

In 1932-1933, while the Soviet government sold massive quantities of Ukrainian grain to foreign markets, some 7 million Ukrainian men, women, and children starved to death. This deliberate attempt to crush the Ukrainian people by means of a man-made famine has become known as

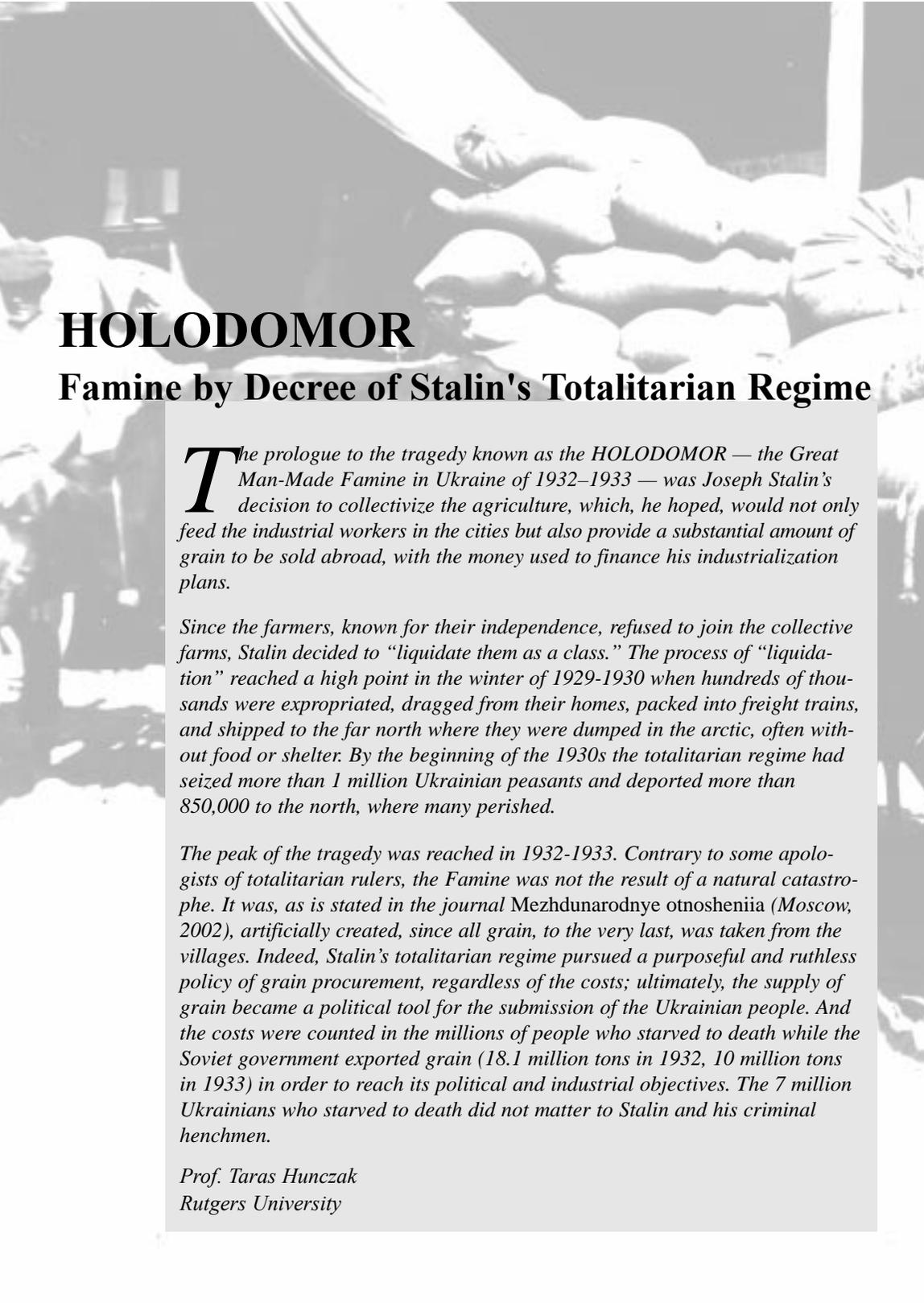
H O L O D O M O R

The Great Man-Made Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933

**Presented at the United Nations, New York City, November 10-30, 2003
to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Famine**



**This exhibition was organized by
The Ukrainian Museum in New York City
on behalf of the
Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations.**



HOLODOMOR

Famine by Decree of Stalin's Totalitarian Regime

The prologue to the tragedy known as the HOLODOMOR — the Great Man-Made Famine in Ukraine of 1932–1933 — was Joseph Stalin’s decision to collectivize the agriculture, which, he hoped, would not only feed the industrial workers in the cities but also provide a substantial amount of grain to be sold abroad, with the money used to finance his industrialization plans.

Since the farmers, known for their independence, refused to join the collective farms, Stalin decided to “liquidate them as a class.” The process of “liquidation” reached a high point in the winter of 1929-1930 when hundreds of thousands were expropriated, dragged from their homes, packed into freight trains, and shipped to the far north where they were dumped in the arctic, often without food or shelter. By the beginning of the 1930s the totalitarian regime had seized more than 1 million Ukrainian peasants and deported more than 850,000 to the north, where many perished.

*The peak of the tragedy was reached in 1932-1933. Contrary to some apologists of totalitarian rulers, the Famine was not the result of a natural catastrophe. It was, as is stated in the journal *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* (Moscow, 2002), artificially created, since all grain, to the very last, was taken from the villages. Indeed, Stalin’s totalitarian regime pursued a purposeful and ruthless policy of grain procurement, regardless of the costs; ultimately, the supply of grain became a political tool for the submission of the Ukrainian people. And the costs were counted in the millions of people who starved to death while the Soviet government exported grain (18.1 million tons in 1932, 10 million tons in 1933) in order to reach its political and industrial objectives. The 7 million Ukrainians who starved to death did not matter to Stalin and his criminal henchmen.*

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A collective farm's first shipment of grain, 1930. The banner on the truck reads, "Instead of *kulak* bread – socialist bread."



Ukrainian peasants handing in their grain to the collective farm, Nymyryv, Vinnytsia region, 1929.



Collecting the corpses of Famine victims by a special "corpse collecting group," early spring 1933.



Mass graves of Famine victims 1932-1933.

Stalin's policy of collectivization met with strong resistance from Ukraine's peasant farmers. To crush the resistance, the Soviet regime indiscriminately applied the label *kulak* (signifying a wealthy peasant) to anyone who opposed collectivization. Under this guise, countless peasant families were evicted from their homes, stripped of their possessions, and often banished to distant labor camps.



Evicting a peasant family from its home in the Donetsk region, 1930.

The Great Famine that enveloped Ukraine in 1932-1933 was precipitated by Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin's policy of collectivization, under which all privately owned land was expropriated and peasants were herded onto collective farms. Stalin hoped that the collective farms would feed the growing numbers of urban industrial workers and at the same time supply substantial amounts of grain for sale abroad; the proceeds could then be used to finance further industrialization throughout the Soviet Union. When Ukraine's fiercely independent peasant farmers refused to relinquish their land, however, Stalin decided to eliminate them altogether.

This process took two forms. First, hundreds of thousands of peasant farmers who resisted collectivization were forcibly removed from their homes, stripped of their possessions, and exiled to arctic labor camps. Many were never heard from again.

The peasants who were forced onto collective farms were subjected to one of the greatest atrocities known to civilization: a deliberate, man-made famine designed to crush all resistance and break the will of the Ukrainian people. By imposing ever-higher grain quotas on the collective farms — quotas that were impossible to meet — the government ensured that no grain would be left to feed the peasants. Indeed, while the Soviet government exported almost 30 million tons of grain in 1932-1933, 7 million Ukrainians starved to death.



As the Famine in the countryside intensified in 1933, peasants swarmed railroad stations, trying to get to cities in their search for food.



Long lines formed in Kharkiv in 1933 as people waited for milk for their children and for bread to be delivered to a bakery. All food in cities was strictly rationed.



A peasant woman and her children — refugees from the countryside — in front of an empty store in Kyiv, 1933.



Sacks of grain being submitted at the collective "Union Bread" in the Kaharlyk village in the Kyiv region, 1932.



Dying of hunger, 1933.

After the breakup of the Soviet Union and the establishment of an independent Ukraine, the contents of many sealed government archives were uncovered, exposing a wealth of gruesome information on the Famine. This chart, from a single region in Ukraine over a three-week period, is a case in point.

Official Statistics from the Health Commission of the Kyiv Region, March 25 to April 15, 1933

| | <u>March 25</u> | <u>April 5</u> | <u>April 15</u> |
|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Number of villages in distress | 1,214 | 1,378 | 1,577 |
| Total number of people hungry | 398,201 | 474,540 | 493,644 |
| children | 178,544 | 245,283 | 262,109 |
| adults | 164,152 | 208,741 | 210,138 |
| Total number of people starving (bodies swollen) | 88,721 | 101,683 | 97,715 |
| In need of hospitalization | 31,678 | 37,588 | 36,632 |
| children | 16,269 | 19,026 | 18,698 |
| adults | 10,768 | 14,066 | 13,952 |
| Hospitalized | 11,294 | 23,248 | 24,168 |
| children | 5,457 | 14,158 | 15,068 |
| adults | 6,588 | 6,679 | 8,135 |
| Deaths since January 1 | 14,548 | 26,479 | 27,809 |
| Recovered | -- | 7,776 | 19,900 |

Stalin's reign of terror was not restricted to peasant farmers. Writers, scholars, artists, and clergy were summarily arrested and executed or exiled; Ukraine's intelligentsia was essentially wiped out as a result of these purges.

Amazingly, while millions of people were dying in Ukraine, the world hardly noticed. Despite the efforts of some reporters, human rights activists, and Ukrainian expatriates, few accounts of the Famine ever reached the West; those that did were often ridiculed by proponents of the Communist regime and by the Soviet government, which repeatedly denied the existence of the Famine.



The death of a peasant on a street in Kharkiv, Spring 1933.

Beginning in January 1933, the Ukrainian countryside became a vast death camp.



The corpse of a girl, lying in a field by the side of the road. It was not unusual for severely emaciated peasants to collapse and die in the fields as they worked.



Only a few major newspapers — notably The Christian Science Monitor in Boston and the Manchester Guardian in England — reported accurately on the devastation; several Hearst newspapers in the United States subsequently also published detailed accounts of the Famine.

Credits

The exhibition *HOLODOMOR: The Great Man-Made Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933* draws on a variety of sources to trace the events leading up to this tragedy and to document the extent of the Famine and its effects on the Ukrainian nation. The exhibition also explores how an atrocity of such magnitude could have escaped the attention of much of the world for so many years.

Organized by The Ukrainian Museum in New York City on behalf of Ukraine's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, the exhibition on *HOLODOMOR* (literally, "death by hunger") is based in large part on Harvard University's superb catalog of its 1983 memorial exhibition, *Famine in the Soviet Ukraine 1932-1933*, and on photos and documents recently made available from Ukraine's newly released Central Government Archives. The archives of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) and the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) also proved to be invaluable sources.

In preparing this exhibition, The Ukrainian Museum was able to draw on its own archival collection of photos and memoirs, amassed and donated for the most part by Famine witness and chronicler Vadym Pavlovsky, as well as on the newspapers supplied by Mykola Panchenko (the *New York American* and the *New York Evening Journal*). Two publications were important sources of photographic material documenting the Famine: Ewald Ammende's *Muss Russland hungern?* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumuller, 1935) and A. Laubenheimer's *Und du Siehst die Sowjets Richtig* (Berlin and Leipzig: Nibelungen-Verlag, 1935).

In addition, *The Ukrainian Weekly* and *The Christian Science Monitor* graciously allowed copies of their publications to be reproduced; the General Research Division of the New York Public Library (Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations) similarly gave the Museum permission to reproduce an issue of the *Manchester Guardian*.

Resolved ...

On May 15, 2003, Ukraine's Parliament, the *Verkhovna Rada*, adopted a Resolution marking the 70th anniversary of the Great Famine.

Excerpt from the Ukrainian Parliament's Resolution:

"For many decades the tragedy of Holodomor ... was not only silenced but also officially disclaimed by the ruling elite of the USSR..."

"We believe that in an independent Ukraine the terrible truth about those years must be made public officially by the state, because the Holodomor of 1932-1933 was deliberately organized by the Stalinist regime and should be publicly condemned by Ukrainian society and the international community as one of the largest acts of genocide in world history..."

"In the name of the future, let us not forget the past."

Resolution No. 789-IV of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine, May 15, 2003

The U.S. House of Representatives has also adopted several resolutions concerning the Great Man-Made Famine in Ukraine, the earliest dating back to 1934. A second one was adopted in 1983, on the 50th anniversary of the Famine. The most recent Resolution adopted by the House, on October 21, 2003, commemorates the Famine's 70th anniversary.

Excerpts from the House of Representatives 2003 Resolution introduced by Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL), Chairman of the House International Relations Committee::

"WHEREAS 2003 marks the 70th anniversary of the height of the famine in Ukraine that was deliberately initiated and enforced by the Soviet regime through the seizure of grain and the blockade of food shipments into the affected areas, as well as by forcibly preventing the starving population from leaving the region, for the purposes of eliminating resistance to the forced collectivization of agriculture and destroying Ukraine's national identity;

"WHEREAS, although the Ukrainian famine was one of the greatest losses of human life in the 20th century, it remains insufficiently known in the United States and in the world: NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

"RESOLVED, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that ... this man-made famine was designed and implemented by the Soviet regime as a deliberate act of terror and mass murder against the Ukrainian people..."

U.S. House of Representatives Resolution 356 October 21, 2003

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