before leaving for Rostov-on-the-Don on October 29, Kaganovich presented a “resolution project” to the Politburo outlining the goals of his mission to the northern Caucasus. Notable among these was “the intensification of the levies, i.e., to take all measures to break the sabotage of the collections and of the sowing campaign by kulak counter-revolutionary elements.” Upon arriving in Rostov on November 1, Kaganovich announced to the local regional Party chiefs that “it is useless to try and give me a precise account of grain reserves. This can only lead to all sorts of deceit and amounts essentially to a rejection of the collection plan. The problem can only be resolved by crushing the kulak counter-revolutionary elements.” On November 5, Kaganovich wrote to Stalin from Krasnodar:

The counter-revolutionaries are strongly entrenched. The dreadful work of the local Party organizations, of liberalism, opportunism and sloppiness have paved the way for the rise of the counter-revolution... Our main task today is to break sabotage, sabotage that is organized and led by a single center. I’m leaving Krasnodar today for the *stanitsy* (Cossack towns). I’ll head to the most rebellious, Poltavskaia, which is home to no fewer than 400 teachers, doctors, technicians, Cossack officers, etc....

The missions of Kaganovich and Molotov (the latter expressing much of the same upon his arrival in Kharkiv and during the course of his expedition in the Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk regions) resembled veritable military campaigns against insurgents. Hundreds of detachments

consisting of “activists” and “plenipotentiaries” with vague mandates, supported by agents of the OGPU, were sent into the countryside to “take the grain.”

Among the first measures taken by Molotov and Kaganovich was to halt the supply of all manufactured products to those districts that had not fulfilled the plan. The most “rebellious” towns were “placed on the blackboard,” signifying the removal of all products, both manufactured goods *and food*, from stores, a complete stoppage in trade, immediate repayment of all active credits (individual and collective), a special levy (i.e., basically the total confiscation of the peasants’ last remaining food reserves), and massive arrests of all the “saboteurs of the collection plan.” The number of arrests in Ukraine and the northern Caucasus skyrocketed: 20,000 in November for leading the “sabotage of collections” and more than 30,000 for the “theft of social property” (punishable, under a new law promulgated on August 7, 1932, by ten years in a prison camp or even death). In December, 72,000 were arrested in total. During the search-and-arrest missions carried out by the “collection detachments,” thousands of “grain pits” were unearthed. However, as Balytsky (the new head of the Ukrainian GPU) admitted, the “total haul” was pathetic—barely 10,000 tons of grain, or 0.2 percent of the collection plan!

It is clear that the Ukrainian countryside was deprived of its last food reserves during the fall of 1932, the village store shelves stripped bare of their paltry supply of products. The final stage in the escalating repression was the collective deportation of all the inhabitants of “rebellious” villages that had “waged war against Soviet power,” as Kaganovich declared to the villagers of Medvedovskaia *stanitsa* on November 6, 1932. A few weeks later, all of the inhabitants of three large *stanitsy* in the Kuban (Medvedovskaia, Umanskaia and Poltavskaia), totaling more than 45,000 people, were collectively deported to Siberia, the Urals, and Kazakhstan for failing to fulfill the unrealistic collection plan that had been imposed on them. These coercive measures were also designed to break the final resistance of a certain number of Ukrainian communist chiefs, compelling them to fully yield on the collection plan at all costs. The correspondence between Molotov and [Mendel] Khataevich, the First Secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk region, sheds some light on this point. In his letter of November 23, 1932, Khataevich tried to explain to Molotov that it would be economically irrational to seize the last reserves held by the kolkhozes: “If production is to go up in future to meet the needs of the proletarian state, we must take into account the minimal needs of the kolkhozes and their members, otherwise there will soon be nobody left to plant the crop and harvest it.” Molotov’s reply the same day is revealing:

Your position is profoundly incorrect, non-Bolshevik. We Bolsheviks cannot place the needs of the State—minimal needs that have been precisely defined and on numerous occasions by the resolutions of the Party—in tenth or even in second place in order to satisfy the needs of the kolkhozes. A true Bolshevik must place the needs of the State first.

It was in the second half of December 1932 that the fatal measures were taken condemning tens of millions of Ukrainian peasants to starvation. On December 19, the Politburo demanded “a radical break in the collection pace.” Kaganovich, seconded by tens of upper Party chiefs and by the OGPU, was dispatched again as “plenipotentiary” to Ukraine, empowered to “occupy strategic regions and adopt all measures to fulfill the collection plan before January 15, 1933.” A few days later, in a letter sent to Stalin from Odesa, he proposed the annulment of a resolution passed by the Ukrainian Communist Party stipulating that only the Regional Executive Committee of Soviets could authorize, in special circumstances, the confiscation of kolkhoz “seed stores” and their inclusion in mandatory state levies. With Stalin’s enthusiastic support,

Kaganovich imposed this measure on the leadership of the Ukrainian Communist Party on December 29. The local leadership also bowed at this time to another critical tactic: kolkhozes that failed to fulfill the “collection plan” would have five days to hand over their “so-called seed stores” (*tak nazyvaemye semennye fondy*), the last reserves ensuring the next harvest, even the most minimal, or some final assistance to starving kolkhoz members. Three days later, on January 1, 1933, the Ukrainian Communist Party heads adopted a resolution calling for all kolkhoz members and individual peasants caught with “hidden stocks” to be included among “thieves of socialist property” and judged “with all the severity of the law of August 7, 1932.” The repression had crossed a new threshold.

Between January 7–12, 1933, an important plenum of the Central Committee took place in Moscow, a great annual reunion bringing together Party leaders from around the country. Stalin acknowledged that, despite an overall better harvest in 1932 than the year before, the collection campaign had encountered more difficulties. He blamed these on “sabotage” perpetrated by “kulak infiltrators within the kolkhozes,” the “criminal nonchalance of the rural communists,” their “non-Marxist attitude towards collective agriculture.” Like all the speakers, the leaders of the Ukrainian Communist Party, some of whom had tried to withstand Moscow’s pressure, celebrated the “triumph of socialism” and the “spectacular successes of the First Five Year Plan, completed in four years and three months,” remaining silent on the real situation in Ukraine.

While the plenum progressed in Moscow, the peasant exodus from the famine zones intensified. For the chiefs of the OGPU, these departures were “consciously organized by counter-revolutionary organizations.” “In one week, our services have stopped 500 hardened instigators who were pushing the peasants to leave,” Balytsky wrote to [Genrikh] Yagoda, the head of the OGPU. On January 22, 1933, Stalin himself drafted a key secret directive ordering an immediate halt to the massive peasant exodus from Ukraine and the Kuban “on the pretext of searching for bread.” Stalin wrote:

The Central Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars have evidence that this exodus from Ukraine, even that of the year before, has been organized by the enemies of Soviet power, the socialist-revolutionaries, and Polish agents. Their goal is propaganda, to use the peasants fleeing towards the regions of the USSR north of Ukraine to discredit the kolkhoz system and, in particular, the Soviet system in general.

The same day, Yagoda sent a circular to the regional leaders of the OGPU ordering that special patrols be set up, especially in stations and on the roads, to intercept all the “runaways” from Ukraine and the northern Caucasus. Once those stopped had been “filtered,” the “kulak and counter-revolutionary elements,” the “individuals spreading counter-revolutionary rumors on supposed food problems,” as well as all those who refused to return home were to be arrested and deported to “special villages” (or, in the case of the most hardened, sent to camps). The other runaways would be “sent back home,” i.e., to villages ravaged by famine, and left to fend for themselves without any food assistance at all. This, in effect, was a death sentence.

The following day, on January 23, 1933, Stalin’s directive against peasant flight (as well as the spread of news about the famine) was put into motion by the imposition of various restrictions, beginning with a suspension of the sale of train tickets to peasants. On January 25, to “prevent the production of false departure authorizations,” officials forbade rural soviets and kolkhoz directors from providing peasants with the usual certificates permitting kolkhoz members to travel. During the last week of January, some 25,000 runaways were intercepted. Two months after the start of the operation, more than 225,000 people had been apprehended, 85

percent of whom were sent back to their villages. The weekly reports of the OGPU “on the measures taken to stop the massive exodus of peasants” addressed directly to Stalin and Molotov made no mention, of course, of the physical condition of those apprehended.

The Famine at Its Height (February–July 1933)

During February–July 1933, the period marking the height of the famine, the higher officials of the Ukrainian GPU drafted a few documents (very few, in fact) on what was actually happening in the starving Ukrainian countryside that help supplement the accounts provided by survivors in later years. Thus, in one revealing communication, Balytsky instructed his subordinates:

Provide information on the food problems only to the First Secretaries of the regional committees of the Party and only orally, after carefully checking the reports. This is to ensure that written notes on the subject do not circulate through the *apparatus*, where they might stir rumors... Do not write specific reports for the Ukrainian GPU. It is sufficient for me to be personally informed by personal letters from the leaders addressed to me directly.

It is interesting to compare the rare sources unearthed from the central archives of the secret service agencies of the former Soviet Union (the forerunners of the KGB, now the FSB) to other more loquacious internal reports written by officials in various administrations that show quite clearly that the “secret” famine was no secret at all. They also convey an aloof police vision of the “food problems,” which were attributed to “sabotage perpetrated in the agriculture of Ukraine by kulak and counter-revolutionary elements [that had] infiltrated the kolkhozes, sovkhoses, and some of the villages.” This attitude emerges starkly in the details provided by [Jan] Krauklis, the head of the regional department of the Dnipropetrovsk GPU, concerning the autopsies performed under his authority. In attempting to determine the “exact causes of death” of those who had starved (Did these individuals *really* die of hunger? Were these not cases of “enemy provocation?”), or investigating cannibalism and necrophagia, Krauklis reported in the manner of the detached ethnologist describing the “savage customs” of a “primitive tribe.” A similar tone is apparent in a communication sent by [Aleksandr] Rozanov, the head of the Kyiv GPU, to Balytsky:

One might even say that cannibalism has become a habit. There are some who were suspected of cannibalism last year and are now backsliding again, killing children, acquaintances, even strangers on the street. In the villages that are affected by cannibalism, every passing day strengthens people’s belief that it is acceptable to eat human flesh. This idea is particularly widespread among the starving and children.

The reports of the OGPU chiefs also reflect very clearly the dread of a mass uprising of starving peasants, whose anti-Soviet talk was systematically noted, especially in the “reports-compilations” of letters written by peasants and seized by a highly vigilant postal surveillance. With the famine raging stronger than ever, the deportation of tens of thousands of starving peasants continued and “grandiose” plans were laid for the deportation of millions of “kulak, counter-revolutionary, and socially harmful elements.” At the same time, the powers of the *troiki* (special courts) were further tightened for fear of peasant insurrections. Police reports show too how hazardous it is to determine the number of famine victims, given that the officials of the rural soviets—often decimated themselves when entire districts were subject to a complete blockade as “punishment” for having failed to fulfill their “sacred obligations before the State”—no longer kept up the civil register (births, deaths, marriages). Moreover, the dead were not always buried anymore, while others were simply dumped into communal pits. It is estimated

that barely 32 percent of the four million deaths were recorded by the state authorities at the peak of the famine.

The new documents also throw some light on the question of food assistance provided in the final hour to certain districts hit by the famine. As recent studies have shown, between January–June 1933, when the famine reached its greatest height and reach, the central authorities passed no fewer than thirty-five resolutions on aid to regions affected by “food problems.” Assistance rose to about 320,000 tons, which, applied to the some thirty million people hit by the famine, amounts to only ten kilos of grain per person, or scarcely 3 percent of a peasant’s average annual consumption! In 1932, the USSR exported 1,730,000 tons of grain and another 1,680,000 tons in 1933. In addition, at the beginning of 1933, state reserves reached more than 1,800,000 tons. As for the paltry food aid, no doubt only a small portion actually reached the villages, since the cities of Ukraine and the northern Caucasus were also severely hurt by the famine (Kharkiv lost more than 120,000 inhabitants in one year alone, while medium-sized cities like Krasnodar or Stavropol lost 40,000 and 20,000 respectively) and absorbed most of the emergency food.

Instructions sent by Balytsky on March 19, 1933 “on the measures to be taken in connection with the food problems” specify that the emergency food supplies, accorded “on a class basis,” were exclusively for the benefit of “those who deserved them, i.e., in order of priority, kolkhoz members with a significant number of work days, brigadiers, tractor operators, families with a least one member in the Red Army, kolkhoz members and individual peasants who had chosen to join the kolkhoz.” Balytsky’s circular in fact focused on the repressive measures that were to be taken against the “kulak, counter-revolutionary, parasitical, and enemy elements of all kinds that sought to exploit the food problems for their own counter-revolutionary purposes, spreading rumors about the famine and various ‘horrors,’ purposely leaving the dead unburied.”

In the spring of 1933, the reports of the Ukrainian GPU reveal another major preoccupation, namely how to ensure the working of the fields for the next harvest in the regions ravaged by the famine. As we saw earlier, in November 1932, the Second Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Khataevich, had warned Molotov that, “Soon there will be nobody left to sow and prepare for the next crop!” A few months later, officials were faced with this very scenario. Given their weakened state, surviving kolkhoz members were hard pressed to rebuild their work force, as those reporting realized, albeit not without some cynicism: “The very few who still work are unable to fulfill quotas. Consequently, they do not receive enough bread and begin to bloat.” In an attempt to deal with the dramatic loss of rural labor, the authorities, backed up by the military, began by mobilizing a part of the urban population, which was sent to the fields. The Italian consul in Kharkiv reported what he witnessed: “The mobilization of the urban forces has assumed enormous proportions... This week, at least 20,000 people were sent to the countryside... The day before yesterday, they surrounded the market, seized all able persons, men, women, and adolescents, transported them to the station under GPU guard, and shipped them to the fields.” Later, officials resorted to mass transfers of “colonists” from other parts of the USSR: more than 200,000 peasants were displaced in 1933–34 towards the areas devastated by the famine, most as soon as they had completed their military service.

The OGPU reports on conditions in the countryside in Ukraine and the northern Caucasus also speak of the incredible repression and brutalization that accompanied the hunger and starvation. Rural banditry soared and, more generally, society witnessed a rise of extraordinary violence on a daily basis in a world traumatized and overwhelmed by a relentless permanent

hunger: lynched thieves, including children caught on trains trying to pinch a few vegetables, summary judgments (*samosudy*) administered by the peasants themselves, tortures, brutalities, exactions of all kinds, child abandonment, cannibalism and necrophagy... The extreme violence committed by the regime and its representatives against the population ended by driving people to the same in their everyday lives.

Accounts by survivors, gathered at several points (in the 1950s among the émigrés of the “second wave,” and in the 1990s in Ukraine itself, after the fall of the USSR) constitute another invaluable source for understanding the famine, not only from the inside but from the perspective of its victims. All describe the incredible fury and determination of the “activist brigades,” made up of policemen and local Party chiefs, but often also of people from outside the village. Together, they systematically confiscated the peasants’ last food reserves. Their exactions, which often resembled a mass plundering (anything having the slightest market value was confiscated, in addition to food products) demonstrate that their objective was not only to “fulfill the grain collection plan at all costs,” but also to “punish” the peasants who were hostile to the kolkhoz system, which they perceived as a “second serfdom.” These peasants tried to survive by gleanings (“stealing,” according to the authorities) a few stalks or some potatoes in the collective fields, hiding a chicken, or growing a tiny vegetable garden (“at the expense of collective labor”). The testimonies also paint a terrible picture of the slow agony of death by starvation, the progressive dehumanization of the victims, and the multiplication of transgressions against others (anthropophagy, the mass abandonment of young children, collective suicides).

Not all segments of the population were affected to the same extent, however. The accounts show that the Ukrainian countryside paid a higher price than the cities, which were inhabited by a strong minority of non-Ukrainians (Russians, Poles, Jews); and ordinary peasants were more vulnerable than kolkhoz members or the “specialists” (technicians, tractor-operators). In the end, the surviving testimonies underline the sense of total abandonment felt by the inhabitants of the rural zones left to starve, trapped in their village, deprived of even the slightest food aid, in a word—condemned to death.

The Famine: A Genocide?

Since the late 1980s, the “rediscovery” of the 1932–33 famine has played a crucial role in Ukrainian political life, in the confrontation between those advocating a break with the USSR (and then with Russia) and others who prefer to maintain close ties with the “big Russian brother.” The *Holodomor* (from *holod*/hunger, *moryty*/killed by privation, starved, exhausted), as Ukraine now calls the intentional mass extermination of its population, has not only been the centre of political and cultural debate but has become an integral part of the process of state and national reconstruction in post-Soviet Ukraine. It is within this context that, following lengthy discussions, the Parliament of the Republic of Ukraine officially recognized the 1932–33 famine as a genocide perpetrated by Stalin’s regime against the Ukrainian people. Six months later, on the 70th anniversary of the *Holodomor*, the United Nations General Assembly drafted a declaration recognizing that “the great famine of 1932–33, the result of a cruel policy of a totalitarian regime...constituted a national tragedy for the Ukrainian people.” The declaration did not, however, equate the famine with a genocide.

The question of whether the 1932–33 famine constitutes a genocide is a matter of disagreement among historians studying the calamity, whether Russians, Ukrainians, or their Western counterparts. There are basically two schools of thought. Some historians see the famine as an artificially organized phenomenon, planned since 1930 by the Stalinist regime to break the

particularly strong resistance of Ukrainian peasants to the kolkhoz system. In addition, this plan sought to destroy the Ukrainian nation, at its “national-peasant” core, which constituted a serious obstacle to the transformation of the USSR into a new imperial state dominated by Russia. According to this view, the famine was a genocide. At the other end of the analytical spectrum are scholars who recognize the criminal nature of the Stalinist policies but believe that it is necessary to assess all of the famines that took place between 1931–33 (in Kazakhstan, Ukraine, western Siberia and Volga regions) as part of a complex phenomenon shaped by numerous factors, from the geopolitical context to the demands of an accelerated industrialization and modernization drive, in addition to Stalin’s “imperial objectives.” From this perspective, the 1932–33 famine in Ukraine and the Kuban was not a genocide.

The Italian historian Andrea Graziosi, a specialist on Ukrainian history, recently proposed a “fusion” of these two arguments on the basis of a comparative analysis of the various Soviet famines that took place in the early 1930s and an in-depth study of the chronology of events. According to this view, the famines that hit the USSR beginning in 1931 were the direct, but not foreseen or planned, result of the ideologically driven policies implemented since late 1929—forced collectivization, dekulakization, the imposition of the kolkhoz system, and excessive grain and livestock levies. Up until the summer of 1932, the Ukrainian famine, already rearing its head, resembled the other famines that had started earlier elsewhere. However, from this point forward, the nature of the Ukrainian famine changed, with Stalin deciding to use hunger as a weapon, to aggravate the famine that was just beginning. Choosing to instrumentalize the famine, Stalin intentionally amplified it in order to punish the Ukrainian peasants who rejected the “new serfdom” and to break “Ukrainian nationalism,” which he saw as a threat to his goal of constructing a centralized and dictatorial Soviet state. And while hunger hit the peasants harder than any other group, resulting in the death of millions in atrocious conditions, another form of repression, of a police nature, struck others in Ukraine at the same moment—the political and intellectual elites, from village teachers to national leaders, via the intelligentsia. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians were arrested and punished with camp sentences. In December 1932, two secret Politburo decrees put an end in Ukraine, and *only in Ukraine*, to the “indigenization” policy applied to Party cadres since 1923 in all of the federal republics: “Ukrainian nationalism” was firmly condemned.

Two fundamental issues need to be considered in defining the Ukrainian famine of 1932–33 as a genocide, along lines set by the December 1948 United Nations Convention: intention and the ethnic-national targeting of a group (Article II of the Convention recognizes only national, ethnic, racial, and religious groups, not social or political). In the case of Ukraine, sufficient evidence exists to demonstrate intention. A crucial document on this point is the resolution of January 22, 1933 signed by Stalin, ordering the blockade of Ukraine and the Kuban, a region of the Caucasus with a majority Ukrainian population. The blockade intentionally worsened the famine in Ukrainian-populated areas *and in these areas alone*. On the question of target group, i.e., whether Stalin viewed the peasants of Ukraine and the Kuban as peasants or as Ukrainians, which is key to justifying use of the term genocide, scholars disagree. For some historians, the famine’s primary objective was to break peasant rather than national resistance. Others argue that the peasants of Ukraine and the Kuban were targeted first as Ukrainians: For Stalin, the Ukrainian peasant question was “in essence, a national question, the peasants constituting the principal force of the national movement.” By crushing the peasantry, one was breaking the most powerful national movement capable of opposing the process of the construction of the USSR. As the famine decimated the Ukrainian peasantry, the regime

condemned the entire policy of Ukrainization underway since the early 1920s: the Ukrainian elites were rounded up and arrested.

This specifically anti-Ukrainian assault makes it possible to define the totality of intentional political actions taken from late summer 1932 by the Stalinist regime against the Ukrainian peasantry as genocide. With hunger as its deadly arm, the regime sought to punish and terrorize the peasants, resulting in fatalities exceeding four million people in Ukraine and the northern Caucasus. That being said, the *Holodomor* was very different from the Holocaust. It did not seek to exterminate the Ukrainian nation in its entirety, and it did not involve the direct murder of its victims. The *Holodomor* was conceived and fashioned on the basis of political reasoning and not of ethnic or racial ideology. However, by the sheer number of its victims, the *Holodomor*, seen again in its historical context, is the only European event of the 20th century that can be compared to the two other genocides, the Armenian and the Holocaust.

Viktor Kondrashin, “Hunger in 1932–1933—A Tragedy of the Peoples of the USSR,”
Holodomor Studies 1, no. 2 (2009): 16–21. Excerpts.

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Russian researchers began writing about the famine of 1932–33 in the second half of the 1980s.... They argued that the famine was a tragedy for the whole Soviet peasantry, and that it was the result of the implementation of the Stalinist model of forced industrialization, which entailed forced collectivization and forced collection of agricultural products, especially of grain. Collections were aimed at increasing grain exports and satisfying the needs of a growing level of industry....

Numerous sources prepared by Russian researchers...conclusively point to the inextricable link between the Famine of 1932–33 and Stalin’s industrialization. The famine can be classified as “an organized famine” resulting from the policy of the Stalinist leadership....

...The grain procurements were a direct result of Stalin’s leadership in forcing industrialization, which required grain exports. And in order to get as much grain as possible mass collectivization was introduced in 1930 in the main grain-producing regions.

Immediately there was a sharp increase in grain procurement plans. In 1930 the government collected twice as much grain as in 1928....

...[I]n 1930 the USSR began pursuing a policy of returning to Tsarist Russia’s status of being Europe’s main grain exporter.... This presented the best prospects for the USSR to receive large amounts of foreign currency needed to support industrialization. But it required the forced collection and export of huge amounts of grain. It was precisely for this purpose that collective farms were introduced in grain surplus regions of the USSR....

The vast majority of victims of hunger were concentrated in the major grain areas, which had become zones of mass collectivization. These were the traditional regions for growing wheat and rye for export as well as to meet the needs of the urban population. The lion’s share of grain exported in 1930 (70 percent) came from two regions—[the] Uk[rainian] SSR and North

Caucasus *Krai*, and the rest came from the lower Volga and Central Black Earth Region. A similar situation was repeated in 1931....

The economic specialization of the separate regions directly affected the way that these regions experienced the tragedy: the grain regions that had already experienced forced collectivisation and forced grain procurements suffered most. In 1932–33 mass deaths from famine occurred in Ukraine, North Caucasus, Volga, Central Black Earth Region, Urals, Western Siberia and Kazakhstan.

The Stalin leadership group did not want famine but created it by its policy of planning obligatory state procurement of agricultural produce from the collective, state and individual farms, as well as by its actions to fulfill these plans.... The grain collection plans were clearly excessive in terms of the productive capabilities of the collective farms and of the entire agricultural sector. The fulfillment of these plans using administrative and repressive measures destroyed agriculture, undermined the interest of the peasants towards carrying out conscientious work, caused them to resist through grain theft, unauthorized migration, and neglect of work. In addition, collectivization undermined livestock farming, thereby aggravating the food situation in the country....

...Emergency Committees of the Politburo for 1932 grain collections were created almost simultaneously in Ukraine, Kuban and the Volga region. “Black boards” for *raions* that did not comply with the grain collection plans were introduced in Ukraine, North Caucasus, Volga and other regions. The confiscation of all food from the peasants for not fulfilling grain collection plans occurred in 1932–33 in many grain areas....

In 1933, it was not only Ukraine but also Russia’s regions that experienced the horror of mass death from famine....

The primary responsibility for the tragedy of 1932–33 is borne by the top leadership of the Soviet Union and by Stalin personally. They consciously chose and pursued the anti-peasant policy of collectivization and grain procurement that destroyed the country’s agricultural sector. But local authorities also played a negative role in the organization of the famine. Not only did many local leaders unquestioningly fulfill the orders of Stalin and the Central Committee, but they also initiated repression against the peasants, failed to report to Moscow the real extent of the famine, and concealed their own failures and mistakes with ‘triumphant relativism.’....

The responsibility of [Stanislav] Kosior, secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee of the CP(B), for the tragedy in Ukraine is not in doubt....

The scale of the tragedy was directly proportional to the share of the regions in grain collections and grain exports. In all of the USSR at least 7 million people died from famine in 1932–33. A comparative analysis of the 1926 and 1937 censuses shows the following level of decline of rural population in separate famine-affected areas: Kazakhstan 30.9 percent, Volga region 23 percent, Ukraine 20.5 percent, North Caucasus 20.4 percent....

Stalin’s famine of 1932–33 was a general tragedy of the peoples of the former USSR, a tragedy of all the Soviet countryside, a crime of the Stalinist regime.

David R. Marples, *Holodomor: Causes of the 1932–1933 Famine in Ukraine* (Saskatoon: Heritage Press, 2011). Excerpts, pp. 95–98, 100–104.

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Arguably, there were two famines that affected Ukraine and Ukrainian-ethnic territories of the North Caucasus: a general famine that was common to a number of areas of the Soviet Union, including the Russian Federation, and a second one caused more directly by measures applied most specifically to the villages of Ukraine in late 1932, which resulted in the *Holodomor* by the spring and summer of 1933.... Discussion of the causes of the Famine in Ukraine has been somewhat overwhelmed by the debate as to whether it constituted a genocide, which entails discussion of the definition of that term, how it originated under Rafael Lemkin and why the United Nations was obliged to accept ultimately such a broad definition to secure the assent of the Soviet Union. Suffice it to say the 1948 definition of genocide can certainly be applied to Ukraine....

...[L]et us consider the reasons for the famines that pervaded the Ukrainian SSR in 1932 and 1933.

1. Stalin's mass collectivization, accompanied by a dekulakization campaign, sometimes described as a war in the countryside or the Second Bolshevik Revolution. The resulting chaos, accompanied by slaughter and losses of livestock, as well as deportations of many of the better farmers from villages, affected agriculture in all grain-growing regions of the Soviet Union, of which Ukraine was an important component.
2. Reorganization of the administrative structure, which eliminated the former system of *okrugs* and created new oblasts and made it difficult to monitor the situation in individual raions and villages. To make matters worse, it is evident that Stalin and Kaganovich in particular lacked respect for the local republican leadership, Stanislav Kosior and Vlas Chubar in particular, and proved unwilling to allow the Ukrainian leaders to deal with problems alone. From August 1932 onward the two Ukrainian leaders fall under suspicion. The degree of confusion and helplessness at the republican level is manifest from the proceedings of the Party Conference of July 1932. The deployment of figures like Kaganovich, Molotov, and Postyshev, as well as secret police officials Vsevolod Balytsky and Stanislav Redens from the OGPU, exacerbated an already tense situation, and also indicated that the Moscow authorities had taken control of the situation away from their counterparts in Kharkiv.
3. The grain procurement campaign harkened back to the situation of the USSR under War Communism. It paid little heed to the real situation in the villages and imposed unrealistic targets on the Ukrainian SSR, even after the totals were lowered. The consequences of the first two points above were that the population of Ukraine was simply not in a position to comply with all-Union demands, and the new kolkhozes and individual farms were likewise incapable of meeting state targets. The Soviet government prioritized the supply of food to the towns, army, and for export rather than feeding the farmers who produced the grain.
4. The 7 August 1932 decree on the protection of state property which marked the beginning of a terror campaign in Soviet villages. It became evident that the campaign to remove "kulaks" or anti-Soviet elements from agriculture had failed. Likewise such peremptory measures could only alienate the villages and create hostility toward the Soviet regime. Linked to this decree, Stalin's letter to Kaganovich four days later about

the danger of losing Ukraine was a clear signal that this republic was of priority concern and should be subjected to special measures. Thus within the general picture, the specific focus on Ukraine can be ascertained.

5. The forming of the Commissions under Molotov and Kaganovich in Ukraine and the North Caucasus (although Postyshev headed a commission in the Volga region, it did not act as harshly). In Ukraine, this led directly to the two major decrees of 11 November and 18 November 1932, which imposed additional quotas on Ukrainian villages in meat, potatoes, and other products. The deliberate removal of remaining supplies of food condemned the peasants to starvation, and the imposition of the “blackboard” worsened the situation by curtailing movement and ostracizing select villages and collective farms. The later decree authorized the OGPU to carry out purges and repressions of the villages, which was formalized by the operational order of 5 December “On measures for liquidating sabotage of grain procurements.”

6. The decree of 14 December, which effectively ended Ukrainization and rendered Ukrainian cultural activists effectively “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists.” Mass arrests followed, undertaken under the leadership of Balytsky and Redens, who linked opposition to procurements directly to the supposed national uprising planned for the spring of 1933 across Ukraine.

7. The ban on travel outside the villages of Ukraine on 23 January 1933, together with the closure of the borders of the republic, deprived the starving peasants of any hope of relief. Either arrested or returned to their villages, they had no further hope of survival.

Other than the imposition of the “blackboard,” points 5 to 7 above pertain directly to Ukraine—or to Ukraine and the North Caucasus—as distinct from other parts of the Soviet Union. Only these two areas among the key grain-growing areas were believed to be troublesome, even to the extent in Ukraine of plans for alleged mass uprising. They were subjected to the harshest measures and ultimately depopulated, as a result of both fleeing farmers and the effects of starvation. Throughout the period there was a political dimension to the economic policies applied. Underlying the decrees adopted was the sentiment that Ukraine and the essentially Ukrainian-populated North Caucasus were politically unreliable areas permeated by nationalists and anti-Soviet elements that had found a natural ally in the kulak. That explains why punitive measures in Ukraine were applied using officials from outside and answerable directly to Stalin. The goal was without doubt to ensure that Ukraine fulfilled the reduced procurements quota, but there was an underlying second goal, namely to bring a republic to heel through the application of harsher punishments than were applied elsewhere....

...Procurements, deportations, and a general assault on the village had resulted in mass deaths from forced famine from which it would take Ukraine decades to recover both demographically and in terms of cultural and social development. It was not a premeditated event or even an attempt to destroy all Ukrainians—the Albanians and other groups, for example German and Jewish colonies, were also caught up in the upheaval. By late 1932, however, official reprisals originating in Moscow were very clearly directed at the Ukrainian republic as well as the intelligentsia and cultural leadership linked to ethnic Ukrainians living outside Ukraine, especially those living in Poland. Measures applied to all rural regions of the Union were expanded and deepened in Ukraine into a campaign to eliminate both real and alleged hostile national forces.... [T]he famines that developed across Soviet grain-growing regions in 1932 resulted from collectivization, a campaign to remove kulaks, and excessive grain requisitions; the catastrophe that occurred in Ukraine in 1933, however, went considerably

further. It was an attempt to subdue through punishment—starvation and alienation—the second largest Soviet republic; to denationalize an emerging nation and bring it into the Soviet fold, no matter what suffering was entailed in the process.

Jacques Vallin, France Meslé, Serguei Adamets, and Serhiy Pyrozhkov, “The Great Famine: Population Losses in Ukraine,” in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932–1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk with the assistance of Lisa Grekul (Kingston, Ontario, Canada: Kashtan Press, 2008). Excerpts, pp. 35–46.

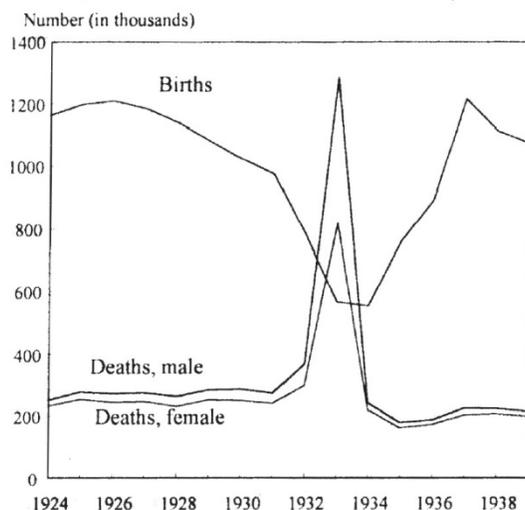
Jacques Vallin (b. 1941) is research director emeritus of the Institut national d'études démographiques (INED, Paris). His main fields of research are population growth in developing countries, mortality and causes of death in developed countries, and historical demography. He is the author or coauthor of some thirty books. France Meslé is director of research at INED; Serguei Adamets is a researcher at INED; and Serhiy Pyrozhkov is the founding director of the Kyiv Institute of Demography and Social Sciences.

Is it possible to estimate the demographic consequences of the *Holodomor*?

It seemed to us that more precise estimations can be done by using all available data and trying to correct them after a detailed discussion of their quality. Such an approach not only leads to a new estimation of the global losses more strictly focused on the two years of the crisis (1932–33), it also opens the door to distinguishing between (1) direct losses attributable to excess mortality and (2) indirect losses linked to the fall in fertility and to outward migration. In order to do this, a return to population change statistics is required, even if this means hypothesizing about under-registration. We think, along with most previous authors, that we can rely on the 1926 and 1939 censuses (after necessary corrections), but that vital statistics can also be used with rather modest adjustment for the years in between (with the exception of 1932 and 1933, years which certainly suffered from under-registration). Migration flows are more problematic, but even for them existing data marks a starting point.

Indeed, vital statistics give a quite plausible picture of the history of Ukrainian mortality for the years before and after the crisis (see Figure 1). Firstly, in relation to the 28.9 million inhabitants recorded in the 1926 census, the 519,000 deaths for that same year provide a crude death rate of 18 per thousand that is fully compatible with what we know about the country's state of health at that time.... If there was under-registration of deaths during this period, it was probably not very significant—except during the crisis where the registration services really seem to have been “snowed under” (or perhaps manipulated to minimize the extent of the crisis). In spite of the fact that vital statistics show a very sharp increase in mortality in 1932–33, registration of deaths could have deteriorated significantly then. It is essentially the extent of this “crisis under-registration” that must be assessed. As for the rest, classical corrections for under- registration of infant deaths and deaths among the oldest should be quite satisfactory.

Figure 1. Annual change in numbers of births and deaths by sex, from 1924 to 1939



In terms of fertility, with a crude birth rate of 42 per thousand in 1926, it is hard to imagine a large under-registration of births, although the number of births declines in the late 1920s. The crisis obviously led to an abrupt fall, but it was less severe than the rise in mortality, followed by a catch-up peak....

To estimate the global losses due to the Great Famine, we followed the same general principle as in previous studies: to calculate an expected population by projecting the 1926 population until 1939 on the basis of fertility, mortality and migration rates that would have prevailed without crisis, and to compare it to the observed 1939 population. But unlike previous attempts, we decided that using vital statistics for the years before and after the crisis (after correction for under-registration) would be much more effective than referring to theoretical models for hypothesizing fertility rates throughout the period....

...[A]fter necessary corrections, existing data enabled us to calculate two life tables, one at the start and the end of the period, relying on the 1926 and 1939 censuses and on the death statistics by sex and age available for 1926–27 and 1938–39. Between these two pillars, we interpolated survival probabilities by age for the period 1928 to 1938, assuming that in the absence of crisis, mortality rates would have decreased regularly from their 1926–27 levels to the 1938–39 ones. These probabilities were then applied, year by year from 1927 to 1939, to the generations involved in the 1926 census, in order to obtain an estimate of survivors, if there had been no crisis, on 1 January of each year from 1928 to 1939.

Then, to complete the projection, we estimated the numbers of births that would have occurred without the crisis.... [W]e deliberately chose the simplest hypothesis possible: through the whole period 1932–39, the general fertility rate was maintained at its 1931 level. A birth series was obtained that combines births registered by ZAGS [Civil Registry Offices] from 1924 to 1931 (corrected for under-registration) and estimated non-crisis births for 1932 to 1938. The projection was completed by applying the probabilities of survival if there had been no crisis affecting these births, which finally resulted in an *expected 1939 population*. While a total population of 35.5 million was expected at the time of the 1939 census, only 30.9 million were actually observed: 4.6 million Ukrainians were missing.

How to distinguish excess mortality from birth deficit and migration effect?....

1. The role of the birth deficit

The easiest task is to estimate the role of birth deficit. Redoing the same population projection for 1939 and replacing the estimate of non-crisis births with registered births (corrected for under-registration of infant deaths) leads to a 1939 population of 34.4 million instead of 35.5.

Conversely, the difference of 3.5 million between the second projection and the population actually observed in 1939 gives us a measure of the extent of losses attributable to both excess mortality and outward migration.

2. Role of migration

Indeed, migration effects certainly are the most difficult to estimate, but not impossible if the various pieces of the puzzle are taken into consideration. Two types of migration have to be identified: forced migration, which has been carefully documented, and voluntary flight from the crisis, which is more difficult to assess.

For the first type of migration...[w]e ended with 400,000 Ukrainian people deported to camps outside of Ukraine during the years 1930 to 1938 and 530,000 to the *Gulag*: a total of 930,000 forced migrations of whom 563,000 were male and 367,000 were female.

It is much harder to make an assessment of voluntary migration.... Of course, the famine led some Ukrainians to flee the disaster zone, to Russia and Belarus, but most of these refugees had to return to Ukraine quickly since their illegal migration status (linked to the passport requirement imposed in 1932) prevented them from living and working outside Ukraine. Therefore, we have preferred to accept the balance of voluntary migration as almost nil and to confine ourselves to forced migration alone, while acknowledging that net outward migration may thus be underestimated. Thus, migration effect could account for 0.9 million.

3. Estimating crisis mortality effect and under-registration of crisis deaths

Finally, when subtracting from the 4.6 million global losses initially estimated the (1) 1.1 birth deficit effect and the (2) 0.9 outward migration effect, the remaining 2.6 million arises from the excess mortality of the crisis (see Table 1).

If we compare these 2.6 million deaths resulting from the excess mortality of the crisis to the 1.7 million difference observed between deaths registered and total numbers of deaths expected without the excess mortality arising from the crisis, we obtain the total number of deaths that escaped registration (0.9 million). However, among these, some are the result of the ordinary under-registration...which was taken into account in correcting the 1926–27 and 1938–39 life tables that we used to estimate non-crisis mortality by interpolation. There finally remain 530,000 deaths that escaped registration because of the crisis and acts of concealment by the regime....

Table 1. Contributions of excess mortality and of birth deficit to overall losses in the 1930s crisis, by sex

| Population (observed and expected) and losses | Total numbers (thousands) | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|--------|
| | Males | Females | Total |
| Observed in the census (1) | 14,753 | 16,193 | 30,946 |
| Expected, given non-crisis mortality & fertility (2) | 17,373 | 18,142 | 35,515 |
| Expected, given non-crisis mortality and after correction of registered births (3) | 16,833 | 17,625 | 34,458 |
| Losses | | | |
| Total (2) - (1), of which | 2,620 | 1,949 | 4,569 |
| due to forced outward migration | 563 | 367 | 930 |
| due to excess mortality (or to voluntary outward migration) resulting from the crisis (3) - (1) - (4) | 1,517 | 1,065 | 2,582 |
| due to the birth deficit (2) - (3) | 540 | 517 | 1,057 |

An exceptional fall in life expectancy

Given these hypotheses on the under-registration of deaths, an attempt can be made to estimate the annual change in life expectancy during the 1920s and 1930s, distinguishing the crisis years from other years....

While from 1927 to 1931, life expectancy was almost stable, with a few oscillations— going from 43.3 years to 43.5 for males and from 46.8 to 47.9 for females (see Table 2 and Figure 2)—it fell very abruptly with the crisis, losing almost 9 years in 1932, then another 28 years in 1933. In that year, it was just over 10.8 years for females and 7.3 for males.

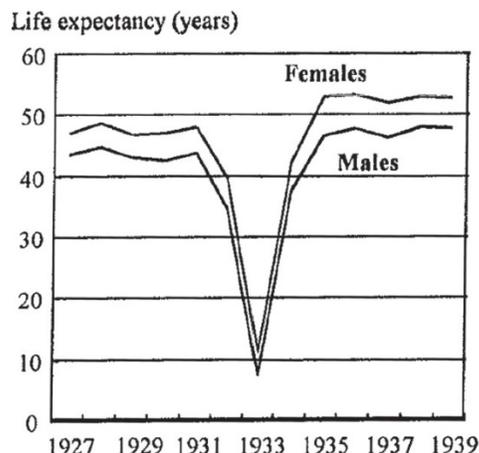
This result may appear exaggerated, but we do not think that is the case.... [R]elying on the estimates given by Evgenii Andreev et al. for Russia (15.2 years for males and 19.5 years for females) and by the same authors, repeated by Alain Blum, for the whole USSR (10.3 years for males and 13.0 for females), it might be expected that life expectancy in Ukraine, which, of all the republics of the USSR, suffered most from the famine, would be significantly below 10 for males and around 10 for females.

Table 2. Estimate of annual change in life expectancy from 1927 to 1939

| Year | Males | Females | Year | Males | Females |
|------|-------|---------|------|-------|---------|
| 1927 | 43.3 | 46.8 | 1934 | 37.6 | 42.1 |
| 1928 | 44.6 | 48.7 | 1935 | 46.3 | 52.7 |
| 1929 | 42.8 | 46.7 | 1936 | 47.6 | 53.0 |
| 1930 | 42.5 | 46.9 | 1937 | 46.2 | 51.9 |
| 1931 | 43.5 | 47.9 | 1938 | 47.9 | 52.7 |
| 1932 | 34.5 | 39.4 | 1939 | 47.7 | 52.5 |
| 1933 | 7.3 | 10.9 | | | |

Calculated transversally, life expectancy measures the extent of the immediate circumstances of the crisis....

Figure 2. Change in life expectancy at birth between the wars, annually



Conclusion

When precisely calculated by using all existent reliable data, total Ukrainian population losses strictly due to the *Holodomor* appear to be of 4.6 million people. This is significantly less than indicated by several previous studies.... Out of these 4.6 million losses, 1.1 million were due to the crisis birth deficit, 0.9 to forced outward migration, and 2.6 to the excess mortality. Here again, our 2.6 million estimate is much less than the levels currently available through the media, which vary from 4 to 10 million. Such a difference is mainly due to the fact that the results of studies on global losses are taken as the proper effect of excess mortality, and also that some authors attribute to Ukraine losses of the whole USSR.... There is no need to use incredible estimation when one can easily demonstrate that the crisis was so severe that it immediately reduced life expectancy at birth to 7 years for males and 10 years for females. The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932–34 was far more brutal than the last great famine in Europe, which occurred in Finland in 1868. And the most astonishing is that such a famine resulted from deliberate human action, not from climatic hazard.

Oleh Wolowyna, “The Famine-Genocide of 1932–33: Estimation of Losses and Demographic Impact.” Originally published under the title “Demographic Dimensions of the 1932–33 Famine in Ukraine” in *Famine in Ukraine, 1932–1933: Genocide by Other Means*, ed. Taras Hunczak and Roman Serbyn (New York: Shevchenko Scientific Society, USA, 2007), pp. 98–114. Text revised for this publication.

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Background

The number of losses due to the 1932–34 Famine in Ukraine (Famine losses were also recorded in 1934) has been the subject of many studies and controversies. The different

estimates vary from around 2.6 million to more than 10 million. The figure of 10 million, extensively used by the government of Ukraine and some Ukrainian diaspora leaders, seems to be based on statements attributed, among others, to Stalin and the Moscow correspondent of the *New York Times*, Walter Duranty, who in his official reports to the *Times* denied the existence of the Famine, as well as on preliminary estimates made before key statistical data became available to researchers.

Before presenting the evidence for a more accurate estimate, it is essential to define what is meant by Holodomor losses. This definition needs to address four dimensions or issues: a) time period; b) territory; c) which deaths should be counted; d) whether lost births should be counted. Regarding the time period, although the brunt of the Famine took place in 1933, its effects started sometime in 1932 and continued through part of 1934; thus the period to be used for estimating the losses should be 1932–34. As for territory, the logical answer is the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR). The inclusion in this estimate of losses during 1932–34 in other parts of the Soviet Union, such as the heavily Ukrainian-populated Kuban region, or of all Ukrainians in the Soviet Union, is problematic. This would require an estimate of Famine losses throughout the Soviet Union by ethnicity, i.e., losses among all Ukrainians (as well as other ethnic groups) on the territory of the Soviet Union as a whole or in specific regions of the Russian SFSR, such as the Kuban. No such estimates have been produced to date.

While Ukrainians as an ethnic group were not specifically targeted by official policies that caused the Famine, the historical record shows that the Ukrainian republic, as well as the Kuban region, with its large concentration of ethnic Ukrainians, were specifically targeted during the Famine years, resulting in much larger losses than elsewhere in the Soviet Union.

For historical and statistical reasons, it makes more sense to restrict the calculation of Holodomor losses to the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. Once a thorough estimate of Famine losses is made for the Kuban, one may consider adding them to the category of Holodomor losses.

Estimation of Losses

One of the sources of confusion about Holodomor losses is the lack of a universally accepted definition of this concept. We define “Holodomor losses” as deaths caused by the 1932–33 Famine, that is, deaths due directly or indirectly to starvation. Deaths due to other causes, such as political repression or deportation of kulaks, are not included in this concept. Strictly speaking, this definition makes it practically impossible to estimate the number of deaths caused by famine, as one would need a classification of all deaths during the Famine period by cause. A practical way of determining the number of these deaths is to try to separate “normal” deaths, i.e., deaths that would have occurred had there been no Famine, from deaths caused by the Famine. This can be done by estimating all the deaths that occurred during this period and then subtracting the “normal” deaths expected to have occurred had there been no Famine. This difference has been called “direct losses” or “excess deaths.”

A related question is whether the estimate of Holodomor losses should also include “indirect” deaths caused by the Famine. “Indirect” deaths are defined as births lost during the Famine period as a direct cause of the Famine. As in the case of direct losses, they have to be estimated indirectly as the difference between the expected births had there been no Famine and the actual number of births during the Famine years. There has been a fair amount of discussion in the literature about the inclusion of these “indirect” deaths in the number of

Holodomor losses. We argue that they should be included. The Famine was directly responsible for lost births owing to several mechanisms: a) reduced sexual activity; b) diminished male and female fecundity; c) higher levels of miscarriage; d) births lost owing to the death of potential parents. These lost births are thus a direct consequence of the Famine and should be included in the number of Holodomor losses.

Estimates of Holodomor losses may be divided into four types: a) subjective estimates by politicians and journalists during or shortly after the Holodomor; b) estimates based on a variety of methods before key data (the 1937 and 1939 censuses, vital statistics, and data on migration) became accessible to researchers; c) estimates based on two contiguous censuses; d) more recent estimates based on demographically sophisticated methods that reconstruct annual populations by age and sex. Estimates of the first type are not credible because of their subjective nature, and estimates of the second type are problematic because key information was missing, and the estimates had to be based on unverifiable assumptions.

Estimates of the third type, based on the Soviet censuses of 1926, 1937, and 1939, were a significant improvement on those that preceded them, but one of their flaws is that they include all losses occurring between the two census dates (1926–37 or 1926–39). Besides the Holodomor losses of 1932–34, they include losses sustained during other years of these longer intercensal periods, and they almost certainly overestimate the number of Holodomor losses, which should be confined to the years 1932–34.

A very important factor in the estimation of Famine losses is net migration, i.e., the difference between out- and in-migration during a certain time period on a specified territory. The problem is that the actual census population (in 1937 or 1939) includes net migration during the intercensal period, which should be excluded from the estimate, as net migration has a direct bearing on the estimate of direct losses.

Our discussion is based on two recent studies that provide the most detailed estimates of Holodomor losses using the population reconstruction method. The first study is: J. Vallin, F. Meslé, S. Adamets, and S. Pyrozshkov, “A New Estimate of Ukrainian Population Losses during the Crises of the 1930s and 1940s,” *Population Studies* 56, no. 3 (November 2002). The second study is: E. M. Libanova, I. O. Kurylo, N. M. Levchuk, O. M. Pali, N. O. Ryhach, O. P. Rudnytsky, V. S. Steshenko, L. I. Sliusar, P. I. Shevchuk, H. I. Bryker, N. V. Kulyk, and V. O. Sharapova, *Demohrafichna katastrofa v Ukraini v naslidok Holodomoru 1932–1933 rokiv: skladovi, mashtaby, naslidky* (Demographic Catastrophe in Ukraine Owing to the 1932–33 Holodomor: Elements, Scope, and Consequences; Kyiv: Institute of Demography and Social Studies, 2008).

The population reconstruction method applied in both studies consists in making two detailed population reconstructions using the cohort-component population projection method. Starting with the initial 1926 census population disaggregated by age and sex, annual trends in fertility, mortality, and net migration are specified, and the cohort-component projection method calculates annual populations by age and sex (for the years 1926–37 or 1926–39). The first projection is based on the assumption that there was no Famine, i.e., historical trends in fertility and mortality are extrapolated and assumptions are made about net migration trends as if there had been no Famine. For the second projection, the annual population by age and sex is estimated as it actually occurred. For this purpose one needs to estimate the actual number of annual births by sex, the actual number of annual deaths by age and sex, and the annual number of net migrants by age and sex. Differences between the two projections allow us to estimate, on an annual basis, the number of excess deaths by age and

sex, as well as the number of lost births by sex.

The population reconstruction method has several advantages over estimation methods used previously: a) Famine losses can be calculated on an annual basis, and thus for the Famine years (1932–1934); b) separate estimates are provided for excess deaths and for lost births; c) estimated excess deaths can be disaggregated by age and sex, and lost births by sex; d) the very useful indicator of life expectancy at birth by sex is also estimated.

The 2002 study provides the following estimates of Holodomor losses during the years 1932–34: excess deaths 2.6 million and birth losses 1.0 million, for a total loss of 3.6 million. The results of the 2008 study are as follows: excess deaths 3.6 million and lost births 1.1 million, for a total of 4.7 million. Based on these studies, we have a range of 2.6 to 3.6 million for direct losses and about 1 million for lost births, with a range of 3.6 to 4.7 million for total losses.

There are problems associated with the estimates derived by the 2002 study. First, estimates of lost births and net migration are for the 1926–39 intercensal period, while a more correct estimate should be limited to the years 1932–34. Second, it is assumed that the data for the 1926 and 1939 censuses were correct, and they were used without any adjustments. Third, as it is very difficult to estimate net migration because of serious data problems, the 2002 study made some estimates of net migration based on records of forced migration and assumed that voluntary net migration during the intercensal period was zero.

The 2008 study made estimates of lost births and net migration for the 1932–34 period and tried to make a more precise estimate of net migration. It also documented serious problems with the 1926 and 1939 censuses and made the necessary adjustments before proceeding to estimate Famine losses. Thus the estimates of Famine losses in the second study are likely to be more precise than those in the first study.

Both studies were restricted to Ukraine. In order to capture the complete migration dynamics between Ukraine and the rest of the Soviet Union, the analysis should be expanded to include all Soviet republics. Preliminary results from a more comprehensive study currently under way, which includes all the republics of the Soviet Union, provide what are probably more definite results: 3.9 million excess deaths and 600,000 lost births, for a total of 4.5 million losses. We see that, compared with the 2008 study, the estimate of direct losses is somewhat higher, while the estimate of indirect losses is significantly lower.

Given the nature of the data available, it is unlikely that one can determine estimates of Famine losses with great precision; it is more reasonable to state the results in terms of ranges. Thus, based on the more credible 2008 study and preliminary results from the more comprehensive study under way, one can state that direct Famine losses for Ukraine were close to four million, and that indirect losses were likely between 600,000 and one million, resulting in a range of 4.5 to 4.7 million total losses. These results can be put into better perspective by comparing them with the total population. If we assume that the population of the Ukrainian SSR in the early 1930s was about 30 million, Holodomor losses represent around 15 percent of the total population.

Although our proposed definition of Holodomor losses excludes losses outside the Ukrainian SSR, let us evaluate the claim that Ukrainians lost a total of seven million persons owing to the Famine. If approximately four million Holodomor victims died in Ukraine proper, this leaves 3 million Holodomor losses outside the Ukrainian SSR. Most of these losses occurred in the Kuban region, where Ukrainian settlements were targeted with starvation policies similar to those in Ukraine. According to the 1926 census, the total

population of the Kuban region was 3.3 million, and the proportion of ethnic Ukrainians was estimated at 60 percent, or 2 million persons. If we assume that losses due to the Famine constituted about 15 percent of the Kuban's total population (as in Ukraine) and affected exclusively Ukrainians (an extreme assumption), then the number of Holodomor losses in the Kuban would be about 300,000 (15 percent of 2 million). This would leave 2.7 million direct losses of Ukrainians in the rest of the Soviet Union (outside Ukraine and Kuban). As Ukrainians in the Soviet Union outside these two areas numbered 6.3 million according to the 1926 census, this means that more than 40 percent of them were victims of the Holodomor, clearly an unrealistic result.

Summary and Conclusions

Careful demographic analysis based on the most complete set of data available and using a sophisticated estimation methodology shows that the number of direct Holodomor losses in the Ukrainian SSR was close to four million, and the number of lost births an additional 0.6 to 1.0 million, for a total loss ranging between 4.5 and 4.7 million. This represents 15 percent of the total population of the country. These are staggering figures, unique in the history of twentieth-century Europe.

The impact of the 1932–34 Famine is further aggravated by differential mortality effects on various age groups. These effects are captured by the indicator “life expectancy at birth,” which is usually calculated separately for males and females. This indicator is defined as the average number of years a person born in a specific year is expected to live, assuming that mortality conditions prevailing in that year remain constant throughout the person's lifetime.

Life expectancy at birth can also be interpreted as the weighted average of mortality levels at different ages. During years previous to the Famine, life expectancy at birth in Ukraine was about 42 years for males and about 45 years for females. According to the analysis by Libanova et al., in 1933 these values dropped to 4.4 years for males and 6.5 for females. These extremely low values are due to the fact that half of all deaths caused by the Holodomor in Ukraine in 1933 claimed persons under 25 years of age, and that 40 percent of all newborns died during their first year of life. (The respective life expectancies at birth estimated by the 2002 study were somewhat higher but equally dramatic: 7.3 years for males and 10.8 years for females.)

In order to put these life-expectancy values in perspective, we offer two comparisons: a) with average values of life expectancy at birth for West European countries in 1933; b) with respective values for Ukraine in 1942, the worst year in terms of World War II casualties. In 1933 the average life expectancies at birth for West European countries were 56.1 years for males and 58.7 for females, compared to 4.1 and 7.3 years for Ukraine, respectively; that is, in 1933 the average life span in Western Europe was from 9 to 12 times longer than the expected life span in Ukraine, assuming that Holodomor mortality conditions continued to prevail at the 1933 level. In 1942 these values were 17.7 years for males and 25.6 for females, that is, more than three times higher for males and about four times higher for females, compared with the 1933 values. The comparisons with West European figures provide a mortality standard that Ukraine was expected to reach some years later, while the comparisons with 1942 illustrate the age-specific mortality impact of the Holodomor. Although in absolute numbers mortality in Ukraine was higher in 1942 than in 1933, a majority of these deaths were among army personnel, while in 1933 the Famine had a disproportionate effect on infants and children. This

explains the significantly smaller values for life expectancy at birth during the Holodomor than during World War II.

The number of Holodomor losses remains a controversial subject, fueled by lack of understanding of the technical problems involved in these estimates, as well as by ideological and political considerations. In this article we have attempted to explain the challenges researchers face when making these estimates, and we summarize the results of the technically most reliable and objective research on this problem. Hopefully this will contribute to reaching a consensus on realistic figures for Holodomor losses and help channel efforts to achieve a better understanding of the details of this tragedy.