

BITTER MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD: HOLODOMOR SURVIVORS' STORIES

Edited by VICTORIA A. MALKO

Foreword by VICTOR RUD



Southern California Holodomor-Genocide Committee
Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation–USA

Bitter Memories of Childhood: Holodomor Survivors' Stories

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Cover Image: "The Bitter Memory of Childhood."

This haunting statue of a girl clutching a handful of wheat stalks stands in the middle of the alley leading to the National Holodomor-Genocide Museum in Kyiv, Ukraine. The statue is dedicated to the most vulnerable victims of the genocide—children. The statue, as part of the memorial complex, was conceptualized and designed by the Ukrainian artist Anatoly Haydamaka and architect Yuri Kovalyov for the 75th commemorative year. Wheat is the symbol of life and prosperity. It became a weapon of the genocide orchestrated to destroy the very fabric of the Ukrainian nation. The wheat symbolizes the Ukrainian nation's determination to live and prosper, the nation's future.

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CONTENTS

Foreword: “Why Study the Holodomor?” by Victor Rud	4
Instructional Framework	9
Lesson Sequence	10
Materials for Students	17
Handout 1	17
Terminology	17
Handout 2	21
Block of Historical Documents A	21
Block of Historical Documents B	24
Block of Historical Documents C	29
Appendix A: The Holodomor Chronology	33
Appendix B: Resources on the Holodomor	41
Appendix C: Survivor Biographies	43
Survivor Testimony Reflections	44
Appendix D: “The Holodomor as Genocide against Ukrainians” by Victoria A. Malko	51
Appendix E: Posters	61
Appendix F: Maps	68

FOREWORD

Why Study the Holodomor?

By Victor Rud

Bitter Memories of Childhood is much more than a record of survivors' memories of the Holodomor, Joseph Stalin's starvation of Ukraine in 1932–1933 that Rafael Lemkin condemned as "classic genocide." It is a critical addition to learning materials on a subject whose relevance tragically increases by the day.

The famous British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge observed that the Holodomor is "one of the most monstrous crimes in history, so terrible that people in the future will scarcely be able to believe it ever happened."¹ George Orwell, celebrated author of *1984* and *Animal Farm*, need not have limited his observation to British intellectuals when he remarked that "huge events like the Ukraine famine of 1933 ... involving the deaths of millions of people, have actually escaped the attention of the majority of English Russophiles."²

For generations, Western media and academia have either remained silent or dismissed the Holodomor as simply a generic famine that was "somehow" brought about by a bad harvest or innocent "overexuberance" in implementing a misbegotten policy of collectivization of agriculture. All became the facile excuse in the West for not confronting a heinous reality. Indeed, more than 90 years after the fact, this genocide has yet to register in the mind of the world and remains massively misunderstood or simply denied.

The Holodomor shares many characteristics of other genocides that have eviscerated our common humanity throughout history. In a discussion during the Holodomor with the Italian consul in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, a Soviet GPU secret police official openly described Ukrainians as merely "ethnographic material."³ Not people. Not human beings. Adolf Hitler came to power as the Holodomor was raging. His version of "ethnographic material" was *Untermenschen*, or subhumans. Dehumanization is the commonality of all genocides.

¹ Douglas McCollam, "Should this Pulitzer be pulled?" *Columbia Journalism Review*, no. 6, November–December 2003; Marco Carynnyk, "The Famine the *Times* Couldn't Find," *Commentary*, November 1983, <https://www.commentary.org/articles/marco-carynnyk/the-famine-the-times-couldnt-find/>.

² See "Notes on Nationalism," in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (London, 1968), vol. 3, 370. See also <https://www.orwellfoundation.com/the-orwell-foundation/orwell/essays-and-other-works/notes-on-nationalism/>.

³ In a 1933 report to the Royal Embassy of Italy in Moscow, Italy's consul in Kharkiv wrote that Moscow engineered the starvation of Ukraine "to dispose of the Ukrainian problem." He quoted a top GPU secret police official who explained that the purpose was to change the "ethnographic material" of Ukraine. Moscow's goal was "to dispose of the Ukrainian problem within a few months at a cost of 10–15 million souls ... However monstrous and incredible such a plan might appear, it should nevertheless be regarded as authentic and well underway ... The current disaster will bring about a predominantly Russian colonialization of Ukraine. It will transform its ethnographic character. In a future time, perhaps very soon ... Ukraine will become a de facto Russian region." Quoted in U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933: Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00831044s&seq=1>.

The Holodomor like other genocides, however, also presents issues that are unique and of burning consequence today.

First. Genocide repeats. For 80 years after the horrors of World War II, we gravely intoned, “never again.” Russia’s Vladimir Putin announces, “We can do it again.” Russia openly, expressly, and with increasing vitriol declares that its war against Ukraine is genocidal in its purpose. “Your task is to wipe the Ukrainian nation off the face of the earth,” states the wallet card issued by the Russian Orthodox Church to Russian troops.⁴ “The genocide of these cretins is due and inevitable.”⁵ “Time to burn everything Ukrainian down to the root” so that “there is no trace left.”⁶ The world’s long verbalized commitment is accelerating toward abandonment rather than affirmation, a cry of denial instead of demand.

Second. Oxford University’s Norman Davies, in his magisterial *History of Europe*, wrote: “The aim was to kill Ukrainian nationhood. ... The world has seen many terrible famines, many aggravated by civil war. But a famine organized as a genocidal act of state policy must be considered unique.”⁷ It was engineered to kill, where “death” becomes not just murder, but genocide, the crime of crimes.

Third. Why? Russian writer Fyodor Dostoyevsky explained: “All people should become Russian and Russian above all else, because the Russian national idea is universal.”⁸ The Holodomor explodes the underpinning of what Western academics, media, and politicians have uncritically absorbed for generations – the misconception about Ukraine as simply a region, “a historic part of Russia.” In 1935, English journalist Lancelot Lawton explained to the House of Commons:

Suppression of Ukrainian nationality has been persistently accompanied by obliteration of the very word Ukraine and concealment of the very existence of Ukrainians. ... The deliberate policy of Russia was to avoid and discourage mention of Ukraine abroad. From the Middle Ages down to the eighteenth century, Ukraine figured largely in European literature. But after the first half of the nineteenth century, the West was made to forget that there was or had been such a nation. ... [It] constitutes one of the major political deceptions of history.⁹

⁴ Paul A. Goble, “Moscow Patriarchate tells Russian troops: ‘Your task is to wipe the Ukrainian nation off the face of the earth’,” *Euromaidan Press*, April 7, 2022, <https://euromaidanpress.com/2022/04/07/moscow-patriarchate-tells-russian-troops-your-task-is-to-wipe-the-ukrainian-nation-off-the-face-of-the-earth/>.

⁵ Mykola Riabchuk, “On the ‘Wrong’ and ‘Right’ Ukrainians,” *Aspen Institute Central Europe*, March 14, 2017, <https://www.aspeninstitutece.org/article/2017/on-the-wrong-and-right-ukrainians/>.

⁶ Nate Ostiller, “Russian official calls for total destruction of ‘everything Ukrainian’,” *The Kyiv Independent*, June 27, 2024, <https://kyivindependent.com/russian-official-calls-for-total-destruction-of-everything-ukrainian/>.

⁷ Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 965.

⁸ U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933: First Interim Report to Congress* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 171, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.31210024831735&view=1up&seq=180>.

⁹ “Address given by Lancelot Lawton, House of Commons, May 29, 1935” in *The Ukrainian Question and Its Importance to Great Britain* (London: The Serjeants Press, 1935), 5, 13, https://shron1.chtyvo.org.ua/Lawton_Lancelot/The_Ukrainian_question_and_its_importance_to_Great_Britain_nhl.pdf?PHPSESSID=2irajvqnobov6ap7s5c8d3bca6. Lawton offered the following from seventeenth century Paul of Aleppo, a Syrian Orthodox clergyman and scholar: “Although a stranger, I felt myself at home in Ukraine. But in Muscovy my heart felt heavy, for wherever I went no one was even a little free. ... Those who want to shorten their

The disinformation was solidified in the West after 1917 by émigré Russian academics who established “Russian Studies” in the West. Rote repetition erased Ukraine from our consciousness the largest country in Europe that is the size of England, Hungary, Germany, and Israel, combined.

Fourth. Western governments, generally, were complicit in their studied silence about the genocide. Tragically, the United States legitimized it by extending diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union in 1933. It legitimized the regime in Moscow that headed a global movement dedicated to America’s destruction. And it did so as that regime was extirpating the very nation – Ukraine – that was America’s biggest asset in ensuring against that very destruction. It was a stunning strategic catastrophe.

Fifth. In 1933, our business, greed, and avarice superseded our national security and foreign policy interests. As millions were being starved to death in Ukraine, at a celebratory banquet in New York politicians and the titans of Wall Street and American industry rose to their feet in a bipartisan toast honoring Stalin’s Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov and sang the world communist anthem, “L’Internationale.”¹⁰ Their obsequious fawning before Litvinov’s sales pitch and their praise of Stalin coincided with the West’s seeking to conceal the genocide of Ukraine from their publics. Today, we have found an offramp for ourselves, sterilizing Russia’s renewed genocide in Ukraine as a real estate deal.

Sixth. The Holodomor showcases the confluence of disinformation, the ready capitulation of Western media and academe, and genocide denial. George Orwell condemned “the fog of lies and misinformation that surrounds such subjects as the Ukraine famine.”¹¹ And Professor James E. Mace, executive director of the U.S. Congressional Commission on the Ukraine Famine in the 1980s, and chief researcher for Professor Robert Conquest in the publication of the *Harvest of Sorrow*, wrote: “In spite of the fact that reliable information was published at the time, it [the Holodomor] has disappeared from the public consciousness so completely that it represents the most successful example of the denial of genocide by its perpetrators.”¹²

Washington was well informed at the time by the “Russian Desk” of its legation in Riga, Latvia, and by embassies and consulates in London, Berlin, Warsaw, Bucharest and other European capitals. The British Foreign Office was also regularly informed by its Moscow Embassy of the “horrifying” and “hair raising” destruction, and that “Ukraine had been bled

life by 15 years must go to the land of Muscovy. In Ukraine I found joy in life, freedom and civilization. The Ukrainians are learned. They like science and study the law. They know rhetoric, logic and philosophy. Practically all the inhabitants can read and write. ... They are great lovers of their liberty, without which they do not desire to live.”

¹⁰ Victor Rud, “Regarding Ukraine, a group hug astride a memory hole,” *The Hill*, November 14, 2022, <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3728537-regarding-ukraine-a-group-hug-astride-a-memory-hole/>.

¹¹ “The Prevention of Literature,” *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (London, 1968), vol. 4, 62.

¹² James E. Mace, “The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine,” in Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, eds., *Famine in Ukraine, 1932–1933* (University of Toronto Press, 1986), 1. Dana Dalrymple observed that the Holodomor is “one of the most successful news management stories in history. It seems incredible now that Stalin could have pulled off such a feat.” See Robert Conquest, Dana Dalrymple, James Mace, and Michael Novak, *The Man-Made Famine in Ukraine* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984), 13.

white.”¹³ Regardless, the Office wrote in an internal memo: “We do not want to make it [information about the Holodomor] public, because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced. ... We cannot give this explanation in public.”¹⁴

The *New York Times*’ Moscow correspondent Walter Duranty was the most notorious, and effective, media denier of the Holodomor, and was hugely instrumental in persuading Franklin D. Roosevelt to grant diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union. In 1931, the U.S. State Department had been informed by its embassy in Berlin that during a visit by Duranty, he “pointed out that, ‘in agreement with the *New York Times* and the Soviet authorities, his official dispatches always reflect the official opinion of the Soviet regime and not his own’.”¹⁵ The following year, Duranty was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his dispatches from Moscow that “are marked by scholarship, profundity, impartiality, sound judgment and exceptional clarity and are excellent examples of the best type of foreign correspondence.”¹⁶

Seventh. Unlike post-war Germany, Russia has never recognized, acknowledged, admitted, atoned or apologized for the crime, never mind pay reparations. Russia is the *proud*, self-proclaimed sole legatee of the Soviet Union. Stalin is deified, his crimes simply erased, and simultaneously are being repeated. Having denied for generations that the Holodomor ever happened, Russia today has reversed and asserts it happened everywhere, thus homogenizing the genocide into a non-event.

Eighth. The Holodomor had an immediate and monumental impact on U.S. foreign policy and security. It was the ultimate Weapon of Mass Destruction that broke the spine of Ukrainian resistance to the reimposition of Russian rule following the disintegration of the old Tsarist Empire after World War I and that Moscow rehammered into a more palatable “Soviet Union.” “USSR.” The Holodomor eliminated for generations the ability of Ukrainians to oppose solidification of Russian rule of the Soviet Union that was in direct, existential conflict with the United States and the rest of the West, with a trajectory toward nuclear oblivion. It was Ukraine’s renewal of its independence in 1991 that ensured the dissolution of that USSR.¹⁷

When genocide is not punished, it repeats with even greater impact, and in this case globally. The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace forewarned in 1999 that “Ukraine will do much to determine whether Europe and the world in the twenty-first century will be as

¹³ M. Carynnyk, L. Y. Luciuk, and B. S. Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932–1933* (Kingston, Ontario: Limestone Press, 1988), 77, 312–13.

¹⁴ *Idem*, 397.

¹⁵ *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933: Report to Congress*, 174.

¹⁶ J. W. Crowl, *Angels in Stalin’s Paradise: Western Reporters in Soviet Russia, 1917–1937, a Case Study of Louis Fischer and Walter Duranty* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 143.

¹⁷ A correspondent for the *Associated Press* and *U.S. News & World Report* wrote: “Ukraine would play the crucial role in the eventual breakup of the USSR. That too was inevitable. ... If the largest, richest non-Russian republic left the Union, the rest of the USSR could no longer hold together. ... Ukrainian independence was, in fact, a key last step in forcing both Gorbachev’s resignation and the breakup of the Soviet state. In the final test of wills in Soviet history, a peaceful, democratic independence movement proved stronger than the largest army on earth.” See Fred Coleman, *The Decline and Fall of the Soviet Empire* (St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 274, 296, 352.

bloody as they were in the twentieth.”¹⁸ This curriculum guide is a tool in helping to ensure that that does not happen.

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¹⁸ Sherman Garnett, *Keystone in the Arch: Ukraine in the emerging security environment of Central and Eastern Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for the International Peace, 1999), reproduced at Lemko.org, https://lemko.org/garnett/index.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK

<p>Lesson Objectives:</p>	<p>1. To promote understanding of the Holodomor as genocide and its irreparable consequences for the Ukrainian people throughout subsequent history of the 20th and 21st centuries, including contemporary Ukrainian society.</p> <p>2. To deepen students’ knowledge of the causes and essence of the policies of the totalitarian Stalinist regime toward Ukrainian statehood and the Ukrainian intellectuals, clergy, and farming population to foster a conscious understanding of dictatorship and totalitarianism as extreme anti-democratic forms of governance, as well as the ability to assess them from a legal perspective.</p> <p>3. To develop:</p> <p>a) skills in working with primary historical sources, including video testimonies and official documents;</p> <p>b) historical empathy as a method for studying controversial and sensitive topics and for engaging with a historical era;</p> <p>c) the ability to articulate and substantiate one’s own assessment of historical events; and</p> <p>d) motivation to study history through a personal and multi-perspectival approach.</p>
<p>Key Terms and Concepts:</p>	<p>Holodomor, genocide, totalitarianism, human rights, Ukrainian statehood, primary sources, identity, Stalinist policies, media literacy and propaganda, historical memory</p>
<p>Instructional Resources:</p>	<p>video recordings of interviews with survivors, handouts, propaganda posters, maps</p>
<p>Teaching Methods and Techniques:</p>	<p>analysis of historical sources; work with video testimonies; pair work; small-group work; whole-class discussion</p>
<p>Recommended Time:</p>	<p>60 minutes</p>
<p>Common Core Domain:</p>	<p>English Language Arts, English Language Arts/Literacy, History-Social Science, Reading, Speaking and Listening, Writing</p>
<p>History–Social Science Content Standards:</p>	<p>HSS-10.7.1, HHS-10.7.2, HHS-10.7.3</p>
<p>Grade Level:</p>	<p>Grades 9–12</p>

LESSON SEQUENCE

Note to Teachers

Many educators did not receive formal preparation in teaching about genocide, the Holodomor, or trauma-informed historical instruction during their credential programs. If you feel uncertain about how to approach this subject, you are not alone. The relative absence of this history in teacher training has contributed to understandable gaps in confidence and familiarity.

At the same time, teaching about the Holodomor requires thoughtful preparation — not only regarding historical facts, but also regarding its emotional impact on students. When students encounter personal accounts of children who suffered during the famine of 1932–1933, they often identify deeply. They imagine themselves in similar circumstances. They think about their own families. This identification can produce powerful emotional responses: sadness, anger, disbelief, and moral shock. It is important to anticipate these reactions.

The Holodomor was not a natural disaster; it resulted from policies implemented by Stalin’s regime and enforced through state structures and administrative mechanisms. Students may struggle with the realization that such inhumanity was carried out through official policy and justified at the time within the framework of Soviet ideology. Helping students understand how state systems can normalize cruelty is intellectually and emotionally demanding work.

Before teaching this material, consider:

- Preparing students for the seriousness of the topic.
- Establishing norms of respect and reflective discussion.
- Focusing on human dignity, resilience, and ethical responsibility — not only atrocity.
- Being attentive to students who may have personal or family histories of trauma.

You do not need to have all the answers. But thoughtful preparation — historical, ethical, and emotional — helps ensure that learning about the Holodomor becomes an opportunity for deeper understanding of human rights, state power, and moral responsibility, rather than an overwhelming experience.

In conjunction with the second anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, on February 22, 2024, the California Legislature adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 89, authored by Senator Bill Dodd. SCR 89 officially recognized and condemned Joseph Stalin’s genocide that killed millions of Ukrainians — designating November as Holodomor Memorial Month. The Holodomor is commemorated every year on the fourth Saturday of November. November is the ideal time for this lesson but it can be taught at any time.

Teaching this history is difficult. It is also profoundly important.

Step 1 [10 minutes]

Begin the lesson with a brief whole-class analysis of a family photograph:

Ask learners to brainstorm questions and share ideas about the people in the family photograph. They may suggest that the image shows members of an extended family and wonder what became of them.

Explain that the photograph depicts members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia in the 1920s–1930s. Among them is Serhii Yefremov, a linguist and Vice President of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, dressed in a traditional embroidered shirt and pictured with his extended family. He was also a member of the Central Rada, the first Ukrainian government. His sister was married to Volodymyr Durdukivsky, principal of the first Ukrainian gymnasium. Both were arrested and prosecuted in the SVU trial (the trial of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine). Yefremov’s nephew, Mykola Pavlushkov, a student at a Kyiv teacher-training institute, was also prosecuted. They perished in forced labor camps on the Solovetsky Islands, part of the Soviet concentration camp system.

Draw learners’ attention to the broader context: after Stalin’s genocide of 1932–1933, Ukrainian cultural identity was deliberately suppressed. Students were no longer allowed to express their national identity through traditional embroidered shirts and were instead required to wear standardized brown uniforms. Emphasize that understanding the consequences of the Holodomor is essential: the destruction of Ukraine’s sovereignty was accompanied by the erosion of its culture and identity.

Distribute Handout 1 (Terminology)

Ask learners to match historical terms with definitions. The handout can be printed, laminated, and cut into sets of cards for the matching activity. One side of the card includes a historical term with an archival photo as an illustration and the corresponding side includes an explanation. This matching activity is optional; instead, encourage learners to look up the terminology on their own.

Inform learners of the lesson topic and emphasize that they will explore the essence of this historical phenomenon through survivor testimonies—oral history¹⁹—while comparing them with contemporary Soviet official documents (primary sources). Explain that the survivors whose interviews will be used were children during 1932–1933 and that they mostly lived in rural areas at the time.

¹⁹ Debbie Ardemento, Katie Kuszma, and Educational Advisory Board, Voice of Witness, *Principles and Best Practices for Oral History Education (4-12): Classroom Guide* (Washington, D.C.: Oral History Association, 2013), file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/2013-1411_Oral_History_ClassroomGuide_Update_V2.pdf.

Step 2 [15 minutes]

Invite learners to watch **Video Testimony**

[She survived the Holodomor and saved a boy](#) Mariia Hurbich (8:45–9:25, 11:22–13:32)

[They endured on potato peels from Belarus](#) Fedir Zadiereiev (11:29–14:43)

[They even took pillows away](#) Nadiia Korolova (10:39–14:58)

- What do the witnesses describe?
- How do the witnesses assess these actions by the Soviet authorities?
- How were people able to survive under conditions of total lawlessness and food confiscation?
- What role did mutual aid play?
- Could the authorities prevent mutual aid?
- Can these testimonies help draw conclusions about the scale and causes of such policies?
- Why is it impossible to preserve memory without eyewitness testimonies?
- Why is it important for Ukraine that information and memory about the events of 1932–1933 be preserved in Ukraine and known to the world?

Step 3 [15 minutes]

To provide learners with a more systematic understanding, work through a set of materials devoted to the causes, methods, and geography of the Holodomor in Ukraine, as well as people’s behavior during the tragedy.

Divide the class into three groups. Direct learners to select any station and analyze primary source documents at the selected station by answering discussion prompts. Every five minutes rotate the stations moving clockwise.

Station 1: Posters

Ask participants who joined this station to examine propaganda posters from the period (see **Appendix E**). Provide printed discussion prompts to fill in. Pay attention to:

- whom the posters are directed against,
- who their intended audience is,
- what information they convey about the official policies of the authorities.

Station 2: Maps

Invite learners to examine the maps in **Appendix F**, which depict the 1930 peasant uprisings, resettlements into depopulated areas, and demographic losses in Ukraine during the Holodomor. Provide discussion prompts for learners to jot down responses.

Discussion Prompts:

- Looking at the map of demographic losses, what does the uneven geographical distribution of losses suggest about the role of administrative decisions?
- How could such losses among the rural population have affected the social structure of Ukraine's population?
- Looking at the map of peasant uprisings in 1930 Ukraine, what do these uprisings reveal about the lives of farmers and their relationship with the Soviet state?
- How might the patterns of resistance help us understand later events, like the Holodomor of 1932–1933?
- Looking at the map of resettlements after the Holodomor, who was moved, where were they sent, and why do you think the Soviet government organized these population transfers?
- How might these resettlements have affected Ukrainian villages and communities?
- Ask for learners understanding of the phrase “nation killing.”

Tell students that in 1937 another population census was conducted. When a population deficit in Ukraine was revealed, the leadership of the Central Statistical Administration was repressed, and the census results were hidden in special archives for many years. In the Soviet Union, the ban on information about the Holodomor remained in force until 1987. However, witnesses remained.

Station 3: Lemkin's Definition

Reflect on the quote from Raphael Lemkin's "Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine," originally written in 1953, but not published until 2008.

Quote:

"The Ukrainian is not and never has been a Russian. His culture, his temperament, his language, his religion, are all different. ... to eliminate (Ukrainian) nationalism ... the Ukrainian peasantry was sacrificed ... a famine was necessary for the Soviet and so they got one to order ... if the Soviet program succeeds completely, if the intelligentsia, the priests, and the peasant can be eliminated [then] Ukraine will be as dead as if every Ukrainian were killed, for it will have lost that part of it which has kept and developed its culture, its beliefs, its common ideas, which have guided it and given it a soul, which, in short, made it a nation. ... this is not simply a case of mass murder. It is a case of genocide, of the destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation."²⁰

Pin the printed quote on the wall and let learners jot down brief responses.

²⁰ *Rafael Lemkin. Soviet Genocide in Ukraine*, edited by Roman Serbyn, compiled by Olesia Stasiuk (Київ: Майстерня книги, 2009), 31–36, <https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/publikacija/soviet-genocide-in-ukraine/>.

Step 4 [15 min]

Organize work with document sets (**Handout 2**) in three groups:

- **Group 1:** Block A (Documents 1, 2, 3)
- **Group 2:** Block B (Documents 4, 5, 6)
- **Group 3:** Block C (Documents 7, 8, 9)

Each group should summarize the essence of their materials in 2–3 sentences. It is also advisable to assign each group specific questions, the answers to which they will present during the general discussion.

For Block A:

- Based on the documents, what were the authorities' objectives in Ukraine at that time?
- What measures were proposed, and against whom were they directed?
- How do the documents justify extraordinary measures, and what does this reveal about the normalization of repression within the Stalinist system?

For Block B:

- What connection can be made between the policies outlined in the documents and the subsequent movement of starving rural population to cities such as Kharkiv?
- How are starving farmers, homeless children, and the dead described in the private letter to the GPU—as victims, problems, or security concerns? Why does such framing matter?
- What do testimonies reveal about everyday survival strategies during the Holodomor? What physical and psychological consequences of starvation are evident in these recollections?

For Block C:

- How do criminal law, mass prosecutions, and restrictions on movement together create conditions in which starvation becomes unavoidable rather than accidental?
- What was referred to as “state socialist property”? Why did the need arise to “protect” it?
- Why is the search for food interpreted as a counterrevolutionary act rather than a humanitarian crisis?

Step 5 [5 min]

Discuss with learners the issue of commemorating the victims of totalitarian regimes. Explain that different peoples have official dates for honoring the memory of victims of tragedies associated with specific historical events. For example:

- January 27 – International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- April 24 – Remembrance Day of the Armenian Genocide
- August 23 – European Day of Remembrance for Victims of All Totalitarian Regimes

Ask the learners what role survivor testimonies play in preserving memory of the past. Let participants express their views:

- Why is it necessary to commemorate the victims of genocide?
- What role does this play for contemporary and future generations?

Assessment: Option 1

Invite interested learners to write an article on the situation in Ukraine in the spring of 1933, written from the perspective of different fictional authors (option A or B). To complete this task, they should use the lesson materials, information from the Internet (**Appendix B**), and video testimonies. In their articles, the authors must refer to documents and survivor testimonies.

Option A: an article written from the perspective of a foreign journalist for one of Europe’s leading newspapers, who independently, without accompaniment by GPU officers, visited cities in Ukraine.

Option B: an article for a newspaper written from the perspective of a foreign journalist in our own time.

For additional information, suggest using “A Tale of Two Journalists: Walter Duranty, Gareth Jones, and the Pulitzer Prize,” written by Professor James Mace, contributor for *The Day* newspaper (1997–2004), July 16, 2003, posted on the website of the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide at <https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/news/a-tale-of-two-journalists-walter-duranty-and-gareth-jones/>.

Assessment: Option 2

Invite interested learners to prepare a paper on the topic “The Holodomor of Ukrainians as a Crime of Genocide,” using materials (**Appendix D**) plus article by Halya Coynash, “Russia destroys monuments to Victims of Holodomor and Stalin’s Terror in occupied Luhansk,” *Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group*, July 22, 2024, <https://khpg.org/en/1608813845>).

To work on the paper, learners will need to familiarize themselves with the topic of international recognition and commemoration of the Holodomor as genocide. Authors should address the following issues:

- a) Definition of genocide. Explain that the international legal definition of the crime of genocide is contained in Articles II and III of the U.N. Convention of December 9, 1948, “On the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” Ask learners to determine which aspects of the Holodomor correspond to the articles of the Convention. They must substantiate their answers with information learned during the lesson and from video testimonies.
- b) The current state of international recognition of the Holodomor as genocide.
- c) Commemoration of the Holodomor in Ukraine and around the world.

For additional information (for homework options 1 and 2), suggest using a compilation of historical documents (**Handout 2**) and **Appendices A, C and E** and note that learners can obtain more detailed information on websites (see **Appendix B**).

Differentiation

Writing prompts can go beyond a research essay or a newspaper article to a short story, play, poem, interview with a Holodomor survivor or descendant, a comparison of the Holodomor to other genocides and to Russia’s current war against Ukraine, analysis of the U.N. Convention on Genocide as applied to the Holodomor and current war, the role of journalists during the Holodomor and now. Additional web-based projects may include a multimedia museum exhibit, a PowerPoint presentation, or a short video.

This lesson sequence can be modified for an hour-long session focused on recreating the timeline of events and tying them to Article II of the Genocide Convention. Another option would be to offer a self-paced format when students read all the materials and watch video interviews with survivors on their own, then illustrate one survivor's story.

MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS

HANDOUT 1

Terminology

activists – Communist Party and Communist Youth League activists sent from Russian cities to rural areas beginning in 1930 to enforce collectivization. Most of these activists had no farming experience. Of the more than 8,000 recruits, the majority were sent to villages in Soviet Ukraine, while others were dispatched to the Northern Caucasus, the Lower Volga region, and Kazakhstan. About 80 percent worked in village councils. Their task was to pressure farmers into joining collective farms, oversee confiscations, and enforce state policies. By the end of 1931, after their campaign, most farms in Soviet Ukraine had been collectivized.

chorni doshky (“black boards” or blacklists) – a punitive policy used by Soviet authorities during the Holodomor to punish villages, collective farms, village councils, and individual farmers who failed to meet state grain quotas. Beginning in November 1932 in the Kuban region in the Northern Caucasus and later applied widely in Soviet Ukraine, communities placed on blacklists were completely cut off from food, trade, and supplies. Armed units confiscated all food, banned travel, and blockaded villages. People who tried to escape were arrested, returned by force, or killed. The policy was formally authorized by a decree of December 6, 1932, issued by the Council of People’s Commissars and the Communist Party leadership. Lists of punished communities were published in newspapers.

collectivization – a Soviet economic policy introduced in the late 1920s that forced farmers to join state-controlled collective farms (*kolhosps*). Farmers lost ownership of their land, livestock, and tools, which became state property. The policy was officially promoted by Joseph Stalin in his 1929 article “The Year of the Great Breakthrough.” Many Ukrainian farmers resisted collectivization and were punished through heavy taxes, deportation to labor camps, exile to remote regions of Russia, or execution. Soviet Ukraine was one of the first republics where collectivization was carried out rapidly and by force.

dekulakization – a Soviet campaign of repression in rural areas that targeted so-called *kulaks*—farmers who were considered wealthier or economically independent. The goal was to destroy private farming and force villagers into collective farms. In Soviet Ukraine, the policy was carried out under the slogan of “eliminating kulaks as a class,” but it also served as part of a broader anti-Ukrainian policy of the Bolshevik regime. Farmers were stripped of their land, livestock, tools, and even homes. Many were deported to forced settlements in Siberia, sentenced to long terms of forced labor in concentration camps, or executed. Property taken from these families was used to support newly created collective farms.

GPU (State Political Directorate) – the main Soviet secret police agency in Soviet Ukraine from 1922 to 1934. The GPU operated as a tool of the Bolshevik regime and was later replaced by the NKVD. Its responsibilities included political surveillance, arrests, deportations, executions, and

the suppression of resistance to Soviet rule. In 1928, the GPU was given the power to conduct trials without approval from a prosecutor. In 1929, special *troikas* were created to speed up sentencing without fair trials. During the Holodomor of 1932–1933, the GPU enforced the law on the “protection of socialist property” (also known as the “five ears of wheat” law), arresting and punishing people—often harshly—for taking even small amounts of grain from fields to survive.

Gulag (Russian acronym for *Glavnoe upravlenie lagerei*, meaning “Main Directorate of Camps”) – the Soviet government agency that managed a vast system of forced-labor camps. The Gulag was created in the 1920s and expanded greatly under Joseph Stalin in the 1930s. Prisoners—including farmers, political opponents, intellectuals, and ordinary citizens accused of crimes against the state—were sent to camps to perform hard labor under brutal conditions. Many died from hunger, exhaustion, disease, or executions. Reliable statistics on prisoner numbers and death rates from the early years of the camp system were not kept or were later destroyed.

Kolyma – a commonly used name for a network of forced-labor camps located in the far east of the Soviet Union. Kolyma was one of the harshest regions of the Gulag system, known for its extreme cold, difficult working conditions, hunger, and high death rates. People sent to Kolyma—including those accused of opposing Soviet policies—were forced to work in mines, construction, and other hard labor, often with little food or shelter. Many did not survive.

Komsomol, officially known as the All-Union Leninist Communist Youth League, was created in 1918 by the Communist Party to educate and control young people and to promote loyalty to the Soviet regime. The Komsomol was used by the state to involve young people in political campaigns, including collectivization, propaganda, surveillance, and enforcement of food confiscations in villages and cities. Members were expected to follow party ideology and assist authorities in carrying out state directives.

kurkul (Russian: *kulak*, literally “fist” and figuratively, a greedy, money-grubber, skinflint) – an ideological label used by the Soviet authorities to identify and persecute independent farmers. Originally, the term referred to villagers who owned more land or equipment than others, hired workers, or operated small mills or grain-processing tools. By 1930, the meaning of the term expanded. The Soviet government applied the label to anyone who resisted *collectivization*, regardless of wealth or property. People labeled as *kurkuls* were treated as “enemies of the state.” Their land, homes, animals, and tools were confiscated. Many were evicted from their villages, resettled to remote areas, sent to labor camps, or executed if they resisted. Anyone who refused to join a collective farm could be declared a *kurkul* and forced to pay heavy taxes. The campaign to confiscate property and remove these farmers was called *dekulakization*.

labor camps – a network of forced-labor camps located across Siberia and other remote regions of the Soviet Union. People were sent to these camps in unheated freight cars, often without food or water. Dozens of people were packed into a single car and transported for weeks in extreme conditions. After arrival, prisoners were forced to perform hard physical labor under harsh and inhumane conditions, including extreme cold, hunger, and disease. Many did not

survive. Between 1928 and 1931, about 1.5 million Ukrainians were affected by dekulakization, most of whom were deported to Siberia and other remote areas.

Law of Five Ears of Grain – the name for the Soviet decree “On the Protection of Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms, and Cooperatives, and the Strengthening of Public (Socialist) Property,” adopted on August 7, 1932. The law imposed extremely harsh punishments for taking any property from a collective farm—even a few ears of grain left in a field. Penalties included at least ten years of imprisonment or execution by shooting. The law was widely used during the Holodomor to criminalize starving villagers who tried to obtain food.

liknep (from Ukrainian *likvidatsiia nepysemnosti*, meaning “liquidation of illiteracy”) – a Soviet campaign officially aimed at teaching people to read and write. While presented as an educational program, it also served a political purpose. Through literacy classes, the Soviet government promoted Marxist and Bolshevik ideology, seeking to shape loyal citizens who accepted Soviet values and authority. Education was therefore used not only to reduce illiteracy but also to influence beliefs and behavior.

NEP – a Soviet economic policy introduced in 1921 to stabilize the economy after World War I and famine. Under the NEP, the system of forced grain seizures was ended and replaced with a fixed tax, allowing farmers to sell surplus produce on the free market. The policy temporarily permitted small private businesses, trade, and limited entrepreneurship. The government restored the banking and credit system, introduced a stable currency, and supported cooperative and private enterprises, which helped revive production. Major industries remained under state control and were organized into state-run enterprises. The NEP was ended in 1928, when the Soviet leadership returned to strict central planning and forced collectivization.

patrol brigades – groups of Soviet activists sent to villages to enforce state policies, especially grain procurement during *collectivization*. These brigades included local activists, teachers, students, district control commission inspectors, and Communist Party officials, many dispatched from urban centers. Their tasks included spreading propaganda, pressuring villagers to join collective farms, searching houses, and confiscating grain and food, sometimes even removing cooked food from stoves. These actions were often carried out by force and could involve violence, property destruction, and intimidation.

petliurivtsi – petliurites were supporters of Symon Petliura, the head of the Directory of the Ukrainian People’s Republic (UNR) during the Ukrainian struggle for independence (1917–1921). In the Soviet Union, the term became a derogatory label used by authorities to discredit nationally conscious Ukrainians, whether or not they had any real connection to Petliura. It was often applied broadly to real or imagined anti-Soviet individuals or groups and was used to justify surveillance, repression, arrests, and persecution.

resettlement into depopulated villages – a Soviet policy implemented after the Holodomor to repopulate Ukrainian villages emptied by mass starvation. According to the secret resolution “On the Resettlement of 21,000 Families of Collective Farmers to Ukraine” (late 1933–early

1934), hundreds of train convoys transported families from Russia and Belarus to regions depopulated by the man-made famine. The newcomers were given housing, food assistance, and other benefits, while surviving local residents often received none. This policy contributed to demographic change and the weakening of Ukrainian rural communities.

Solovki – a group of Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea that became one of the first Soviet prison camp sites in the 1920s. The Solovetsky Monastery was turned into a labor camp where political prisoners were held in harsh conditions. Many Ukrainian intellectuals—writers, artist, scholars, clergy, and students—were imprisoned there, accused of “nationalism” or opposition to the Soviet regime. Solovki became an early symbol of the *Gulag* system.

SVU trial – a show trial conducted by Soviet authorities in 1930 against the alleged “Union for the Liberation of Ukraine” (SVU), a fictitious organization invented by the GPU (Soviet secret police). The trial accused Ukrainian scholars, teachers, writers, and students of plotting to overthrow Soviet rule and establish an independent Ukrainian state through uprisings and rebellions that swept through Ukraine. During and after the SVU trial, more than 30,000 people—mostly members of the Ukrainian intelligentsia—were arrested, exiled, imprisoned, or executed. Some of the convicted were sent to labor camps such as *Solovki*.

Torgsins (abbreviation for “trade with foreigners”) — special state-owned stores in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s. They sold food and basic goods only in exchange for foreign currency, gold, silver, or jewelry. During the Holodomor, starving villagers could buy food in Torgsins only if they gave up family valuables. Prices were extremely high, forcing many people to trade their last possessions in order to survive.

troika – a group of three officials—usually a Communist Party representative, a secret police (GPU) officer, and a local activist—who were given the power to arrest, sentence, and execute people without a court trial. Troikas were used by the Soviet government to speed up repression, often targeting people labeled as “enemies of the state.” Their decisions were arbitrary, and those accused had no chance to defend themselves.

Ukrainization – a Soviet nationality policy introduced in 1923 as part of a broader strategy called *korenizatsiia* (“indigenization”). Its goal was to strengthen Soviet power in non-Russian republics by promoting local languages and recruiting officials from the local population. In Soviet Ukraine, the policy was Moscow’s concession to the republic’s leaders. It encouraged the use of the Ukrainian language in schools, administration, and culture in order to bring Ukrainian-speaking specialists into government positions. However, the policy was limited and controlled by the Communist Party. The Holodomor was a “special operation” that aimed to curtail the policy of Ukrainization under the guise of “grain procurement” in 1932–1933. Many of its supporters were accused of “nationalist deviation,” arrested, exiled, or executed, and the Soviet government returned to strict central control and Russification.

HANDOUT 2

BLOCK A

Document 1

Letter from Stalin to Kaganovich on changing the leadership of the Ukrainian SSR²¹

August 11, 1932

... 3) *The main issue* is now Ukraine. Matters in Ukraine are currently extremely bad. Bad from the standpoint of the *Party* line. They say that, in two regions of Ukraine (Kyiv and Dnipropetrovsk, I believe), nearly 50 district Party committees have spoken out against the grain procurement plan as *unrealistic*. They say the matter is no better in other district committees. What does this look like? This is not a Party, but a parliament, a caricature of a parliament. Instead of *directing* the districts, Kosior is always *waffling* between CC AUCP directives and the demands of district committees, and he's waffled himself to the end. Lenin was right when he said that a person who lacks the courage to go against the flow at the right moment cannot be a real Bolshevik leader. *Bad* from the standpoint of the Soviet line. Chubar is no leader. *Bad* from the standpoint of the GPU. [Stanislaw] Redens is incapable of leading the battle with counterrevolution in such a large and unique republic as Ukraine.

If we do not correct the situation in Ukraine immediately, we could lose Ukraine. Also keep in mind that within the Ukrainian Communist Party (500,000 members, ha, ha) there is no lack (yes, no lack!) of rotten elements, active and latent petlurites and direct agents of Pilsudski. As soon as things get worse, these elements won't hesitate to open a front within (and outside) the Party, *against* the Party. Worst of all, the Ukrainian leadership does not see these dangers.

It is necessary:

- a) to remove Kosior from Ukraine and replace him with you [Kaganovich]; you will *retain* the post of secretary of the CC AUCP(b);
- b) *after this*, transfer Balitsky to Ukraine as chairman of the Ukrainian GPU (or PP [authorized plenipotentiary] to Ukraine, as it seems the GPU chairman position in Ukraine does not exist) and he will *remain* deputy chairman of the [All-Union] OGPU; make Redens a deputy to Balitsky in Ukraine;
- c) *in a few months* replace Chubar with another comrade, say, Hrynko or anybody else, and appoint Chubar to be Molotov's deputy in Moscow (Kosior can be made one of the secretaries of the CC AUCP(b));

²¹ RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 99, l. 146–51; quoted in О. В. Хлевнюк, Р. У. Дэвис, Л. П. Кошелева, Э. А. Рис, Л. А. Роговая (сост.), *Сталин и Каганович: переписка 1931–1936 гг.* [*Stalin and Kaganovich: correspondence 1931–1936*] (Москва: Российская политическая энциклопедия (РОССПЭН); Российский государственный архив социально-политической истории, 2001), 273–74. Reprinted in *Holodomor of 1932–33 in Ukraine: Documents and Materials*, comp. Ruslan Pyrih, trans. Stephen Bandera (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohyla Academy Publishing House, 2008), 47–49.

- d) Set yourself the goal of turning Ukraine into a fortress of the USSR, a real model republic, within the shortest possible time. Don't spare money for this purpose.

Without these and similar measures (economic and political strengthening of Ukraine starting with the districts *along the border*, etc.), I repeat once again: we may lose Ukraine.

<...>

Regards!

J. Stalin

Document 2

From Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine on measures to intensify grain procurements²²

November 18, 1932

“On Measures to Combat Kulak Influence in Collective Farms and Rural Party Organizations”

In order to overcome kulak resistance to the fulfillment of grain procurement plans, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine resolves:

1. To introduce the practice of placing on the blacklist those collective farms that maliciously sabotage the delivery of grain in accordance with the state plan.

With regard to collective farms placed on the blacklist, the following measures shall be implemented:

- a) the immediate cessation of the delivery of goods; the complete termination of cooperative and state trade on site; and the removal from the relevant cooperative shops of all available goods;
- b) a complete prohibition of trade, both for collective farms and collective farmers, as well as for individual farmers;
- c) the cessation of all forms of crediting and the early collection of loans and other financial obligations;
- d) the inspection and purging of collective farms with the removal of counterrevolutionary elements—the organizers of the disruption of grain procurements;
- e) the placement of individual collective farms on the blacklist, as well as warnings about such placement, to be announced by resolution of the regional executive committee.

<...>

²² Голод 1932–1933 років на Україні: очима істориків, мовою документів [The famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: through the eyes of historians, in the language of documents] (Київ: Політвидав України, 1990), 256.

Document 3

From a letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine to the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on the state of grain procurements in Ukraine in late November – early December 1932²³

December 8, 1932

<...>

With regard to the effectiveness of individual repressive measures, it can be stated that:

1. The greatest results are achieved through the application of in-kind fines. At present, a collective farmer—and even an individual farmer—clings tightly to a cow or a pig...

IV. With respect to individual farmers, some progress has been made, but it is precisely here that continuous, systematic, and decisive pressure is most needed. The slightest easing of work, in the hope that “things will now move forward,” immediately leads to a decline in procurements. This is shown by the most recent five-day periods. The most effective repressive measures are in-kind fines and the deprivation of homestead land.

S. Kosior <...>

Discussion Questions for Block A:

- Based on the documents, what were the authorities’ objectives in Ukraine at that time?
- What measures were proposed, and against whom were they directed?
- How do the documents justify extraordinary measures, and what does this reveal about the normalization of repression within the Stalinist system?

²³ Голод 1932–1933 років на Україні: очима істориків, мовою документів [*The famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: through the eyes of historians, in the language of documents*] (Київ: Політвидав України, 1990), 230.

BLOCK B

Document 4

Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and Council of People's Commissars of the USSR on grain procurements in Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus and the Western region²⁴

December 14, 1932

On hearing reports from Comrades Rumiantsev, Secretary of the Western regional Party committee; Kosior, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine; Stroganov, Secretary of the Dnipropetrovsk regional Party committee; and Sheboldaev, Secretary of the Northern Caucasus regional Party committee, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and Council of People's Commissars of the USSR resolve the following:

1. The Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine and Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, on the personal responsibility of Comrades Kosior and Chubar, shall fully complete the grain and sunflower seed procurement plans by the end of January 1933.

2. The Northern Caucasus regional Party and executive committees, on the personal responsibility of Comrades Sheboldaev and Larin, shall fully complete the procurement plan for grain by January 10 to 15, 1933, and for sunflower seeds by the end of January 1933.

3. The Western regional Party and executive committees, on the personal responsibility of Comrades Rumiantsev and Shelekhes, shall fully complete the procurement plan for grain by January 1, 1933, and for flax by February 1, 1933.

4. In view of extremely poor efforts and the absence of revolutionary vigilance in a number of local Party organizations in Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, a significant number of districts has been infiltrated by counterrevolutionary elements: kulaks, former officers, petliurites, supporters of the Kuban Rada, and so on. They have managed to find their way into collective farms as directors and other influential administration members, accountants, storekeepers, threshing floor foremen, and so on. They have succeeded in infiltrating village councils, land management bodies and cooperative societies, and are now trying to direct the work of these organizations against the interests of the proletarian state and Party policy, as well as trying to organize a counterrevolutionary movement and sabotage of the harvest and sowing campaigns. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and Council of People's Commissars of the USSR order the Central Committee of the Communist

²⁴ RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 911, l. 42–44; TsDAHOУ, f. 1, op. 20, spr. 5243, ark. 234–238; Валерій Васильєв, Юрій Шаповал, Стівен Уїткрофт, Лариса Малашенко, *Командири Великого Голоду: Поїздки В. Молотова і Л. Кагановича в Україну та на Північний Кавказ, 1932–1933* [Commanders of the Great Famine: Travels of V. Molotov and L. Kaganovich to Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, 1932–1933] (Київ: Генеза, 2001), 210–12. Reprinted in *Holodomor of 1932–33 in Ukraine: Documents and Materials*, comp. Ruslan Pyrih, trans. Stephen Bandera (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohyla Academy Publishing House, 2008), 65–68.

Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine, Northern Caucasus regional Party and executive committees and the Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine to resolutely root out these counterrevolutionary elements by means of arrest and long-term imprisonment in concentration camps, without stopping short of capital punishment for the most malicious elements.

5. The Central Committee and Council of People's Commissars instruct party and government organizations of the Soviet Union that the worst enemies of the Party, working class, and collective farm workers are the saboteurs of grain procurement who have Party membership cards in their pockets. To please kulaks and other anti-Soviet elements, they organize state fraud and double-deals, and fail to complete tasks established by the Party and government. The Central Committee and Council of People's Commissars order appropriate structures to apply austere repressions against these traitors and enemies of Soviet rule and collective farms, who still carry Party membership cards in their pockets: five-to-ten-year terms of imprisonment in concentration camps and, under certain circumstances, execution by shooting.

6. The Central Committee and Council of People's Commissars point out that instead of the correct Bolshevik implementation of nationality policy, "Ukrainization" was carried out mechanically in a number of districts of Ukraine, failing to take into consideration the peculiarities of every district and without the meticulous selection of Bolshevik cadres. This made it easier for bourgeois nationalist elements, petliurites and others to create their legal façades and counterrevolutionary cells and organizations.

7. The Central Committee and Council of People's Commissars particularly point out to the Party and executive committees of the Northern Caucasus region that the irresponsible, anti-Bolshevik Ukrainization which affected nearly half of the districts in the Northern Caucasus do not correspond to the cultural interests of the population. It was carried out with a complete lack of supervision on the part of territorial agencies over the Ukrainization of schools and the press, and provided the enemies of Soviet rule with legal façades for organizing resistance to the endeavors of Soviet authorities by kulaks, [czarist] officers, re-emigrating Cossacks, members of the Kuban Rada, etc. In order to crush the resistance to grain procurement by kulak elements and their "Party" and non-party flunkeys, the Central Committee and Council of People's Commissars of the USSR resolve the following:

a) To relocate the entire population of the most counterrevolutionary Poltava stanitsa (Northern Caucasus) to the northern regions of the USSR in the shortest time possible, with the exception of those collective and individual farmers who are truly loyal to Soviet rule and who have not been implicated in grain procurement sabotage. Populate this village with conscientious collective farmers who are Red Army soldiers and are currently working in territories that suffer from shortages and poor quality of land. Transfer all lands, winter crops, buildings, inventory and livestock from the farmers being expelled to these settlers.

Responsibility for implementing this resolution (paragraph "a") shall rest with Comrades Yagoda, Gamarnik (with Comrade Bulygin as his substitute), Sheboldaev, and Yevdokimov.

b) Prosecute and sentence traitors of the Party who were arrested in Ukraine for organizing the sabotage of grain procurement to five-ten-year terms in concentration camps: former district secretaries, chairmen of executive committees, directors of land management bodies and chairmen of district associations of collective farms <...>.

c) Exile all former communists who were expelled from the Party for sabotaging the sowing and grain procurement campaigns to the northern regions as kulaks.

d) Propose that the Central Committee Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine and Council of People's Commissars of Ukraine pay serious attention to the proper implementation of Ukrainization, to eliminate its mechanical implementation, to expel petliurites and other bourgeois-nationalist elements from Party and government organizations, to meticulously select and train Ukrainian Bolshevik cadres and to ensure Party management of and supervision over Ukrainization on a regular basis.

e) Immediately change the language used in offices of Soviet entities and cooperative societies, as well as all newspapers and magazines in the Ukrainized districts of the Northern Caucasus, from Ukrainian to Russian, explaining that Russian is more understandable to Kuban residents. Also, prepare to change the language of instruction at schools to Russian by autumn. The Central Committee and Council of People's Commissars order the regional Party and executive committees to immediately investigate the staff working at schools in Ukrainized districts.

f) In cancellation of a previous resolution, allow delivery of goods to Ukrainian villages and grant Comrades Kosior and Chubar the right to suspend delivery of goods to particularly retrograde districts, until they fulfill the grain procurement plan.

Chairman, Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, V. Molotov (Skryabin)
Secretary, Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), J. Stalin

Document 5

Letter from Z. Katsnelson, head of the Kharkiv Regional Department of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, to V. Balytskyi, chairman of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, on the spread of famine²⁵

June 5, 1933

To the Chairman of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR
Comrade Balytskyi

Personal letter

The food situation in the districts of Kharkiv Region, already quite severe, has sharply worsened in recent times.

²⁵ *Розсекречена пам'ять: Голодомор 1932–1933 років в Україні в документах ГПУ-НКВД [Declassified Memory: The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine in the Documents of the GPU-NKVD]*, ред. Сергій Богунов та Василь Даниленко (Київ: СБУ; Міжнародний благодійний фонд «Україна 3000», Києво-Могилянська академія, 2008), 532–33.

As a result, we are witnessing a significant increase in the influx into the city of Kharkiv of homeless, destitute, and begging elements.

If in the months of January and February the following were collected in the city:

homeless adults	257	persons
the sick and the disabled	15	
children and adolescents	373	
TOTAL	645	persons

and in March–April, correspondingly: <...> 4,476,
then in the month of May already there were collected:

homeless adults	4,439	
the sick and the disabled	585	
children and adolescents	6,378	
TOTAL	11,402	persons

All of this pertains only to the city itself, without taking into account the railway stations, from which children are removed by the commission of Comrade Bronevyi, bypassing the militia, and the total number of those removed is estimated at 10,000 persons. Alongside this, there has been a sharp increase in the number of corpses discovered and collected on the streets of the city of Kharkiv—peasants who died as a result of starvation.

Document 6

Selection of Materials from *Surrogate Food of 1933: The Holodomor Dictionary*²⁶

“Flour was made from acacia blossoms. To this day I cannot stand the smell of blooming acacia.”
A. M. Malynochka, village of Topchyne, Dnipropetrovsk Region

“We ate white goosefoot, acacia blossoms, and made pancakes from them. The acacia trees then stood stripped bare, even black.”
K. K. Kovchynska, village of Stetsivka, Zvenyhorodka District, Cherkasy Region

“Groundhogs, steppe ground squirrels, hedgehogs, and other small animals came out. People caught them however they could—flushed them out with water, beat them, all that small game—and ate it.”
I. D. Dreiev, village of Nyzhnobaranykivka, Bilovodsk District, Luhansk Region

²⁶ *Їдло 1933-го: Словник голодомору [Surrogate Food of 1933: The Holodomor Dictionary]*, ред. Олекса Різниченко (Одеса: Юридична література, 2003), <http://ukrlife.org/main/prosvita/jidlo2.htm>.

“The collective farm organized a field kitchen. People worked every day hoeing sugar beets and received a ladle of thin gruel. If that was not enough, someone would add raw water to it and die. My mother brought us, the children, half a ladle. Mother grew blackened and swollen, but she saved us.”

M. Ya. Kravets, village of Mali Krushlyntsi, Vinnytsia District, Vinnytsia Region

“Linden leaves and distillery mash went into food. One must thank fate that the Liutenka distillery processed potatoes from autumn and poured that mash into three large pits. By spring it had thickened. That mash was sold to people; they baked flat cakes from it and lived on that.”

M. V. Savchenko, village of Liutenka, Hadiach District, Poltava Region

“With the coming of spring it became a little easier for people—they ate willow and elm blossoms...”

I. A. Dreiev, village of Nyzhnobaranykivka, Bilovodsk District, Luhansk Region

“When buds appear on the linden trees, children sit under the lindens and on the lindens from morning till evening and eat those buds. In our village there are lindens near the church, and nowhere else. And the linden buds must have been good.”

H. P. Shesniak, village of Slobidka-Kalnianska, Khmelnytskyi Region

“At that time, I worked at a state farm; the state farm fed us. It was worse for the collective farmers: during the sowing season they cooked sugar beets for them and fed them that way. People would eat those beets and die. You walk across the field and keep looking: here lie two or three dead, there two or three.”

M. D. Kyrylchuk, village of Borshchivtsi, Mohyliv-Podilskyi District, Vinnytsia Region

Discussion Questions for Block B:

- What connection can be made between the policies outlined in the documents and the subsequent movement of starving rural population to cities such as Kharkiv?
- How are starving farmers, homeless children, and the dead described in the private letter to the GPU—as victims, problems, or security concerns? Why does such a framing matter?
- What do testimonies reveal about everyday survival strategies during the Holodomor? What physical and psychological consequences of starvation are evident in these recollections?

BLOCK C

Document 7

Instruction on the application of the Resolution of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of August 7, 1932, "On the Protection of the Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms, and Cooperatives and on the Strengthening of Public (Socialist) Property"²⁷

September 13, 1932

<...>

Section 2.

Categories of embezzlers and the measure of social protection to be applied to them. <...>

2. With regard to kulaks, former traders, and other socially alien elements working in state (industrial and agricultural—state farms) enterprises or institutions, who are exposed as having committed theft of property or embezzlement of large sums of money from these enterprises or institutions, as well as officials of state institutions and enterprises, the highest measure of punishment shall be applied; under mitigating circumstances (in cases of single and insignificant thefts), the highest measure of punishment shall be replaced by deprivation of liberty for ten years.

In cases of theft, even minor, committed by persons of the aforementioned social categories, but entailing disruption or stoppage of the work of state enterprises (theft of parts of units and machines, deliberate destruction or damage of state-farm inventory, etc.), the highest measure of punishment shall also be applied... <...>

5. With regard to kulaks, both those who have infiltrated collective farms and those remaining outside collective farms, who organize or participate in the theft of collective-farm property and grain, the highest measure of punishment shall be applied without mitigation.

6. With regard to working individual peasants and collective farmers exposed as having committed theft of collective-farm property and grain, deprivation of liberty for ten years shall be applied.

Under aggravating circumstances, namely: systematic theft of collective-farm grain, sugar beets, and other agricultural products and livestock; theft committed by organized groups; theft on a large scale; theft accompanied by acts of violence, terrorist acts, arson, etc.—the highest measure of punishment shall also be applied to collective farmers and working individual peasants. <...>

²⁷ Розсекречена пам'ять: Голодомор 1932–1933 років в Україні в документах ГПУ-НКВД [Declassified Memory: The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine in the Documents of the GPU-NKVD], ред. Сергій Богунов та Василь Даниленко (Київ: СБУ; Міжнародний благодійний фонд «Україна 3000», Києво-Могилянська академія, 2008), 298.

Document 8

Report on persons convicted in cases initiated by the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR and the militia in August–November 1932 in connection with grain procurements²⁸

December 8, 1932

According to data from the Records and Statistics Department of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR (based on statistical reports for August–October) and telegraphic information from local authorities during the period of the special operation (from November 15 to December 1).

Report

On persons prosecuted and convicted in cases initiated by the organs of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR and the militia in connection with grain procurements for August–November 1932

In total, during August–November, the organs of the GPU prosecuted 21,197 persons in connection with grain procurements, of whom:

in August — 1,491 persons were prosecuted
in September — 2,526 persons
in October — 2,850 persons
in November — 14,230 persons

By specific types of offenses, the total number of those prosecuted is distributed as follows:

for theft, squandering, and concealment of grain — 6,940 persons
for agitation against grain procurements — 6,449 persons
for speculation in grain — 3,715 persons
for resistance to the removal of grain — 2,022 persons
for terror and arson — 441 persons
for sabotage in collective farms and state farms — 348 persons
information on the nature of the cases not received — 1,282 persons

4. Of the total number prosecuted in connection with grain procurements, 1,108 persons were convicted by the Judicial Troika and the Special Council attached to the Collegium of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, of whom:

²⁸ *Розсекречена пам'ять: Голодомор 1932–1933 років в Україні в документах ГПУ-НКВД [Declassified Memory: The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine in the Documents of the GPU-NKVD]*, ред. Сергій Богунов та Василь Даниленко (Київ: СБУ; Міжнародний благодійний фонд «Україна 3000», Києво-Могилянська академія, 2008), 427.

sentenced to the highest measure of social protection (execution) — 31 persons
sentenced to a labor camp for 10 years — 116 persons
sentenced to a labor camp for 5 years — 419 persons
sentenced to a labor camp for 3 years — 92 persons
sentenced to exile — 443 persons
sentenced to other measures — 8 persons

Document 9

Order from the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) on preventing the mass flight of starving villagers in search of food²⁹

Rostov-Don, Kharkov, Voronezh, Smolensk, Minsk, Stalingrad, Samara

January 22, 1933

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of Peoples' Commissars of the USSR have received reports on the mass flight of peasants "for bread" to the Central Black Earth Region,³⁰ Volga, Moscow Region, Western Region, and Belarus. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR do not doubt that the flight of villagers and the exodus from Ukraine last year and this year is [being] organized by the enemies of Soviet government, SRs [Social Revolutionaries] and agents of Poland with the goal of spreading propaganda "through the peasants" against collective farms and the Soviet government in the northern regions of the USSR. Last year, the [Communist] Party, Soviet and chekist structures of Ukraine missed that counterrevolutionary undertaking by the enemies of Soviet regime. Last year's mistakes cannot be repeated this year.

First. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR order the Regional Council and the Official OGPU Representative in the Northern Caucasus to prevent the mass exodus of peasants from the Northern Caucasus to other regions and entry into the region from Ukraine.

Second. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars order the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of

²⁹ RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 45, l. 108–109; V. P. Danilov, Robert Manning, and Lynne Viola (eds.), *Трагедия советской деревни: коллективизация и раскулачивание. Документы и материалы, 1927–1939* [Tragedy of Soviet countryside: Collectivization and dekulakization. Documents and materials, 1927–1939], vol. 3: *Конец 1930–1933 гг. [The End of 1930–1933]* (Москва: Российская политическая энциклопедия (РОССПЭН), 2001), 635; A. N. Sakharov, "Совершенно секретно": *Лубянка – Сталину о положении в стране (1922–1934 гг.): в 4 т. ["Top secret": Lubyanka to Stalin on the situation in the country: in 4 volumes]* (Москва: Институт российской истории Российской академии наук, 2001), vol. 4, 391. See English translation in *Holodomor of 1932–33 in Ukraine: Documents and Materials*, comp. Ruslan Pyrih, trans. Stephen Bandera (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohyla Academy Publishing House, 2008), 85–86.

³⁰ Central Black Earth Region – administrative-territorial unit of the Russian SFSR from 1928 to 1934.

Ukraine and the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, Balitsky and Redens to prevent the mass flight of peasants from Ukraine to other regions and entry to Ukraine from the Northern Caucasus.

Third. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars order the Official Representatives of the OGPU in Moscow Region, Central Black Earth Region, Western Region, Belarus, Lower Volga and Middle Volga to arrest "peasants" fleeing north from Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus and, after the filtration of counterrevolutionary elements, return the remainder to their places of residence.

Fourth. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars order Prokhorov to issue the corresponding commands through the GPU TO [transport division].

Chairman, Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, V. M. Molotov
Secretary, Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), J. Stalin³¹

Discussion Questions for Block C:

- How do criminal laws, mass prosecutions, and restrictions on movement together create conditions in which starvation becomes unavoidable rather than accidental?
- What was referred to as "state socialist property"? Why did the need arise to "protect" it?
- Why is the search for food interpreted as a counterrevolutionary act rather than a humanitarian crisis?

³¹ The document is signed by Stalin; Molotov's signature is missing.

APPENDIX A

THE HOLODOMOR CHRONOLOGY

Date	Event	Description and Consequences
March 1917	The beginning of the Ukrainian revolution. The Central Rada (Council) was established in Kyiv to represent Ukrainian national interests.	The revolution marked the beginning of a broader nation-building process, setting the stage for later declarations of autonomy and ultimately the Ukrainian People's Republic.
December 1917	The Central Rada proclaimed the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR)	While recognizing the UNR, Bolshevik leader V. Lenin issued an ultimatum and started the first military invasion of Ukraine.
January 22, 1918	The Ukrainian Central Rada issued the Fourth Universal, formally proclaiming the independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) from Russia	The act came amid Bolshevik attempts to seize control in Ukraine and marked the first modern declaration of full Ukrainian sovereignty. It established Ukraine as an independent state in international law and provided a foundation for later national institutions.
January 22, 1919	The Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) and the West Ukrainian People's Republic (ZUNR) formally declared unification in the Act of Unity	The act symbolized the aspiration for a single, independent Ukrainian state. While largely symbolic due to ongoing wars and political instability, it became a key national symbol of Ukrainian unity. Ukrainian recognized as the state language.
1919–1920	The war for Ukrainian independence. Russian Bolsheviks created quasi state: Ukrainian SSR	The period marked the failure of the first modern Ukrainian state to secure lasting independence, leading to Russian and Polish control over most Ukrainian lands, but it also cemented the legacy of resistance and national self-determination.
1921	Lenin's policy of War Communism gave way to the New Economic Policy (NEP)	The policy of War Communism, including forced grain requisitions, nationalization of industry and banks, and severe restrictions on

		private trade, devastated the Ukrainian countryside, caused widespread famine, and provoked peasant uprisings. Lenin reverted to the NEP to save his power.
May 1921	Trial of the Ukrainian Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs)	This show trial marked an early step in the Soviet regime's suppression of independent Ukrainian political life, targeting leaders of a major Ukrainian socialist party, among them Symon Petliura and Serhii Yefremov (members of the Ukrainian Central Rada).
1922	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics formed, formally uniting Ukraine with Russia, Belarus, and the Transcaucasian republics under a centralized Soviet state	For Ukraine, this meant the loss of real sovereignty, subordination of political and economic decision-making to Moscow, and the entrenchment of policies that would later enable mass repression, forced collectivization, and the Holodomor.
1921–1923	Famine broke out in five southern regions of Ukraine due to grain requisitions to save the starving in the Volga region in Russia and ongoing anti-Bolshevik insurgency in Ukraine	The famine lasted in Ukraine into the summer of 1923. Bolshevik policies foreshadowed the larger-scale Stalin's famine of the 1930s.
1923	The Soviet government introduced Ukrainization policy and encouraged local cultural initiatives under strict political control	The policy temporarily fostered Ukrainian national identity and cultural development under Soviet rule, while political repression continued in parallel.
1926	The GPU issued a pamphlet "On Ukrainian Separatism"	Soviet authorities intensified efforts to suppress perceived Ukrainian separatism, targeting intellectuals, cultural leaders, and political figures who were seen as promoting autonomy beyond the limits allowed by the Communist Party. Accusations of "bourgeois nationalism" were used to justify censorship and arrests. The year marked the beginning of a systematic campaign against

		Ukrainian national consciousness, foreshadowing the later purges and repression of the 1930s.
1928	Stalin curtailed the NEP; the GPU instituted the policy of secrecy in preparation for a crackdown on opposition	A shift toward rapid industrialization and forced collectivization and the preparation for the coming campaign against perceived “enemies of the state” laid the administrative and security groundwork for the coercive policies that would devastate Ukraine’s countryside in the early 1930s.
1929	The onset of the Great Depression in the United States and worldwide triggered a global economic crisis, leading to a collapse in international trade and widespread unemployment	The depression intensified the Soviet leadership’s urgency to accelerate collectivization and extract grain, as the USSR sought to compete with the United States on the global market.
1928–1929	Administrative pressure intensified in order to force Ukrainian farmers to join collectives	The number of collectivized households in Ukraine increased from 173,000 to 447,000, and the total land area of collective farms expanded from 1 million to 3 million hectares.
November 10–17, 1929	Resolution of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) “On Agriculture in Ukraine and Work in the Countryside”	The slogan of “total collectivization” was officially proclaimed. The plenum revealed no consensus on the pace and final deadlines of total collectivization.
January 5, 1930	The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted the resolution “On the Pace of Collectivization and Measures of State Assistance to Collective Farm Construction”	Ukraine was designated as one of the regions where collectivization was planned to be completed by the autumn of 1931 or the spring of 1932.
February 1, 1930	Resolution of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR “On Measures to Strengthen the Socialist	Laws permitting the leasing of land and the use of hired labor in agriculture were abolished, and the confiscation of the means of production from “kulaks” was

	Transformation of Agriculture in Areas of Total Collectivization and on the Struggle against the Kulaks”	announced. They were divided into categories, and lists of those subject to these measures were to be compiled by decisions of meetings of farm laborers or by village assemblies.
February 4, 1930	S. Kosior delivered a report in Kharkiv titled “On the Mass Liquidation of the Kulaks as a Class and the Party’s Immediate Tasks”	The speech called for the implementation of total collectivization in all steppe districts during the spring sowing campaign and, in the autumn of the same year, in all other districts of Ukraine.
January – March 1930	First wave of dekulakization in Ukraine	A total of 61,887 households (2.5% of all households) were subjected to dekulakization. During deportations children were separated from their parents. Children older than 16 were sentenced to shorter terms. Children younger than 10 were placed in state-run orphanages where they were stripped of Ukrainian identity and often became recruits for Soviet security police.
March 2, 1930	The newspaper <i>Pravda</i> published Stalin’s article “Dizzy with Success”	The article stated that the basic unit of the collective-farm movement should be the <i>artel</i> rather than the commune. It declared the inadmissibility of advancing collectivization through administrative coercion and proclaimed peasants’ freedom to leave collective farms.
March – April 1930	Stalin orchestrated a show trial of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU) in the Kharkiv Opera House	It served as a fabricated case to justify mass repression of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, clergy, and cultural elites, marking a decisive step in dismantling Ukrainization and paving the way for the terror and genocidal policies of the 1930s.
February – April 1930	The GPU recorded more than 4,000 mass uprisings, involving over a million participants in Ukraine	A total of 1,593,800 households left collective farms, nearly half of all collective farmers. The uprisings

		were brutally suppressed by GPU units and Red Army forces.
September 1930	Directive letter of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) "On Collectivization"	Marked a renewed offensive against individual farmers. Ukraine was tasked with doubling the level of collectivization and completing full collectivization of the main agricultural regions during 1931. A new wave of dekulakization began.
December 1930	Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine	Proclaimed a "merciless" offensive against the "kulaks." During 1930 and the first half of 1931, about 100,000 families were deported from Ukraine. In total, over the years of total collectivization in Ukraine, 352,000 households were expropriated.
October 1931	Total collectivization of Ukraine as a whole was completed	Nearly 87% of households in the steppe region, 70% in the left-bank region, and 67% in the right-bank forest-steppe were collectivized. The targets set by the joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in December 1930 were exceeded. However, in many districts there were no remaining food, fodder, or seed grain reserves. The population began to starve.
July 6, 1932	The Council of People's Commissars of the USSR approved Ukraine's grain procurement plan from the 1932 harvest	This decision institutionalized mass grain confiscation and stripped Ukrainian farmers of food reserves necessary for survival. It became a key administrative trigger, transforming famine conditions into a state-enforced starvation by prioritizing state deliveries and exports over human life, criminalizing noncompliance, and enabling further repressive measures.

August 7, 1932	Decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR “On the Protection of Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms, and Cooperatives and on Strengthening Public (Socialist) Property”	The “theft” of collective farm property was punishable by execution, and under “mitigating circumstances” by imprisonment for a term of no less than ten years with confiscation of property. Among the population, this decree became known as the “Law of Five Ears of Grain.” The law became a central legal instrument of the Holodomor, demonstrating how genocide was carried out through administrative and judicial means rather than overt mass killing orders.
October 1932 – January 1933	“Operations” of Molotov’s Grain Procurement Commission in Ukraine	Under pressure from V. Molotov, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine and the Council of People’s Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR adopted resolutions demanding the fulfillment of the grain procurement plan by January 1, 1933. District executive committees were granted the right to reclassify all collective farm seed, food, and fodder reserves as grain procurements. Local authorities were instructed to confiscate grain allegedly stolen during harvesting, threshing, and transportation. The practice of imposing in-kind fines (food penalties) was introduced. Judicial-investigative brigades were established under the People’s Commissariat of Justice of the Ukrainian SSR and in the regions. Ukraine was placed under a blockade regime.
December 1932	Acting as Stalin’s plenipotentiary, L. Kaganovich supervised the intensification of grain requisitions, enforced blacklisting, purges of local party cadres accused of	The visit helped finalize the administrative architecture of the Holodomor-genocide, aligning economic coercion with national repression. It underscored Moscow’s determination to break

	“Ukrainian nationalism,” and the rollback of Ukrainization	anti-Soviet resistance and Ukrainian political autonomy simultaneously.
December 29, 1932	Meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine with the participation of L. Kaganovich	A directive letter to regional and district party committees was adopted, proposing that all available food supplies be immediately removed from collective farms that failed to meet procurement quotas.
January 19, 1933	Resolution of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) “On the Mandatory Delivery of Grain to the State by Collective Farms and Individual Peasant Households”	A shift in economic policy began. Collective farms and individual farmers were permitted to retain all produce generated beyond the mandatory delivery quotas to the state and to sell any surplus at free-market prices. In effect, the destructive requisitioning system was replaced by a grain tax.
January 24, 1933	Personnel changes in the leadership of the republic at Stalin’s initiative	Pavel Postyshev was appointed Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine and First Secretary of the Kharkiv Regional Party Committee (while retaining his post as Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)). Postyshev arrived as Stalin’s plenipotentiary enforcer, tasked with crushing Ukrainian resistance, intensifying grain procurements, and overseeing mass purges of the national communists, intelligentsia, and cultural institutions.
January 1933	Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)	Stalin asserted that the material conditions of workers and peasants were improving year by year. Only “food difficulties in a number of collective farms” were acknowledged. Stalin issued a directive to treat the famine as a “non-existent phenomenon.”

<p>November 1, 1932 – February 1, 1933</p>	<p>Molotov Commission additionally “procured” grain in Ukraine</p>	<p>Extraordinary and punitive grain seizures in Ukraine went far beyond already unrealistic procurement quotas. These operations involved house-to-house searches, confiscation of not only grain but also seed reserves and foodstuffs, and the imposition of blacklists on entire villages, effectively cutting them off from trade and supplies. This phase marked the transition from coercive procurement to deliberate starvation, eliminating the last means of survival for rural households. By synchronizing economic extraction with political repression and movement restrictions, the Molotov Commission’s actions were a decisive step in transforming the famine into the Holodomor-genocide.</p>
<p>March 1933</p>	<p>Famine mortality in Ukraine reaches mass proportions</p>	<p>Phenomena such as cannibalism spread. According to estimates based on demographic extrapolation, the number of victims in Ukraine ranged between 6 and 9 million people. American medical professional William Horsley Gantt quoted 15 million deaths as a result of the First Five-Year Plan, citing estimates of Soviet public health officials.</p>
<p>January 1934</p>	<p>The capital of the Ukrainian SSR was transferred from Kharkiv to Kyiv</p>	<p>The transfer symbolized the defeat of the Ukrainian national revival of the 1920s and the consolidation of Stalinist control after the Holodomor and mass repressions. St. Michael’s Golden-Domed Cathedral and other churches of the Ukrainian Cossack Baroque era were destroyed.</p>

APPENDIX B

RESOURCES ON THE HOLODOMOR

Films

Soviet Story, a film by Edvīns Šnore, Latvia, 2008 (85 minutes) with English subtitles
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7lrB_6mX4k&rco=1

Genocide Revealed, an award-winning documentary by Yuriy Luhovy, Canada, Educational Release (26 minutes and 52 minutes on one DVD)
<https://www.genociderevealedmovie.com/product/gr-eng-edu/>

Holodomor: Voices of Survivors, a film by Ariadna Okhrymovych, Canada, 2015 (30 minutes)
<https://vimeo.com/148047499>

Harvest of Despair, a documentary film by Slavko Nowytski, Canada, 1983 (55 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITfz6SVO_js

Historical Documents

The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: through archival documents
The project of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine
<https://mvs.gov.ua/en/golodomor-1932-1933>

HREC Online Holodomor Photo Directory
The project of the Holodomor Research and Education Consortium
<https://holodomor.ca/hrec-special-collections/hrec-photo-directory/>

Gareth Jones: Hero of Ukraine
This website is dedicated to Gareth Jones, a Welsh journalist who exposed the Holodomor in his diaries and was murdered in his prime in 1935 most probably by the Soviet secret police.
<https://www.garethjones.org/>

Museums

National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide
<https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/>

Nongovernmental Diaspora Organizations

Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation-USA
<https://ukrainiangenocide.org/>

U.S. Committee for Ukrainian Holodomor-Genocide Awareness
<https://ukrainegenocide.com/about-us/>

Southern California Holodomor Genocide Committee
<https://socalholodomorgenocidecommittee.org/>

Survivor Testimonies

Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System
<https://guides.library.harvard.edu/hpsss>

Mace, James E. and Leonid Heretz, eds. *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933: Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine*, vols. 1–3. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009145045>

U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine. *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932–1933: Report to Congress*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007398237>

What is the Holodomor?

Narratives, survivor testimonies, archival photographs, and artworks on the topic of the Holodomor on a multilingual media platform *Ukraïner*
<https://www.ukraïner.net/en/what-is-the-holodomor/>

Textbook

Holodomor, the Genocide of the Ukrainians: A History with Sources by Victoria A. Malko. Fresno: The Press at California State University, 2023. Sponsored by the Ukrainian National Women’s League of America.
<https://unwla.org/wp-content/uploads/Holodomor-Textbook-Victoria-Malko.pdf>

The textbook includes materials for teachers and students, such as witness testimonies, official Soviet documents, archival photographs, works of art, and links to online resources for studying the Holodomor as genocide, its causes and consequences.

The textbook is accompanied by an electronic course available under the non-commercial CC BY-NC-SA license on the Canvas Commons platform for teachers at the following link: <https://lor.instructure.com/resources/69436cc8bea64d00b5a84a9ebe521249?shared>

APPENDIX C

SURVIVOR BIOGRAPHIES

The selected testimonies come from a series of stories, “The Witnesses of the Holodomor,” which were recorded on expeditions of the Ukraïner team and the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide as part of the project “Holodomor: Mosaics of History” with the support of the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation.

For many years after the Holodomor, the Soviet authorities had concealed the truth about it, prohibiting speaking about what the Ukrainians lived through and how many people really died from forced starvation. The subject of the Holodomor was hardly ever officially raised in the Soviet Union or abroad.

In 1985, the U.S. Congress set up the Commission on the Ukraine Famine. Its members wanted to investigate what had happened in 1932–1933 in the USSR to reveal the truth about the crime committed by Joseph Stalin and his accomplices against the Ukrainian nation. In Ukraine, the archives were declassified, and the investigation of the Holodomor began only after the declaration of independence in 1991.

In 2003, Ukraine internationally declared the Holodomor as a genocide against the Ukrainian people. Then Russia, as the successor of the Soviet Union, addressed the international community with the appeal not to recognize the Holodomor as genocide, and later interfered in the process of approving the U.N. resolution on a number of occasions.

The Holodomor as a genocide of Ukrainian people ruined many lives. A great number of people attempted to fight against the Soviet reign of terror. Some did not withstand, could not resist it, and did not survive. The memory of those horrible years is brought to us by eyewitnesses. They share their recollections with Ukrainians and the whole world so that people would never forget. The recollections of eyewitnesses remain an important source of information about those events. But with every year their numbers dwindle.

Directions: Have students take notes while watching video interviews with five Holodomor survivors, using the following matrix (see **Survivor Testimony Reflections**).

Survivor Testimony Reflections

Survivor's Name	Summarize the survivor's account focusing on who, what, when, where, why, and how	Record emotions that you noticed, paying attention to the survivor's choice of words

They endured on potato peels from Belarus



Fedir Zadiereiev (born 1921)

Fedir Zadiereiev was born on February 1, 1921, in the village of Kobylianka near the town of Sedniv in Sivershchyna, in what is today the Chernihiv region of northern Ukraine. He grew up in a traditional Ukrainian family whose life was closely tied to agriculture, religious practice, and village customs. One of his earliest memories is working in the fields alongside his father and hearing folk songs sung during farm labor—remnants of a vibrant rural culture that would soon be destroyed by Soviet policies.

Before collectivization, Kobylianka was a prosperous and socially cohesive village. Fedir recalled a world built on trust, where goods and services were exchanged without written contracts and debts were repaid over time. This social order began to erode with the introduction of collectivization and the Soviet campaign against so-called “kulaks.” Religious life was repressed, churches were closed, and priests disappeared after interrogations. Despite this, Fedir’s family preserved religious traditions at home, passing down prayers and moral teachings across generations.

Fedir was eleven years old when the Holodomor began in 1932. He emphasized that the famine was not caused by drought or poor harvests but by deliberate state policy enforced through violent grain requisitions and repression. Soviet squads—often including local Komsomol members—confiscated all food, livestock, and household property. The family lost their cow, sleigh, provisions, and even their dog. Neighbors labeled as “kurkuls” were evicted and stripped of everything.

During the famine, Fedir became the primary caregiver for his three younger siblings—Semen, Pavlo, and Shura—while his parents walked nearly 100 kilometers to Belarus to obtain food from relatives. He survived by fishing, gathering nettles, plantain, wild spinach, and even straw, which he boiled into a thin “borshch.” Like many villagers, he witnessed death daily: bodies left unburied, mass graves hastily covered, and corpses lining riverbanks through winter. One of his most enduring memories was his failed attempt to bring food to a starving elderly man who died before Fedir could return.

The family survived largely thanks to repeated journeys to Belarus and the help of Fedir’s grandmother who secretly smuggled potatoes despite the risks. The Holodomor, however, remained unspoken afterward, silenced by fear and official denial.

After the famine, with village life offering no future, Fedir left his village at the age of fourteen or fifteen and went to Chernihiv. There he survived homelessness, petty theft, and arrest before finding work at a macaroni factory—his first experience of stability and regular food. Later, he secured employment at the Chernihiv Musical Instruments Factory, lived in a dormitory, and established an independent urban life.

Never take what is not yours, not even during the Holodomor



Marfa Kovalenko (born 1926)

Marfa Kovalenko was born in 1926 in the village of Kostiantyniv, Nedryhailiv district, in Slobozhanshchyna (today the Sumy region of northeastern Ukraine). She was six years old when the Holodomor of 1932–1933 began, yet the famine and the violence that accompanied it left memories that remained vivid throughout her life.

Marfa came from a family that combined rural roots with professional education. Her father, Danylo Kovalenko, worked as a physician assistant in the nearby village of Korovyntsi, where a medical practice served several surrounding communities. Marfa often lived with her grandfather, Yakym Kovalenko, a former farm laborer on the estate of Count Khvoshchinsky. This connection later proved crucial for the family's survival. The family had already suffered losses before the famine: Marfa's older brother Oleksii and her aunt died of scarlet fever, a disease Marfa herself survived in early childhood.

With the onset of collectivization and dekulakization, the Kovalenko family, though not wealthy, became targets of expropriation. Most of their land was confiscated, and during the famine their only cow was seized by a local requisition brigade. Marfa vividly remembered how activists searched homes with metal rods, smashed pottery, poured out cooked food, and took livestock. Her father appealed to the authorities for the return of their cow but insisted he would accept only their own animal, not one taken from another starving family. The cow was never returned.

During the winter of 1932–1933, the family survived on stored vegetables, pickled foods, and later on surrogate foods such as boiled sugar beets and flatbreads made from leaves. Marfa recalled patrols guarding fields under the so-called "Law of Five Ears of Grain," whipping starving children who tried to gather leftover grain. Many villagers, especially children, died; bodies were collected by wagons and buried in mass graves.

A decisive factor in the family's survival was a small collection of silverware inherited by Marfa's grandfather from the former estate owners. These items were sold piece by piece at a Torgsin shop in Romny in exchange for grain, which Marfa's mother immediately ground into food. Mutual support within the village also played a critical role: neighbors shared milk, small portions of food, and help whenever possible, even amid extreme scarcity.

Marfa entered school in the autumn of 1933, after the worst of the famine had passed. She remembered classmates of different ages, widespread hunger, and the quiet absence of many children who had not survived. Looking back, she emphasized that despite enormous loss, the people retained their humanity, helping one another even when they themselves had almost nothing.

They even took pillows away



Nadiia Korolova (born 1922)

Nadiia Korolova was born in 1922 in the village of Ivankivtsi, in the Podillia region (today divided between Khmelnytskyi and Vinnytsia regions of central Ukraine). She was ten years old when the Holodomor of 1932–1933 unfolded. Her childhood coincided with the violent transformation of the Ukrainian countryside through compulsory collectivization, dekulakization, and anti-religious campaigns.

Podillia was among the regions where resistance to Soviet policies emerged early. In 1929–1932, villagers openly opposed forced collectivization and the closure of churches; in some areas, Soviet officials were expelled, and district centers temporarily came under local control. By 1932, the Soviet regime responded with military force. Nadiia later understood the Holodomor as a deliberate attempt to crush anti-Soviet resistance and reassert total control.

Nadiia’s parents were hardworking farmers who owned about ten hectares of land, livestock, farm equipment, and household goods. With the onset of collectivization, all family property was confiscated. Activists emptied their home, seizing clothing, bedding, and food, leaving the family destitute. Refusal to join a collective farm subjected them to punitive in-kind taxes. When the family could no longer comply, their last cow was taken, and Nadiia’s father was threatened with arrest as a “kulak.”

To avoid imprisonment, her father fled to Luhansk, where he worked in coal mines—one of many Ukrainian farmers forced into industrial labor. Nadiia, her mother, four sisters, a brother, and a baby were left without their breadwinner just before the famine began.

During the winter of 1932–1933, requisition brigades confiscated all grain and food under an unrealistically high procurement plan. Searches were brutal and systematic: activists used metal-tipped rods to probe the ground for hidden food, emptied pots, and dismantled household property. Fear and hunger silenced compassion. While collective farm leaders had access to confiscated food, most villagers faced starvation.

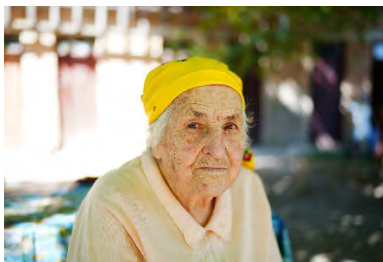
The family survived on surrogate foods—beets, hemp, leaves mixed with millet, and frozen potatoes dug from the fields, dried, ground, and baked into flatbread. Without millstones, they ground grain in rough clay bowls. Nadiia recalled arrests under the “Law of Five Ears of Grain,” which made even gathering leftover grain punishable by long prison sentences. Forced starvation claimed the life of one of her sisters in 1933; the family buried the child themselves in a wooden crate.

After the famine, Nadiia’s father returned and joined the collective farm to avoid further repression. Like many former independent farmers, he worked intensely but without ownership

or security. To avoid being sent to forced labor in Donbas, Nadiia joined the Komsomol and, at the age of fifteen, was appointed head of a youth work unit. Just a few years after the famine, her brigade achieved exceptionally high beet yields—evidence of both her organizational ability and the regime’s reliance on youthful labor to rebuild agriculture.

Nadiia also witnessed the destruction of religious life. The wooden church in her village, where her grandfather had served as warden, was closed and dismantled; its materials were repurposed, and a school was later built on the site. Despite persecution, villagers secretly continued observing Christian holidays. Reflecting on those years, Nadiia emphasized the total helplessness imposed by terror and forced starvation.

[An entire hamlet saved during the Holodomor](#)



Tetiana Krotova (born 1928)

Tetiana Krotova (née Zaitseva) was born on October 30, 1928, in the hamlet of Shevchenko (today the village of Travneve), near Kropyvnytskyi (formerly Kirovohrad), in the Podniprovia region—a transitional steppe zone historically linking the Dnipro heartland with former Zaporizhian Cossack territories. She was four years old during the Holodomor of 1932–1933.

Her family settled in the hamlet in 1924 after receiving land from the Soviet state. Both parents worked in a collective farm, and the family raised five children. Tetiana recalled that the 1932 harvest was not significantly worse than previous years; grain was collected and stored in empty houses under collective farm orders, where it was left to rot rather than distributed or transported. Despite widespread famine elsewhere, no one died of starvation in the hamlet of Shevchenko—a circumstance Tetiana attributed to the actions of the local collective farm head, who secretly redistributed confiscated grain to families at night. Discovery of such actions would have meant his execution.

Even so, fear governed daily life. Villagers avoided grinding grain using millstones lest the sound attract inspections. Wheat was cooked whole, eaten from shared clay bowls, often with milk from a cow the family managed to keep. Children consumed uncrushed grain and lived in constant anxiety of exposure. Families sometimes walked 10–20 kilometers to nearby villages to barter household items for food.

In 1935, the Zaitsev family moved to the village of Hromukha, settling in a house confiscated from villagers labeled “kulaks.” There Tetiana encountered the full scale of famine’s devastation. Starvation had been severe: people survived on burdock roots, carrion from cattle burial grounds, and the remains of dead horses. Grain was again stored in piles inside former kulak houses, mixed with animal waste and left unused. Entire families perished. Tetiana

recalled neighbors whose parents and children died en masse, and relatives who lost their only children.

In Hromukha, bodies were collected daily by collective farm order and dumped in the cemetery, sometimes including people still barely alive. Only years later were the remains buried in a pit. After the death of the collective farm head responsible for these actions, villagers buried him without ceremony or respect—an act of silent moral reckoning.

Children orphaned by the Holodomor were placed under collective farms “patronage,” a rudimentary form of foster care that offered minimal food but a chance of survival. Tetiana also witnessed the arrival of migrants from Russia who attempted to settle in depopulated homes following the famine, part of a broader state-directed resettlement campaign. Most did not remain.

After World War II, Tetiana studied in Kropyvnytskyi, surviving on a small scholarship and a daily bread ration. She later worked as an educator in an orphanage in Bessarabia and became a schoolteacher. In 1950, she married Ivan Krotov, himself a survivor of the Holodomor who had lost both parents to starvation and endured orphanhood, evacuation, war, and displacement before returning to Ukraine.

[She survived the Holodomor and saved a boy](#)



Mariia Hurbich (born 1920)

Mariia Hurbich (née Shovkun) was born in 1920 in the hamlet of Vyla in the Losynivka district of Sivershchyna (today Nizhyn district, Chernihiv region). She was twelve years old when the Holodomor of 1932–1933 began. During the genocide, she survived together with her family and helped save the life of a neighboring boy—an act of quiet solidarity they recalled together years later.

Before collectivization, Mariia’s family was relatively well-off: they owned approximately ten hectares of land, four horses, three foals, and three cows, sustaining a household of eleven people. The family’s social position and national consciousness made them vulnerable. Two of Mariia’s brothers—a university student and a schoolteacher—were arrested in connection with the fabricated case of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, a show trial orchestrated by the GPU to suppress Ukrainian intellectuals and discredit resistance to Soviet rule. Both brothers were imprisoned in Solovki for alleged “nationalism.”

Facing the threat of arrest and deportation, Mariia’s father joined the collective farm on his sons’ advice, thereby avoiding dekulakization. Like millions of others, the family surrendered land, livestock, and tools without compensation. Collective farm labor was effectively unpaid:

workers survived on meager food rations, sometimes as little as 200 grams of bread per day, supplemented by produce from small household plots.

Mariia worked in the collective farm from the age of twelve, cultivating over an acre of land and delivering crops to the state. She recalled that 1932 was marked by flooding in Sivershchyna, but harvest losses alone could not explain the famine. Grain yields declined only moderately, yet excessive procurement quotas were imposed, deliberately exceeding collective farm capacities. Food was confiscated from villagers, often left to rot in storage, while starvation spread.

Mariia vividly described house searches conducted by “activists,” the confiscation of all food, and the enforcement of the August 7, 1932 decree known as the “Law of Five Ears of Grain,” under which even picking leftover wheat from fields was punishable by imprisonment. Despite terror and violence, villagers sometimes acted with restraint, while others showed cruelty, pouring out cooked food and destroying the last means of survival.

Her family survived thanks to a cow, hidden millstones, and shared efforts within the community. They ground grain secretly in cellars, cooked beans and wild plants, and exchanged food whenever possible. Mariia remembered giving part of her collective farm ration of boiled peas to a starving boy—an encounter that saved his life. Years later, they recognized each other and wept together in remembrance.

Mariia witnessed mass death in her village: bodies lay in the streets and were collected by carts for burial in a mass grave. Death certificates concealed starvation, listing pneumonia or other illnesses. Speaking about the Holodomor was forbidden for decades, instilling fear and silence among survivors.

Reflecting on these events, Mariia consistently identified the Holodomor as a deliberate attempt to destroy Ukraine. Yet, she emphasized that communal solidarity, moral resistance, and mutual aid allowed many to survive. Even under totalitarian repression, villagers resisted actively and passively—hiding food, refusing collective farm labor, spreading protest leaflets, and preserving memory. According to Mariia, the Soviet regime sought to break Ukraine, but it ultimately failed.

APPENDIX D

The Holodomor as Genocide against Ukrainians

By Victoria A. Malko

Leading contemporary historians classify Holodomor as an act of genocide directed against the Ukrainian people.³² According to the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), genocide is defined as acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group.³³ In a 1953 speech in New York, Raphael Lemkin, the author of the U.N. Genocide Convention, described Joseph Stalin's actions as "a classic example of Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment in Russification."³⁴ He characterized the Kremlin's policy in Ukraine during the first half of the twentieth century as "not merely a case of mass murder, but a case of genocide—the destruction not only of individuals but also of a culture and a nation."³⁵

Raphael Lemkin coined the term *genocide* in 1944 from the Greek root *genos* (race, tribe) and Latin *-cide* (*caedere* – to kill). Lemkin wrote:

Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accompanied by mass killings of all members 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, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups.³⁶

³² В. Марочко, *Голодомор 1932–1933 рр. в Україні: Соціально-демографічні та морально-психологічні наслідки* [The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: Socio-demographic and moral-psychological consequences] (Київ: Знання, 2007); James E. Mace, "Is the Ukrainian Genocide a Myth?," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932–1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, edited by L. Y. Luciuk and L. Grekul (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2008), 49–60; Norman M. Naimark, *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010); Roman Serbyn, "Holodomor: The Ukrainian Genocide," in *Rafał Lemkin: A Hero of Humankind*, edited by Agnieszka Bieńczyk-Missala and Sławomir Dębski (Warsaw: Polish Institute of International Affairs, 2010), 205–30.

³³ United Nations, Treaty Series, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1948*, vol. 78-I, no. 1021 (1951), 280, <https://treaties.un.org/doc/publication/unts/volume%2078/volume-78-i-1021-english.pdf>.

³⁴ Raphael Lemkin, "Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine" (typewritten notes), folder 16, box 2, reel 3, ZL-273, "The Raphael Lemkin Papers, 1947–1959," Rare Books and Manuscripts Division, New York Public Library.

³⁵ Full text with facsimile manuscript and introduction by Douglas Irwin-Erickson, see Raphael Lemkin, *Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston, Ontario: Kashtan Press, 2014).

³⁶ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, 1944), 79.

It was codified in the U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (hereafter Genocide Convention) in 1948.

The Genocide Convention is an international treaty, which the Soviet Union (now its legal inheritor Russian Federation) ratified in 1954. Russia's obligations under the Genocide Convention are *erga omnes*, or owed to the international community as a whole, which stems from the *jus cogens* status of the prohibition of genocide.³⁷ The Genocide Convention provides for criminal liability of individuals for genocide and related acts, while States can be held responsible for such acts under a distinct, though at times overlapping, legal framework.³⁸

Article I of the Genocide Convention imposes duties on State parties regarding genocide which "whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish."

Article II defines genocide as follows:

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

There are three constituent elements under Article II of the Genocide Convention: (1) the commission of any of the genocidal acts committed against (2) a protected group (3) with the intent to destroy the group in whole or in part.

Article III lists the punishable acts, including: "(a) genocide; (b) conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) attempt to commit genocide, and (e) complicity in genocide."

The question of the connection between the Holodomor and Ukraine's state sovereignty is crucial for understanding the country's modern political and historical identity as well as the continuity between Joseph Stalin's and Vladimir Putin's genocidal intent. The Holodomor demonstrates that the destruction of the Ukrainian political and cultural elite, the clergy of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, and the farming population was aimed at

³⁷ *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Preliminary Objections, Judgment*, ICJ Reports, 1996, 595, at para. 31; see also "Report of the International Law Commission on the work of its fifty-third session (23 April–1 June and 2 July–10 August 2001)," in Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-sixth session, Supplement No. 10, Extract from the *Yearbook of the International Law Commission* (United Nations, 2001), vol. II (2), 112–13, https://legal.un.org/ilc/documentation/english/reports/a_56_10.pdf.

³⁸ The ICJ bases its conclusion that States may be found to be responsible for genocide and related Article III acts from the explicit wording of Article IX of the Genocide Convention, which provides for the distinct "responsibility of a State for genocide or for any of the other acts enumerated in Article III." See *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro)*, *Judgment*, ICJ Reports, 2007, at paras. 167–169, 174, <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/91/091-20070226-JUD-01-00-EN.pdf>.

preventing any future aspirations for independence. The experience of the Holodomor became the catalyst for the struggle to restore statehood in 1991 and continues to play a central role today.

Historical Background

The essence of the Kremlin's genocidal policy toward Ukraine has its roots in the years 1917–1921, when, in response to the proclamation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (UNR) and the establishment of its state institutions, the Russian Bolsheviks launched three military interventions followed by the occupation of Ukraine. By the end of 1920, the occupation regime of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) had stationed more than one million troops³⁹ on the territory of the UNR, who took part in food confiscations and the suppression of the Ukrainian national liberation movement. After Vladimir Lenin annulled the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the UNR lost its statehood and the territories inhabited by ethnic Ukrainians. As a result of the Russian military occupation and annexation, Ukraine lost a significant part of its lands, where more than five million Ukrainians had lived.⁴⁰

Without the support of its allies, the national liberation struggle was defeated, the insurgent units were demilitarized, and the Moscow occupiers suppressed the resistance through Lenin's famine of 1921–1923. Historian Vasyl Marochko noted that in March 1922, according to incomplete data, the number of starving people in the Ukrainian SSR reached 4 million, of whom 1.9 million were children. By July 1922, the famine had spread across five southeastern provinces of the Ukrainian SSR, where 40% of the population were Ukrainians. Around 10% of the children lost their parents and ended up in orphanages.⁴¹

In the 1920s, the administration of Woodrow Wilson did not recognize Ukraine's sovereignty, as it pursued a policy of "Russia first," prioritizing trade with "indivisible" Russia. This short-sighted policy allowed Ukraine to be "swallowed by the insatiable jaws of Red Moscow."⁴²

On the fifteenth anniversary of the Bolshevik coup d'état, in 1932–1933, the catastrophic consequences of Lenin's famine were surpassed by Stalin's Holodomor. According to linguists, the etymology of the word *Holodomor* points to one of the methods of exterminating

³⁹ С. В. Сидоров, Радянська армія [Soviet Army], *Енциклопедія історії України [Encyclopedia of History of Ukraine]*, http://www.history.org.ua/?termin=Radianska_armiia.

⁴⁰ Д. Дорошенко, *Історія України 1917–1923 рр.: в двох томах [History of Ukraine 1917–1923: in two volumes]* (Київ: Темпора, 2002).

⁴¹ В. Марочко, Ленінський людомор 1921–1923 рр.: «братній» розподіл смерті [Lenin's genocide of 1921–1923: "fraternal" distribution of death], *Слово Просвіти [The Word of Enlightenment]*, 23 квітня 2018, <http://slovoprosvity.org/2018/04/23/leninskyj-lyudomor-1921-1923-rr-bratnij/>.

⁴² Clarence A. Manning, "Woodrow Wilson and American Foreign Policy," *Ukrainian Quarterly* XII, no. 4 (1956): 332–38, esp. 338.

Ukrainians.⁴³ As noted by Robert Conquest, the goal of Stalin's regime was not only the seizure of grain but also the elimination of the potential threat of Ukraine's political autonomy.⁴⁴

When the Kremlin's genocide against Ukrainians reached its peak, the Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration remained silent about Stalin's crimes for political reasons and established diplomatic relations with the USSR in November 1933. The U.S. leader's blindness once again "allowed Moscow, with the support of American Lend-Lease, to become a conqueror."⁴⁵ The United States' diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union in 1933—amid the deliberately organized starvation and deportation of millions of Ukrainians to concentration camps in Siberia—seriously hindered the development of Ukrainian statehood for more than half a century. The cultural revival of the early 1920s, during the time of the Ukrainian People's Republic, was "executed" during the consolidation of Stalinism in the 1930s.⁴⁶

Intent and Mechanisms of Organizing the Holodomor

Indirect evidence of an intent to destroy Ukrainians is found in 38 archival documents declassified by the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), dated from January 15, 1932 to April 28, 1933. These include resolutions of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), decisions of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, directives of the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine, telegrams signed by Joseph Stalin and Viacheslav Molotov addressed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine and the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, letters from Lazar Kaganovich to Joseph Stalin, and OGPU circulars. Among these documents, four explicitly point to an intent to destroy the Ukrainian national group:

- Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) "On the Passport System and the Clearing of Cities of Superfluous

⁴³ Spelled with a lower-case h, the word *holodomor* means an acute scarcity of food, caused by drought, crop failure, population imbalance, or war, typically accompanied by starvation and epidemics that lead to increased mortality like in a plague. The word appeared in 1898 in a periodical describing destitute population suffering from extreme starvation. It is derived from *holod* (starvation) and *mor* (Latin root *mort-* death), meaning "death caused by starvation." It should be distinguished from the upper-case H in the word *Holodomor* – an intentional act of mass extermination of people in Soviet Ukraine and ethnically Ukrainian areas of Kuban in the Northern Caucasus of the Russian SFSR as defined in Article II of the U.N. Convention. This crime was perpetrated by the top leadership of the Communist Party and the GPU of the USSR as well as rank-and-file perpetrators on the regional and district levels. This genocide targeted Ukrainians as a national group to thwart the crystallization of the nation and prevent Ukraine's secession from the Soviet Union.

⁴⁴ Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁴⁵ Manning, "Woodrow Wilson and American Foreign Policy," 338.

⁴⁶ Victoria A. Malko, "The Executed Renaissance: The Ukrainian Intelligentsia in the 1920s and 1930s," in *Executing a Renaissance: The Poetological Nation of Ukraine*, edited by Josef Wallmannsberger (Stuttgart: *ibidem*-Verlag, 2024), <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/executing-renaissances/9783838217413>.

Elements” dated November 15, 1932, which prohibited the issuance of passports to Ukrainians living in rural areas and forbade their entry into cities.⁴⁷

- Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR “On Grain Procurement in Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus, and the Western Region” dated December 14, 1932, which intensified repressions against Ukrainians and led to the de-Ukrainization of state institutions, the press, education, and socio-political life.⁴⁸

- Resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR “On Ukrainization in the Far Eastern Territory, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, the Central Black Earth Region, and Other Areas of the USSR,” dated December 15, 1932, which halted the process of Ukrainization throughout the entire territory of the USSR.⁴⁹

- Resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks) of Ukraine on the implementation of the directive of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR in connection with the mass departure of peasants beyond Ukraine’s borders, dated January 22, 1933, which prohibited the mass exodus of individual farmers and collective farmers, banned the sale of railway tickets to villagers, and ordered their arrest.⁵⁰

These resolutions prohibited the issuance of passports and any travel in search of food, effectively blocking the possibility of escape beyond the famine-stricken “ghettos.” This created living conditions deliberately calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Ukrainians. The repressive measures affected Ukrainians not only within the territory of the republic but also in all areas of Ukrainian settlement throughout the USSR.

Special units of the GPU, the militia, regular Red Army forces, party commissars, and members of the Komsomol and Committees of Non-wealthy Peasants, acting as collective bodies, followed a pattern of systematic and widespread measures aimed at destroying Ukrainians as a national group:

- repression of the intelligentsia (“Executed Renaissance”)—the destruction of the cultural and political elite capable of organizing resistance;
- eradication of the Ukrainian language, culture, and church;
- forced and total confiscation of grain and all foodstuffs from Ukrainian households under the cover of “grain procurements”;
- mass deportations and expulsions of portions of the Ukrainian nation beyond the

⁴⁷ В. Марочко, *Голодомор 1932–1933 років в Україні: Хроніка* [*The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: Chronicle*] (Київ: Видавничий дім «Киево-Могилянська академія», 2008), 154.

⁴⁸ Марочко, *Голодомор 1932–1933 рр. в Україні* [*The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine*], 475–77.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 480.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 616–17.

borders of the Ukrainian SSR;

- separations of children from their families during deportations, placing children of the “enemies of the people” in state-run orphanages where they were stripped of their identity and often recruited into the ranks of Soviet secret police;
- creation of extrajudicial bodies—*troikas*—with the authority to impose death sentences;
- conducting show trials and visits to locales resisting grain requisitions with the intent to intimidate Ukrainians and suppress the national-liberation movement;
- introduction of the blacklisting regime as a mechanism for destroying Ukrainians (the policy was first applied in the Northern Caucasus region);
- isolation of the territory of the Ukrainian SSR, as well as towns and districts placed on the black lists.

The destruction of Ukrainian historical scholarship was closely connected to political repression. The Soviet authorities targeted historians who studied and defended Ukraine’s past. One of the main targets was the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. In 1931, the historical department led by Mykhailo Hrushevskyyi, Ukraine’s most prominent historian, was shut down. The historian was forced into exile in Russia, where he died in 1934 under suspicious circumstances. Between 1930 and 1933, 184 Ukrainian scholars were repressed, and 170 of them were historians. Many books on Ukrainian history were confiscated and removed from libraries. Facts which did not fit the official Soviet story were deliberately removed or silenced. At the same time, scholars were accused of “bourgeois nationalism,” and Western historical research was rejected. During this period, the Soviet government revived the idea of a “single proto-Russian people,” which denied Ukrainians a separate historical identity. This policy seriously undermined the foundations of Ukraine’s national history.⁵¹

Employees of the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences were repressed and executed; more than 30 Ukrainian terminological dictionaries were withdrawn from circulation. Ultimately, in 1933, even the Ukrainian orthography was revised to conform to Russian language norms.⁵² At the beginning of the 1930s, the communist totalitarian regime completely destroyed the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, which until 1927 had been led by Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivskyyi, a prominent advocate of the idea of an independent Ukrainian state.⁵³

⁵¹ Victoria A. Malko, *The Ukrainian Intelligentsia and Genocide: The Struggle for History, Language, and Culture in the 1920s and 1930s* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 252–53.

⁵² С. Вакуленко, 1933-ий рік в історії української мови: чинна норма та правописна практика (на прикладі редакційної політики газети *Комуніст*), доповідь, представлена на конференції Американської асоціації славістичних досліджень у Філадельфії, штат Пенсільванія, 22 листопада 2008 [The Year 1933 in the History of the Ukrainian Language: Current Norms and Spelling Practice (Based on the Editorial Policy of the Newspaper *Komunist*), paper presented at the conference of the American Association for Slavic Studies in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 22, 2008], *Historians*, 3 грудня, 2012, <http://www.historians.in.ua/index.php/en/ukrayinska-mova/488-cerhiy-vakulenko-1933-ii-rik-v-istorii-ukrainskoi-movy-chynna-norma-ta-pravopysna-praktyka-na-prykladi-redaktsiinoi-polityky-hazety-komunist>.

⁵³ Л. Бабенко, *Радянські органи державної безпеки в системі взаємовідносин держави і православної церкви в Україні (1918 – середина 1950-х рр.)* [*Soviet state security organs in the system of relations between the state and the Orthodox Church in Ukraine (1918 – mid-1950s)*] (Полтава: АСМІ, 2014).

The exact number of Holodomor victims remains unknown, as the perpetrators and their accomplices deliberately destroyed evidence to conceal their crimes. Although estimates vary, some Soviet, Russian, and Ukrainian historians and demographers cite figures ranging from 3 to 5 million victims, excluding those who died from the forced starvation outside Ukraine.⁵⁴ However, studies by Ukrainian demographers of the 1930s,⁵⁵ as well as modern forensic experts, historians, and economists, indicate that the number of victims may have reached from 7 to over 10 million (9.1 million in Ukraine and 1.4 million in the Kuban region settled by Ukrainian farmers in the Northern Caucasus).⁵⁶ In 1936, American medical professional William Horsley Gantt published his study with results of the First Five-Year Plan, quoting 15 million deaths based on estimates of Soviet public health officials.⁵⁷

The losses were so vast that they affected Ukraine's social structure, cultural development, and demographic potential. According to Victor Rud, Esq., a board member of the Ukrainian American Bar Association, head of its Foreign Affairs Committee, and a descendant of Holodomor survivors, "In terms of the number of victims, the destruction of the nation's psychology and self-awareness, the brink upon which the nation's very existence was balanced, and the enduring consequences that remain evident eighty years later, the Holodomor has no analogues in human history." Rud also argues that the Holodomor did not serve as a catalyst for the founding of the Ukrainian state but rather "buried the idea of Ukrainian independence for generations," warning that its echo can still be felt in Ukraine today – "so much so that, although Ukraine is nominally independent, it is fundamentally not a Ukrainian state."⁵⁸

Dr. James E. Mace, executive director of the U.S. Congress's Commission on the Ukraine Famine, referred to Ukraine as a "post-genocidal society," highlighting the long-lasting consequences of the Holodomor. The prolonged stress and the "experience" of surviving the Holodomor led to the eradication of distinguishing characteristics of the Ukrainian national group (business entrepreneurship, initiative); the deformation of social relations (denunciations, mob justice); the erasure of Ukrainian self-identity (avoidance of the use of Ukrainian language,

⁵⁴ O. Rudnytskyi, N. Levchuk, O. Wolowyna, P. Shevchuk, and A. Kovbasiuk, "Demography of a man-made human catastrophe: The case of massive famine in Ukraine 1932–1933," *Canadian Studies in Population* 42, no. 1–2 (2015): 53–80.

⁵⁵ В. Марочко, О. М. Асаткін – вигаданий «фальсифікатор» перепису населення 1937 р. [O. M. Asatkin – a fictional "forger" of the 1937 census], *Український історичний журнал [Ukrainian Historical Journal]*, вип. 4 (2017): 129–49.

⁵⁶ Р. Т. Теслюк, Н. І. Андрусишин, та М. В. Бачинська, Статистичні підрахунки та демографічні розрахунки втрат української нації під час вчинення злочину геноциду у 1932–1933 рр. в УРСР: Аналітична частина експертного висновку комплексної судової статистично-криміналістичної експертизи № 957 від 3 грудня 2020 року [Statistical estimates and demographic calculations of the losses of the Ukrainian nation during the commission of the crime of genocide in 1932–1933 in the Ukrainian SSR: Analytical part of the expert opinion of the comprehensive judicial statistical-forensic expert analysis No. 957 of December 3, 2020], in *Геноцид українців 1932–1933 за матеріалами досудових розслідувань [The Genocide of Ukrainians in 1932–1933 Based on Pre-Trial Investigation Materials]*, упоряд. О. Петришин, М. Герасименко, О. Стасюк, 2-ге вид. (Київ – Харків: «Право», 2022), 453–79.

⁵⁷ William Horsley Gantt, "A Medical Review of Soviet Russia: Results of the First Five-Year Plan." *British Medical Journal* 2, no. 3939 (July 4, 1936): 19–22.

⁵⁸ Victor Rud, "Comments Re: Podcast on the Holodomor at The Pursuit," email correspondence with a group of Holodomor researchers, February 25, 2020.

traditions). The forced Russification led to lowering of self-esteem, which impedes the renewal of the national statehood and national historical memory.

The Holodomor as a Tool for Suppressing Ukrainian Sovereignty

First, simultaneously with the famine, mass repressions were carried out against Ukrainian political and cultural leaders, scholars, writers, and artists. This made it impossible to develop a political class capable of representing Ukraine's interests as a sovereign state.

Second, Ukrainian farmers were not only the economic but also the cultural backbone of the nation. The extermination of millions of them undermined the social base for any political movements seeking independence. As James E. Mace noted, Stalin sought to "break the backbone of the Ukrainian nation," depriving it of the ability to resist centralized power.⁵⁹

Third, formally, the Ukrainian SSR was a subject of the federation; however, in reality, all decisions were made in Moscow. The Holodomor demonstrated that the rights of the national republics were merely declarative, and their sovereignty – fictitious.

The Holodomor and Modern Ukrainian Sovereignty

After the restoration of independence in 1991, the issue of the Holodomor became central to the formation of national historical memory. The Law of Ukraine "On the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine" recognized it as a genocide of the Ukrainian people.⁶⁰ This legal act carries not only historical but also political significance, as it affirms Ukraine's right to sovereignty, restored after decades of colonial subjugation.

After thirty years of its independence, Ukraine has once again become the epicenter of geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West. Modern Russian aggression bears clear signs of historical continuity. As Vasyl Marochko notes, it is the result of the rehabilitation of Stalinism, the revision of the past, and the denial of the Holodomor as genocide.⁶¹ The main challenge of today is the threat of genocidal extermination of Ukrainians, since Russia's primary goal is to destroy Ukrainian sovereignty as such. The use of grain corridor blockades, deportation of children, and deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure are methods that echo Stalin's policies of the 1930s.⁶² Thus, the Holodomor is not only a tragedy of the past but also a reminder of the ongoing threat to Ukraine's sovereignty posed by Russia.

⁵⁹ James E. Mace, "The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine: What Happened and Why," in *Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933*, edited by Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), 1–25.

⁶⁰ Закон України «Про Голодомор 1932–1933 років в Україні» № 376-V [Law of Ukraine "On the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine" No. 376-V] (*Відомості Верховної Ради України* 2006, № 50, 504), 28 листопада 2006, in *Голодомор 1932–1933 років в Україні як злочин геноциду згідно з міжнародним правом* [*The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as a crime of genocide under international law*], ред. В. Василенко та М. Антонович (Київ: Києво-Могилянська академія, 2016), 226–28, <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/376-16>.

⁶¹ В. Марочко, «Русській МірЪ» у Феодосії: заборона слова про Голодомор ["Russian World" in Feodosia: ban on talking about the Holodomor], *Історична правда* [*Historical Truth*], 28 січня 2015, <http://www.istpravda.com.ua/columns/2015/01/28/146975/>.

⁶² Kristina Hook, John Packer, Erin Farrell Rosenberg, Yonah Diamond, and Christopher Atwood, *The Russian Federation's Escalating Commission of Genocide in Ukraine: A Legal Analysis* (Washington, D.C.: New Lines Institute

Ukrainian legal scholars have provided a legal interpretation of the Holodomor. Myroslava Antonovych, head of the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at the National University Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, concluded that according to Article II of the U.N. Convention on Genocide, the actions of the Stalinist regime fully meet the definition of the crime of genocide in the case of the Holodomor:

- (a) Ukrainians who resisted Soviet rule were killed;
- (b) serious bodily harm and mental suffering were inflicted on all victims of the Holodomor (both those who died and those who survived);
- (c) living conditions were deliberately created to bring about the physical destruction of Ukrainians;
- (d) all these measures prevented childbirth within the Ukrainian national group;
- (e) the Holodomor resulted in the transfer of children from their parents to state institutions, where they were stripped of their national identity and raised to be loyal to the colonial regime.⁶³

Thus, the Holodomor bears all the hallmarks of the crime of genocide, making it not only a historical tragedy but also a legal precedent in international law.

To date, more than 30 countries and the European Parliament have officially recognized the Holodomor as genocide. This is not only an act of solidarity with Ukraine but also confirmation of the international legal recognition of its right to historical truth. Such recognition aligns with Article I of the U.N. Convention on Genocide, which obliges states to prevent and punish crimes similar to the Holodomor.

Conclusions

The Holodomor of 1932–1933 was not an accidental outcome of a poorly managed agricultural policy but a deliberately organized crime aimed at destroying the Ukrainian nation and its aspirations to statehood. It served as an instrument to suppress Ukrainian sovereignty by eliminating the social, cultural, and political foundations of independence.

In the modern context, the memory of the Holodomor plays a crucial role in strengthening national identity and safeguarding the state sovereignty of Ukraine. The legal recognition of the Holodomor as genocide at both the national and international levels is not only an act of historical justice but also an affirmation of Ukraine's right to its own sovereign development.

Thus, the Holodomor stands not only as a tragedy of the past but also as an important lesson for the present: the preservation of state independence requires not only political will but also a collective historical memory that reminds us of the price of freedom.

for Strategy and Policy and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights), July 2023, 5, 15, 18, 23–25, <https://newlinesinstitute.org/rules-based-international-order/genocide/the-russian-federations-escalating-commission-of-genocide-in-ukraine-a-legal-analysis/>.

⁶³ M. Antonovych, "Individual and Collective Intent in the Crime of Genocide (on the Example of the Holodomor-Genocide against the Ukrainian Nation)," *Actual Problems of International Relations* 145 (2020): 54–61.

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APPENDIX E

POSTERS

Poster A: “Collective farmer, guard your fields from class enemies—thieves and idlers who steal the socialist harvest”

The poster is a classic example of Soviet propaganda. Its author was Viktor Govorkov, and it dates to 1933. It was printed as a multicolor lithograph with a large edition (about 60,000 copies) by the state publishing house for political posters in Moscow.

In the poster, the “kulak-thief” is given zoomorphic features of a mouse, a well-known agricultural pest. With the onset of collectivization and dekulakization, the image of the “kulak” (often equated with a “bourgeois nationalist”) was further demonized. Bolshevik propagandists endowed such figures with negative physical and psychological traits, depicting them as predatory birds, animals, or various parasites that brought no benefit to society and, on the contrary, caused it harm.

Discussion Questions:

- Who is portrayed as the enemy in this poster, and how do visual elements (such as animal features or symbols) shape the viewer’s perception of that group?
- Who was the intended audience for this poster, and what behaviors or actions was it meant to encourage in everyday life during collectivization?
- What does the poster reveal about official Soviet policies and attitudes in 1933, and how does this message compare with what people describe in the video testimonies about their lived experiences?

**КОЛХОЗНИК,
ОХРАНЯЙ**

**СВОИ
ПОЛЯ**



**ОТ
КЛАССОВЫХ
ВРАГОВ-ВОРОВ
И ЛОДЫРЕЙ, РАСХИЩАЮЩИХ
СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКИЙ УРОЖАЙ**

WWW.ARTROSK.INFO

Poster B: “How they ‘struggled’”

This Soviet propaganda cartoon appeared in a special issue about the SVU in the *Червоний перець* [Red Pepper] satirical biweekly magazine in early 1930.

In 1929, Stalin authorized a crackdown on the Ukrainian intelligentsia who were accused of being members of a nationalist organization, aiming to discredit them and gain support for his “revolution from above.” The goal was to undermine their influence in the eyes of workers, the purported backbone of the Soviet regime, because this intelligentsia had connections to the countryside, which had been a wellspring of Ukrainian national liberation struggle. In April 1929, the GPU claimed to have discovered several cells of an organization called the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU). In a report, dated December 1, 1929, Vsevolod Balytskyi, the head of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR, known as “Ukraine’s guillotine” among the Ukrainian communists, stated that the “operation to apprehend SVU collaborators” was carried out in twenty-eight regions, resulting in the arrests of over 700 people. Ultimately, the GPU arrested, deported, or executed more than 30,000—intellectuals, artists, writers, scientists, and teachers—and publicly tried forty-five of them at the Kharkiv Opera house in the spring of 1930. Many of the teachers were sons and daughters of the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church clergy, who were part of the educated elite, targeted for annihilation. Notably, Volodymyr Chekhivskyi, who had given up politics for theology, was also implicated.

A cartoon on the front cover of the satirical magazine mocked Chekhivskyi’s “inner struggle” as a former insurgent in the Ukrainian National Republic’s army and a religious leader. The cartoon was clearly anti-Ukrainian as blue and yellow are colors of the Ukrainian national flag and the trident is its coat of arms.

Discussion Questions:

- Who is the cartoon directed against, and how do satire, symbols, and color (such as the blue and yellow flag colors and the trident) shape the portrayal of Ukrainian intellectuals and national identity?
- Who was the intended audience of this cartoon, and how might it have influenced workers’ and urban readers’ attitudes toward the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the SVU trial?
- What does this cartoon reveal about official Soviet policies toward Ukrainian culture, religion, and political dissent in 1930, and how does this representation compare with what individuals describe in video testimonies about repression and persecution?

ПОРСІД СПЕЦІАЛЬНИЙ НОМЕР ПРО СВУ

САТИРИЧНО-ГУМОРИСТИЧНИЙ ДВОТИЖНЕВИК
Харків, Сумський пров. № 5. Тел. 14-83

1930

1930

Мал. Л. Каплана

В мені змагаються святий і гайдамака
(З вітання В. Гоголем)



Як вони „змаганьє”

Poster C: “From the front – ‘holy men,’ but from the rear ...”

This Soviet propaganda cartoon appeared in the January 1930 issue of the *Червоний перець* [*Red Pepper*] magazine. This satirical biweekly publication, printed in Kharkiv, featured on its front cover an illustration of three men attempting to sneak into a collective farm with a locked gate under the cover of night. The headline states: “From the front – ‘holy men,’ but from the rear ...” The cartoonist, Boris Fridkin, directs the reader’s attention: “Collective farmer! Before admitting these three citizens into your collective farm, go to page 4.” The punch line on the bottom of page 4 reads: “See?! With a shotgun, an ax, and a can of gasoline, the ‘kurkuli are growing into socialism.” The top half of the front cover is yellow, while the bottom half is blue. Yellow and blue colors were used in Soviet propaganda cartoons, hinting that these “saboteurs” were Ukrainian nationalists, as yellow and blue are national colors of Ukraine.

Ultimately, propaganda moved from demonizing the image of the “class enemy” to openly calling for its destruction. Contemporary Putinist propaganda employs similar techniques today: instead of “kulaks,” “petliurites,” and “class enemies,” the targets – Ukrainians – are labeled as “Nazis.”

Discussion Questions:

- Who are the figures depicted as enemies in this cartoon, and how do visual elements (darkness, weapons, and the blue-and-yellow color scheme) construct them as dangerous “saboteurs” rather than ordinary villagers or believers?
- Who was the intended audience of this cartoon, and how does the direct address to the “collective farmer” encourage ordinary people to participate in surveillance, exclusion, or violence against those labeled as “class enemies”?
- What does this cartoon reveal about official Soviet policies toward collectivization, religion, and Ukrainian national identity in 1930, and how does its message compare with personal experiences described in video testimonies of repression?

ПОРСЦІД

САТИРИЧНО-ГУМОРИСТИЧНИЙ ДВОТИЖНЕВИК

СІЧЕНЬ

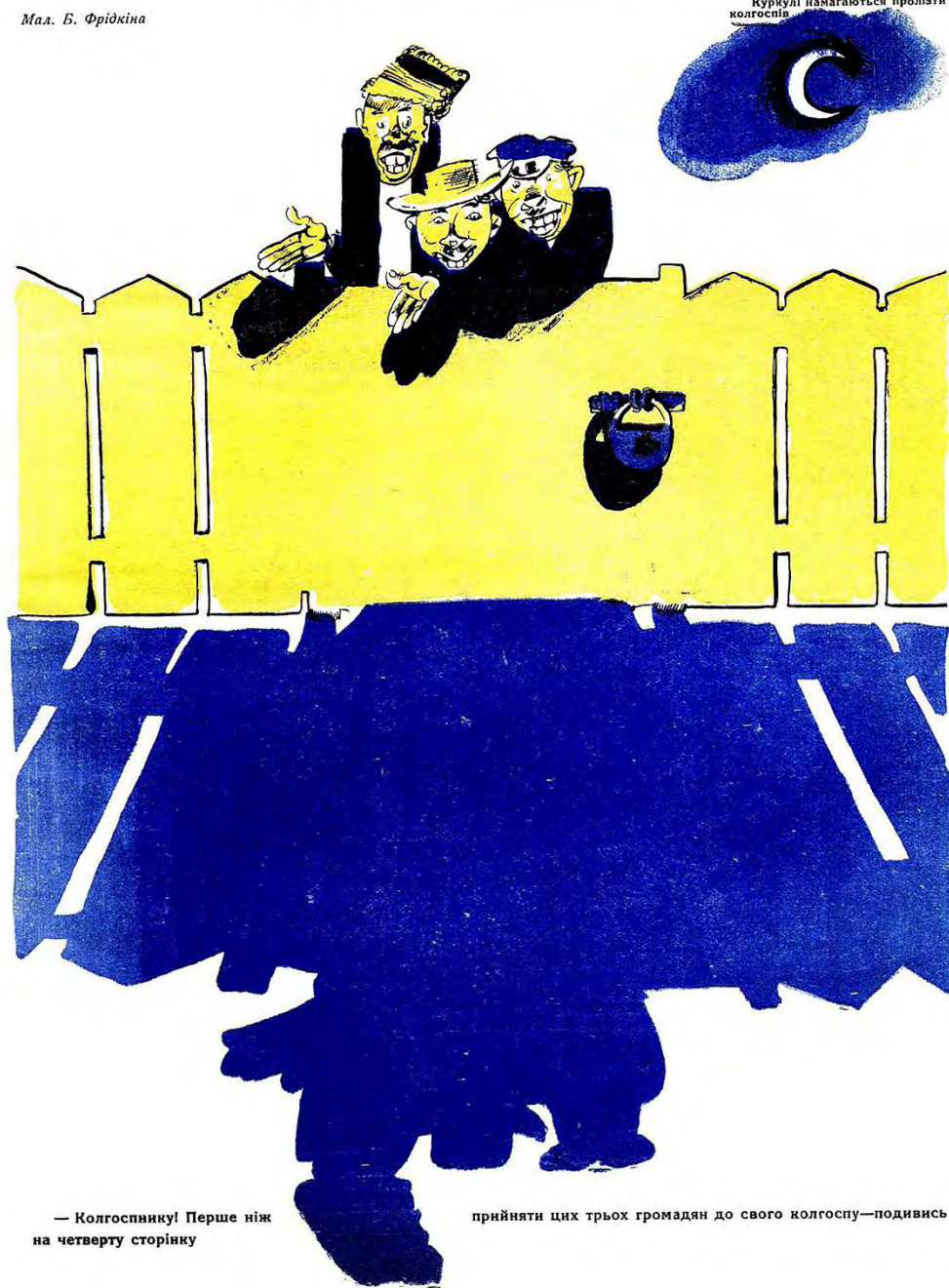
Харків, Сумський пров № 5. Тел 14-83

1930 РІК

СПЕРЕДУ — „БЛАЖЕН МУЖ“, А ЗЗАДУ...

Мал. Б. Фрідкіна

Куркулі намагаються пролізти до колгоспу



— Колгоспнику! Перше ніж на четверту сторінку

прийняти цих трьох громадян до свого колгоспу—подивись

Мал. Б. Фрідкіна



— Бачиш?! З одрізом, з сокирою, з гасом „востає куркуль у соціалізм“

APPENDIX F: MAPS

Tables for Map Analysis

Table 1. Anti-Soviet uprisings in the Ukrainian SSR

Year	Uprisings	Participants	“Terrorist Acts”
1928	150	40,000	400
1929	150	40,000	1,437
1930	4,098	1,000,000	2,779
1931	319	75,000	1,354
1932	923	220,000	1,000

Source: Богдан Патриляк, Сталін як Путін. Голодомор – реакція на мільйонний селянський «Майдан» початку 1930-х [Stalin like Putin. Holodomor – a reaction to the million-strong peasant “Maidan” of the early 1930s], *Історична правда [Historical Truth]*, 19 листопада 2014, <https://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/2014/11/19/145925/>.

Note: The GPU recorded murders, assassinations, and attacks on party leaders and activists as “acts of terrorism.”

Table 2. Comparative data on population growth and losses based on the conclusions of the International Commission of Jurists, drawn from statistical data reflected in Soviet censuses

State Republic	Population 1926	Population 1939	Population increase	Population growth (%)
USSR	147,028,000	170,557,000	+23,529,000	+16.0
RSFSR (Russia)	77,791,000	99,591,000	+21,800,000	+28.0
Belarus	4,739,000	5,275,000	+0,536,000	+11.2
Ukraine	31,195,000	28,111,000	-3,084,000	-9.9

Source: *International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932–33 Famine in Ukraine. The Final Report, 1990*. Stockholm: Institutet för offentlig och internationell rätt (Institute of Public and International Law), 1996.

When the 1937 census revealed a population deficit in Ukraine, the leadership of the Central Statistical Administration was repressed, and the census results were hidden in special archives for many years. To replace the “discredited” 1937 census, the 1939 census was conducted, with results carefully controlled to produce figures more consistent with Stalinist propaganda. In the Soviet Union, the ban on information about the Holodomor remained in force until 1987.

Discussion Questions for Map 1:

- Looking at the map of demographic losses, what does the uneven geographical distribution of losses suggest about the role of administrative decisions?
- How could such losses among the rural population have affected the social structure of Ukraine's population?

Discussion Questions for Map 2:

- Looking at the map of peasant uprisings in 1930 Ukraine, what do these uprisings reveal about the lives of farmers and their relationship with the Soviet state?
- How might the patterns of resistance help us understand later events, like the Holodomor of 1932–1933?

Discussion Questions for Map 3:

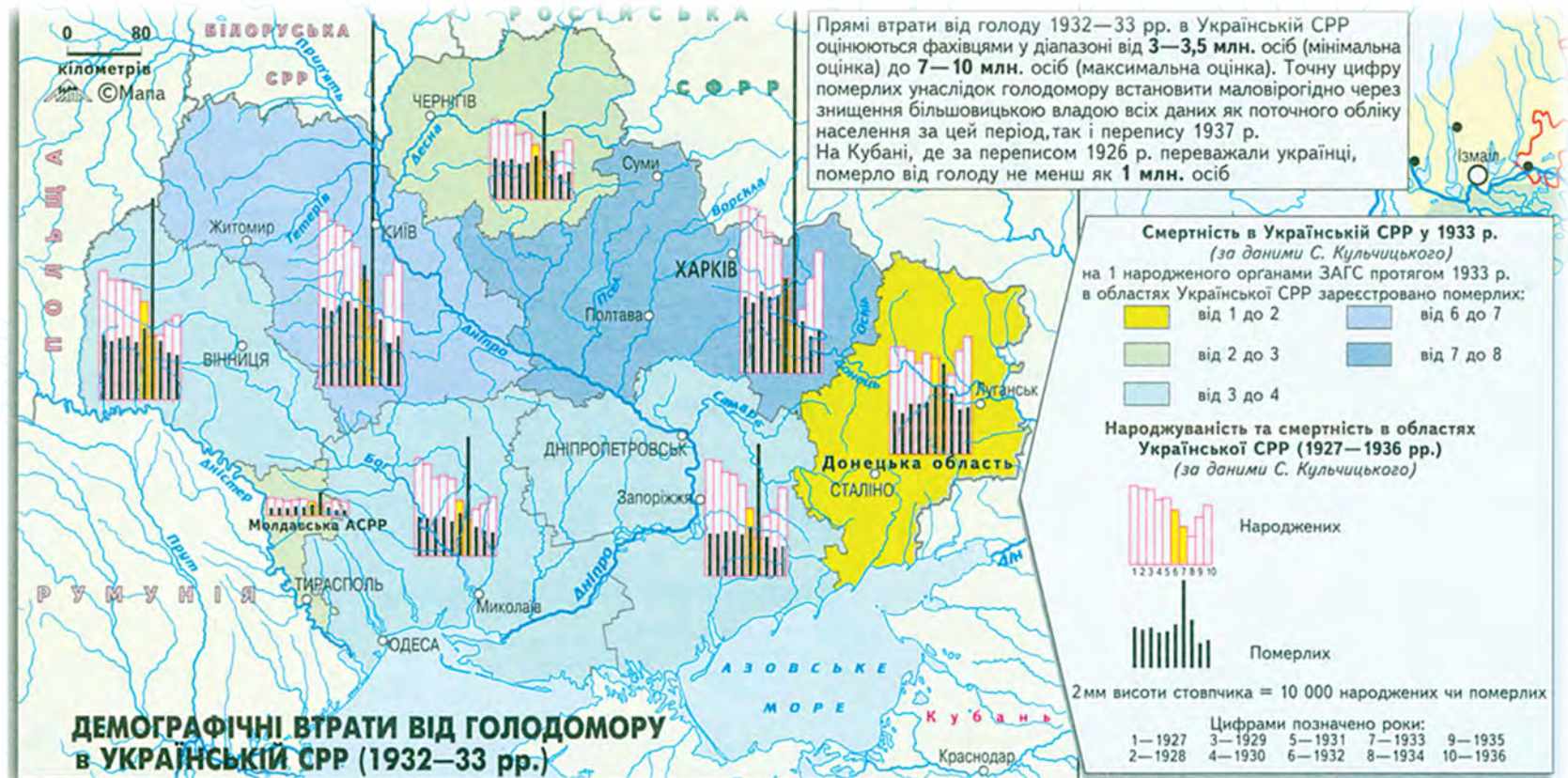
- Looking at the map of resettlements after the Holodomor, who was moved, where were they sent, and why do you think the Soviet government organized these population transfers?
- How might these resettlements have affected Ukrainian villages and communities?

General Discussion Question:

- What does the phrase “nation killing” mean?

APPENDIX F: MAPS

Map 1. Demographic losses from the Holodomor in the Ukrainian SSR, 1932–1933. Reprinted from Юрій Лоза, *Україна: Історичний атлас для 10 класу [Ukraine: Historical Atlas for Grade 10]* (Київ: Видавництво «Мапа», 2000), 14.



Map 2. Mass Uprisings in the Ukrainian SSR in 1930. Courtesy of the DNVP "Kartohrafiia," 2019.



Map 3. Mortality from the Great Famine in 1932–1933 in the Ukrainian SSR. Created by the DNVP “Kartohrafiia,” 2019.



“The Holodomor-genocide of the Soviet regime against the Ukrainians belongs to the three most significant genocides of the first part of the twentieth century along with the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust. However, as it was a hidden genocide it remains unknown to many people in the world. The curriculum guide, *Bitter Memories of Childhood: Holodomor Survivors’ Stories*, is meant to help high school teachers to unveil the truth about that genocide and to draw attention to it through reminiscences of children who survived that hideous crime.”

– **Myroslava Antonovych**, National University Kyiv Mohyla Academy

“Studying genocides and human rights violations is a vital pedagogical practice that sharpens students’ critical analysis of complex historical events while deepening their moral awareness and ethical development, and this curriculum does so with notable rigor and sensitivity. By centering the Holodomor—an atrocity deliberately suppressed and denied for decades—*Bitter Memories of Childhood: Holodomor Survivors’ Stories* restores an essential history that students and educators must confront and understand. The guide is carefully structured and richly detailed, pairing historical context with thoughtfully designed, applied learning activities that actively engage students in analysis, reflection, and evidence-based discussion. Its relevance is further underscored by Russia’s ongoing, atrocity-filled war in Ukraine, making this curriculum both historically necessary and urgently contemporary.”

– **Kristina Hook**, Kennesaw State University

In *Bitter Memories of Childhood*, Victoria Malko has expertly assembled and edited learning materials on the Holodomor, the Ukrainian Genocide-Famine of 1932–33. Despite the omnipresence of Russian aggression against Ukraine in the Western press, the Holodomor regrettably remains a “black hole” for the English-speaking public. Malko’s curriculum and multiplex presentation of documentation and memoir literature for high school students is a perfect antidote to this ignorance.

– **Norman M. Naimark**, Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies Emeritus, Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University

Bitter memories of childhood: Holodomor survivors’ stories is a resource guide for high school teachers interested in introducing their students to the Holodomor as genocide against Ukrainians, perpetrated by Joseph Stalin’s regime in the period between the two World Wars. The history of the Holodomor is presented on the macro level of world history and the micro level of survivor’s everyday life. This resource features video interviews with survivors from the National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide collection and recommendations for their use, a step-by-step sequence of lesson activities, contextual information, a chronology of events, official Soviet documents, propaganda posters, and historical maps to examine the causes, mechanisms, and consequences of state-imposed forced starvation.

The proposed resource guide models student-centered strategies—small-group document analysis, comparative media analysis, and guided discussion—that foster historical thinking, media literacy, and ethical reflection, while situating the Holodomor within the broader framework of genocide studies and memory education. The resource guide includes adaptable classroom materials, discussion prompts aligned with genocide prevention and commemoration goals, and concrete approaches for integrating the Holodomor into Holocaust and genocide education in accordance with California’s instructional priorities.

