

# HOLODOMOR POEM

## ***Above the Bitter Wind***

by - Guy DiMatteo

Our hearts were broken  
by all it cost

So much was taken  
So many lost

We held each other  
with trembling hands

and felt the pain  
which life demands

Surrounded by a fear so deep  
that lingers even as we sleep

The only comfort we might find  
a guide to show the way

Is found inside the silence  
within the moments when we pray

But in our hearts we kept a vow  
never to forget

having faith to make it through  
and live without regret

For even when it seems as though  
darkness will surely win

The light of hope will always shine  
above the bitter wind

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## Holodomor Definition

noun: ho·lo·do·mor \ 'hō-lō-dō-'mōr

The term Holodomor (death by hunger, in Ukrainian) refers to the starvation of millions of Ukrainians in 1932–33 as a result of Soviet policies. The Holodomor can be seen as the culmination of an assault by the Communist Party and Soviet state on the Ukrainian peasantry, who resisted Soviet policies.

Source: [holodomor.ca](http://holodomor.ca)

Website for the Holodomor Research and Education Consortium (HREC)

# Holodomor Student Vocabulary

## Two Regimes: A Mother's Memoir of the Holodomor and Holocaust

### Student Vocabulary for Understanding

**Authoritarian** – Characterized by or favoring absolute obedience to authority, as against individual Freedom; an authoritarian regime.

**Collective Farm** - A jointly operated group of several farms, especially one owned by the government

**Collectivization** – To organize (an economy, industry, or enterprise) on the basis of collectivism. The principles or system of ownership and control of the means of production and distribution by the people collectively, usually under the supervision of a government.

**Communism** – A system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single, often authoritarian party holds power.

**Deportation** – Action of deporting a foreigner from a country.

**Despotism** – A government or political system in which the ruler exercises absolute power.

**Dictator** – One holding complete autocratic control; one ruling absolutely and often oppressively.

**Displaced Person** – One who has been driven from one's homeland by war or internal upheaval.

**Dissident** – One who disagrees, disagreeing especially with an established religious or political system, organization or belief.

**Expropriation** – To deprive of possession, the action of the state in taking or modifying the property rights of an individual in the exercise of its sovereignty

**Food ration cards** – A card issued by the government to allow the holder to obtain food or other commodities that are in short supply

**Genocide** – The deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political or cultural group.

**GPU** – The Soviet secret police which was succeeded by the NKVD and eventually the KGB. All Soviet internal security systems were ruthless.

**Grain elevator** – A facility designed to stockpile or store grain.

**Gulag** – A network of forced labor camps or prisons in the former Soviet Union, especially for political dissidents; a place or situation of great suffering and hardship likened to the atmosphere in a prison system or a forced labor camp

**Hitler** – Adolph Hitler was dictator of Germany from 1933-1945, leader of the Nazi party.

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# Holodomor Student Vocabulary

**Holodomor** – Combination of two Ukrainian words: “holod” meaning hunger, famine, starvation and the verb “moryty” which means to waste, debilitate, exhaust or kill. Refers specifically to the forced famine genocide of 7-10 million people in 1932/1933 in Ukraine.

**Kuban region.** A region on the eastern coast of the Sea of Azov.

**Kulak** (kurkul in Ukrainian) – Russian word for a farmer characterized by Communists as having excessive wealth; independent landowner in Ukraine. Targeted as enemies of the state by Stalin.

**Lenin** – Vladimir Lenin was a Russian revolutionary, first head of the government of Soviet Russia from 1917-1924 and the Soviet Union from 1922-1924.

**Mariupol.** A city in Ukraine on the Sea of Azov.

**ration cards.** Because of extreme shortages of consumer goods and food, Soviet citizens were issued cards that allowed them a small, fixed amount of goods. They presented their cards at state stores to receive their allotment.

**Siberia.** A vast desolate and remote area of Russia

**Slave labor camp** – A prison camp where forced labor is performed.

**Stalin** - Joseph Stalin was a Soviet political leader who governed the Soviet Union from 1924-1953.

**Steppes** – A large area of flat unforested grassland in southeastern Europe or Siberia.

**Totalitarian** - Relating to a system of government that is centralized and dictatorial, requiring complete subservience to the state.

## Background to Ukraine

by Orest Zakydalsky

1 Ukraine lies at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, at 49 degrees north latitude and 32 degrees east longitude. Its neighbours to the north are Belarus and Russia; to the west, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary; to the southwest, Romania; and to the east, Russia. Ukraine covers 603,550 sq. km and is the second largest country in Europe, roughly the size of France or the province of Manitoba. The capital of Ukraine is Kyiv. Ukraine is made up of 24 oblasts (provinces) and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea on the Black Sea.

2 The borders of Ukraine changed several times in the twentieth century. In 1922, after the First World War, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was established within the Soviet Union from parts of Ukraine that had been under the Russian Empire. The western regions of Ukraine, which were divided among Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia were incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR during and after the Second World War. Crimea became a part of Ukraine in 1954. The Russian Federation invaded Crimea in 2014 and illegally annexed it.

3 Most of the terrain of Ukraine consists of vast plains known as steppes, where the black earth (*chornozem*) is extraordinarily rich and fertile. Ukraine became known as the “Breadbasket of Europe” because *chornozem* is ideal for growing wheat and other grain crops as well as certain vegetables such as sugar beets. Ukraine is also a land rich in minerals — particularly iron ore, coal, manganese, and salt.

4 In 2021 there were 41.6 million people living in Ukraine, the ethnic breakdown according to the 2001 census was: 77.7% Ukrainian, 17.3% Russian, 0.6% Belarusian, 0.5% Moldavan, 0.5% Crimean Tartar, 0.3% Polish, and 0.2% Jewish.

5 The population in 1989 was 51.8 million, with 69% of the people living in cities while 31% lived in rural areas. The demographic decline from 1989 to 2021 is due mainly to a low birth rate (related to difficult economic conditions within the country), a relatively low life

## **Background to Ukraine**

expectancy, and emigration. The rights of minorities are respected in Ukraine. The literacy rate is almost 100%, with comparatively high levels of enrollment in higher education.

### **Ukraine Under Foreign Rule**

6        The lack of natural geographic barriers, coupled with its richness in both natural resources and agriculture, and a strategic location as a crossroads between Europe and Asia, have made Ukraine a land coveted by its neighbours throughout history. Both European (Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Austro-Hungarian Empire, Russian Empire, Soviet Union, Nazi Germany) and Asian (Golden Horde, Ottoman Empire) forces invaded, fought over, and ruled Ukrainian territory. For more than two hundred years (from the late 18th to the 20th centuries) most of Ukraine's territory was ruled by the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union.

7        In 1918, Ukraine became independent but independence was brief. The Red Army invaded and most of Ukraine's territory became part of the Soviet Union (USSR). In 1922 the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic became a part of the USSR and the republic was governed from Moscow until 1991. According to the Soviet census of 1926, Ukraine had a population of 29 million people (about 20% of the total Soviet population). Ukrainians were the largest national group within the USSR after the Russians. Ukraine regained its independence in 1991, leading to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Over 90% of the Ukrainian population voted for independence.

8        The Soviet Union depleted and plundered Ukraine's riches. Much of its grain was exported. Its minerals fed the industrial machine of the Soviet Union: Ukraine provided the Soviet Union with 71.9% of its pig iron, 77% of its iron ore, and 69.9% of its coal in 1928. Under Soviet rule, Ukraine saw a period of massive industrialization and urbanization. While this period led to economic growth, the ecological and environmental consequences were disastrous. Air, water and soil pollution continues to be a massive problem. In 1986, Ukraine

## Background to Ukraine

suffered the worst nuclear disaster in history at the Chornobyl Atomic Energy Station, the consequences of which are still felt today.

### **Sources:**

- [http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2007/ds/nas\\_rik/nas\\_e/nas\\_rik\\_e.html](http://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/operativ/operativ2007/ds/nas_rik/nas_e/nas_rik_e.html)
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Reprinted with permission from Valentina Kuryliw, daughter of two survivors of the Holodomor, from her book titled *“Holodomor in Ukraine: The Genocidal Famine, 1932–1933”*

Kuryliw, Valentina. “The Holodomor, 1932-1933.” *Holodomor in Ukraine: The Genocidal Famine, 1932–1933*, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and Toronto, Ontario, Canada, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2018, pp. 17–20.

# Holodomor at a Glance

## SOVIET HOLODOMOR 1932-33 UKRAINE

### DEFINITION **HOLODOMOR** noun: ho lo do `mor

Scan the QR code to hear how to pronounce **Holodomor**.



The term Holodomor (death inflicted by starvation) refers to the man-made famine that caused the deaths of millions of Ukrainians in 1932-33 as a result of Soviet policies. The Holodomor can be seen as the culmination of an assault by the Communist Party and Soviet state on the Ukrainian farming population, who resisted Soviet policies.

Source: Holodomor Research and Education Consortium (HREC) and *Holodomor in Ukraine* by Valentina Kuryliw

Ukraine is the largest country entirely in Europe. Ukraine was called the breadbasket of Europe because of its rich soil. In 1922, Ukraine was incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR – Soviet Union). In 1926 per the census in Soviet Ukraine, farming communities made up 89% of the population.

Source: HREC and *Holodomor in Ukraine* by Valentina Kuryliw

### CAUSES of the Holodomor

When Joseph Stalin came to power in 1928, he set out to rapidly industrialize the USSR. To pay for this rapid industrialization, he seized control of farming in Ukraine so that he could sell on the international market the grain grown by Ukrainian farmers. The peasant farmers (89% of Ukrainian population) were forced, often through violence, to give up their land, their equipment, and their animals, and to become simply workers on state-run collective farms.

#### Joseph Stalin's first 5 Year Plan

During Stalin's first 5 Year Plan, the Soviet Government in 1928 to 1933 attacked the following groups in Ukraine:

#### First – Attack on Intellectuals – the BRAIN

In 1930, the intellectuals; scholars, teachers, university students and others, were accused of being part of a fictitious organization and charged with anti-Soviet activities. There were a number of show trials which resulted in convictions. The result of the show trials was that Ukrainian language and culture were linked to subversion and thus treasonous. On that premise 30,000 people were arrested, sent to the Gulag or executed.

Source: HREC and [encyclopediaofukraine.com](https://encyclopediaofukraine.com) – Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU)

#### Second – Attack on the Ukrainian Church - the SOUL

The Ukrainian Autocephalous (independent) Orthodox churches were closed and destroyed. The priests and the entire hierarchy of the church were sent to labor camps or executed and 10,000 clergy were liquidated.

Source: HREC and *Holodomor in Ukraine* by Valentina Kuryliw

#### Third – Attack the Farmers - the SPIRIT

Farmers were forced to join the collective farms, or be sent to labor camps (the Gulag). The authorities imposed high unrealistic grain quotas. When quotas could not be met, they were blacklisted, and all foodstuff was withheld from them. Teams were sent house to house, searching and removing what little food remained. A law was introduced that made the theft of even a few stalks of grain an act of sabotage punishable by execution. Millions of people starved; children were orphaned, abandoned and died.

Source: HREC and *Holodomor in Ukraine* by Valentina Kuryliw

#### Fourth Attack - Sealed the borders and sealed their fate

In 1932 the USSR introduced an internal passport system that prevented hungry farmers from fleeing the countryside to enter cities, and in 1933, a Soviet decree closed the borders so that the starving could not seek food outside of Ukraine.

Source: HREC [https://holodomor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/7\\_HR\\_Documents.pdf](https://holodomor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/7_HR_Documents.pdf)

### RESULTS of the Holodomor

Stalin created the artificial Famine to destroy the Ukrainian identity and annihilate Ukraine as a nation.

At the height of the Famine in 1933, people in Ukraine were dying at a rate of 28,000 people per day. Nearly a third of those who died in the Holodomor were children under the age of 10.

Four to ten million people died in the Holodomor of which over 80% were Ukrainians. Others were also impacted by the Holodomor: Russians, Jews, Poles, Greeks, Roma, Belarusians, Hungarians, and others, also died from starvation. However, Ukrainians were the primary target of Stalin's plan.

**“Aside from certain Don and Volga regions, only Ukrainian agricultural areas faced complete confiscation of foodstuffs, only Ukrainian agricultural area were sealed off from the rest of the world, only Ukrainian villages were blacklisted for failing to fulfill their grain delivery quotas and only Ukrainians were denied the possibility of leaving their impacted regions. As a result of this, within just a six month period in 1933 more than 4 million Ukrainians died.”**

Professor Andrea Graziosi, historian, University of Naples

TwoRegimes.com



# The Holodomor 1932-1933

by Valentina Kuryliw

1 One of the most devastating events of the twentieth century occurred in Ukraine after it was conquered and incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922. A genocide was carried out against the Ukrainian population in 1932–1933, which subsequently was denied, dismissed and hidden from world scrutiny for more than five decades. Although Ukrainians in the West had long maintained that millions had died as a result of the Soviet state’s policies, the true nature the Holodomor came to light only when archives in Moscow and Ukraine were opened following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. In addition to those who died of starvation, countless numbers of Ukrainians were executed by firing squads, deported to Siberia or sent to the Gulag. The word *Holodomor* is used to describe death inflicted by starvation. It comes from two Ukrainian words: *holod*, meaning starvation, and *moryty* to cause a torturous death. For generations, the very mention of the Famine was forbidden in Ukraine, and the Holodomor was often a bitter secret guarded by survivors, hidden even from their own children. In the West, this great human tragedy was little known or acknowledged. How and why did this happen and who was responsible for the death of these millions?

## Historical background.

2 After 250 years of Russian Tsarist rule, Ukrainians declared independence from Russia in January 1918 in the midst of war and revolution. Ravaged by war, revolutions and invasions by various armies, Ukraine lost the battle for independence. By 1921, Ukraine was partitioned with the central and eastern regions controlled by Bolshevik (Russian Communist) forces and the western region annexed by Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. Ukrainians became the largest non-Russian nationality within the newly formed USSR. To stabilize and rebuild the economy within the Soviet Union, the Soviet leadership launched a New Economic Policy in 1921 that provided greater economic freedom and permitted private enterprise, mainly independent farms and small businesses. To increase support for the Communist regime, a policy of indigenization (*korenizatsiia*) was introduced in 1923, which sought to develop the non-Russian Soviet republics culturally. Throughout much of the 1920s Ukrainian village populations flourished – socially, politically, educationally and demographically, bring about an increase in the number of successful independent farmers on the black soil (*chornozem*) of Ukraine. The Ukrainian SSR also experienced a notable cultural rebirth, with writers, artists and intellectuals creating innovative new works in the Ukrainian language.

# The Holodomor 1932-1933

## Lead-up to the Genocidal Famine

3 By 1928 Joseph Stalin won the power struggle within the Communist Party and became the dominant and undisputed leader of the USSR. His rule was characterized by the ruthless elimination of anyone and anything he perceived as a threat to his power. For Stalin, the independent-minded farmers and cultural freedoms in Ukraine constituted a threat. Starting in 1929, Ukraine's writers, artists, educators, intellectuals, and cultural elites were repressed for being too Ukrainian and not Soviet enough. In 1930 Stalin destroyed Ukraine's independent church, the Ukrainian Autocephalous (independent from the Russian) Orthodox Church, and its clergy. Following the attack on the intellectuals and the church, Ukrainian farmers, who made up over 80 percent of Ukraine's population and thus were carriers of the language and cultural, were next to be dealt a mortal blow.

4 In 1928 the first Five-Year Plan of the Soviet Union was put in place, which had as its aim the rapid industrialization of the USSR at any cost. As part of the Five-Year Plan of 1928–1933, the Soviet leaders conducted a massive reorganization of privately owned farms into collective (state-controlled) farms and imposed high crop requisition quotas. It was the sale of grain that was to pay for industrialization. Independent farmers were forced to give their private land, livestock and equipment to the collective farm without compensation. They became simply workers on state-controlled collective farms, paid only if the collective farm handed over the quota in crops set by Moscow.

5 The opposition of Ukrainian farmers to collectivization was fierce and revolts were widespread. The Soviet state reacted quickly and ruthlessly. First, the more well-to-do successful farmers and their families were labeled by the state as *kurkuls* in Ukrainian or *kulaks* in Russian, and these village leaders were targeted and demonized in the press by the Soviet government as “anti-Soviet unwanted elements.” Beginning in 1929, so-called *kurkuls/kulaks* and their families, about half a million in Ukraine, were executed by firing squads or deported, many to Siberian concentration camps. Anyone opposed to collectivization was conveniently labeled *kurkuls/kulaks* and dealt with accordingly.

## Implementing the Holodomor

6 Having disposed of the leaders and successful farmers in Ukraine, the Soviet regime continued with the forced collectivization of agriculture, and the remaining farmers became the target. Several measures were implemented. The state imposed huge quotas for wheat, which were especially severe in Ukraine. Any opposition to collectivization was met with brutal force. Secret police (OGPU) and Red Army units were sent to villages to collect the very last bit of grain by force. The state then implemented policies that aimed not just at the collection

# The Holodomor 1932-1933

of quotas, but also caused the death of millions of farmers in Ukrainian villages. Communist brigades were sent out to search the homes of individual farmers, supposedly for hidden grain and seed, but they also confiscated all kinds of foodstuffs – onions, pumpkins, vegetables pickled in jars for the winter – anything that families might use to survive. A law enacted in August 1932, The law of Five Stalks of Grain, stated that anyone, even a child caught taking any produce from a collective field could be shot or imprisoned for stealing “socialist property.” A decree in January 1933 specifically sealed the borders of Ukraine. The Soviet government also started a system of internal passports, which made it more difficult for farmers to leave their villages to seek food elsewhere, and to travel or obtain a train ticket without permission. Those caught attempting to flee to the cities or beyond Ukraine's borders, where conditions were better, were imprisoned or sent home to die. Over one-third of the villages in Ukraine and the Kuban (an area in the Russian republic adjacent to Ukraine where the population was mostly Ukrainian) were put on a blacklist (*chorna doska*) and blockaded for failing to meet grain quotas and were forbidden from receiving any supplies. This was essentially a collective death sentence for these villages. Settlers from Russia and Belarus were later brought in to resettle some of these depopulated areas, but not all remained.

7        In the meantime, the wheat stored in government warehouses was often sold abroad for export, rotted due to mismanagement or used for the production of alcohol. In fact, in 1932, Soviet wheat from Ukraine – confiscated from Ukrainian farmers by Red Army troops and secret police – was dumped on world markets at exceedingly low prices. Even Canadian farmers suffered because they could not match the low prices set for Soviet grain. Many could not believe that the people who had grown the wheat were being starved to death during a good harvest.

8        To minimize possible sympathy for the suffering of the local population, Stalin also attacked political leaders in Ukraine, imprisoning many and putting others to death. Some committed suicide. Some of these Ukrainian Communists were replaced with Party members from outside the Ukrainian SSR. Having brought the Ukrainian farmers to their knees and eliminated the political leadership that might harbour Ukrainian national awareness, there was little open opposition to Soviet rule. On the collective farms, those who survived became little better than slave labourers on land cultivated by their ancestors, which had served as the breadbasket of Europe for centuries. In the summer of 1933, after the Soviet state opened the granaries the famine subsided. The nation was devastated and defeated and had lost millions of its citizens.

## Causes

# The Holodomor 1932-1933

9        Why did this happen? This remains a very important question for historians. For decades, the USSR denied outright that the Famine had taken place, to say nothing of the charge that it was human-made. One group of historians attributed the loss of life to “excesses” or difficulties in the production of collectivization. There is no question that the disruption of agricultural life through the reorganization of land ownership and cultivation methods led to food shortages and death. However, this point of view does not account for the disproportionately massive starvation that occurred in Ukraine and in the Kuban, where the population was mostly Ukrainian .

10       Another school of historians has concluded that the Famine was deliberate and linked to a broader Soviet policy to subjugate the Ukrainian people. With the fall of the Soviet Union and opening of Soviet-era archives, researchers have been able to demonstrate that Soviet authorities undertook measures in Ukraine with the knowledge that the result would be the death of millions of Ukrainians by starvation. The most recent research leaves little doubt that the Holodomor was an act of genocide.

## Nationalities Policy

11       As can be expected the economy was not the only concern of the newly created state – establishing Soviet power over the different nationalities was also a major concern. In 1923, the Soviets launched a policy called indigenization (*korenizatsiia*), which was aimed at attracting members of non-Russian nationalities into the Communist Party. In Ukraine the policy was called Ukrainization. It led to a cultural renaissance, growth of Ukrainian national identity, and also a more favorable view of the USSR. Many Ukrainians were conscious of their national identity, valued their language and culture, and considered themselves a separate and distinct ethnic group equal to the Russians. However, the resistance to collectivization and to forced grain requisitions in Ukraine were in Stalin's mind related to a growing Ukrainian nationalism that could lead to the separation of Ukraine from the USSR. In August 1932, at a critical time in the events leading up to the Holodomor, Stalin expressed his concerns that “if we do not correct the situation . . . we could lose Ukraine.”

## Reaction to the Ukrainian Genocidal Famine

12       Some foreign journalists stationed inside the USSR largely ignored the Holodomor in the 1930s, or did not accurately report on it, while most governments whose countries were going through the Great Depression knew, but did nothing about it.

13       The journalist Walter Duranty, at the *New York Times*, who was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his articles about the USSR wrote that:

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## The Holodomor 1932-1933

*“ There is no actual starvation or deaths from starvation, but there is widespread mortality from disease due to malnutrition . . . conditions are bad. But there is no famine.”*

14      There were a few journalists who wrote about starvation in Ukraine. Two such journalists were the Welshman Garth Jones, who wrote for the *New York American* and *Los Angeles Examiner*, and Malcolm Muggeridge, a British foreign correspondent. In his article “War on the Peasants” in the *Fortnightly Review*. May 1, 1933, Muggeridge wrote:

“On one side, millions of starving peasants, their bellies often swollen from lack of food; on the other, soldiers, members of the GPU (secret police) carrying out the instructions of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They had gone over the country like a swarm of locusts and taken away everything edible, they had shot or exiled thousands of peasants, sometimes whole villages, they had reduced some of the most fertile land in the world to a melancholy desert.”

15      In Ukraine it was impossible to mention publicly, teach about or to discuss the Holodomor openly until the late 1980s. Information about the Famine was only available in the West, mostly from eyewitness testimonies of refugees who had survived the event and escaped from the Soviet Union during World War Two.

16      A succession of Soviet governments formally denied that the Holodomor had taken place. Even today, authorities of the Russian Federation will admit that there were famines in the 1930s in the USSR, although they refused to acknowledge that Ukraine and Ukrainians were singled out in decrees that led to disproportionate deaths. The truth about the Holodomor started to become openly available to the citizens of Ukraine only on the eve of the breakup of the USSR. Eyewitnesses account and documentary evidence emerged that showed that Ukraine was indeed targeted for starvation in the wake of this shift in Soviet nationality policy. There were many ways of bringing about the destruction of a nation or its parts – starvation was one of these methods, and it was used against the Ukrainians in the twentieth century.

17      Until recently, the Holodomor was denied, covered up and ignored. Today, the Holodomor is commemorated worldwide each year on the fourth Saturday in November. Canada and numerous other countries have recognized the Holodomor as genocide. Across Canada, many school boards commemorate Holodomor Memorial Day each year on the fourth Friday in November. We remember and honour its victims and resolve to prevent such crimes from occurring again. “They are just too many to forget.”

# **The Holodomor 1932-1933**

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# Holodomor Timeline

1900

Ukraine is divided between the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires prior to World War 1. The majority of Ukrainians live in the Russian Empire.

1914

WW1 begins. 5000 Ukrainians (Galicians, Ruthenians) who emigrated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire are interned in Canada.

1915

TO 1916 the Armenian Genocide inside the Ottoman Empire.

1917

1917 MARCH The Russian Revolution and the breakup of the Russian Empire. Ukraine establishes a government, the Central Rada.

NOVEMBER 7 The Bolshevik/Communist takeover in Petrograd, Russia.

1918

JANUARY 22. Ukraine declares independence as the Ukrainian People's Republic.

TO 1920 Ukraine attempts to remain independent, while fighting the Red Army (Bolshevik/Communists), the White Army (Russian monarchists), the Poles and the Romanians on Ukrainian soil.

MARCH the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, a separate treaty on the Eastern Front to end the war between Germany and her allies, and Russia and the Central Rada of Ukraine. Leon Trotsky, representing the Bolshevik Government of Russia, recognized Ukraine as a separate state.

1919

Ukraine is left out at the negotiations on self-determination of nations at the Treaty of Versailles. Ukraine is refused recognition as a separate country.

TO 1921 Civil War rages in the Russian Empire, Ukrainian-Russian war over Ukraine.

1920

The Bolsheviks conquer Ukraine with the aid of the Bolshevik (Communist) Red Army.

1921

TO 1923 Famine rages in Ukraine. More than 700,000 Ukrainians starve to death in this Famine. Food is confiscated and taken out of Ukraine to feed the Volga region and Russian cities while Ukrainians are left to starve.

The New Economic Policy (NEP) is brought in by the Bolsheviks to rebuild the economy. It allowed for small farm holdings, permitting Ukrainian farmers to continue farming their private land and running small businesses.

1922

Ukraine is forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union as a republic, the Ukrainian SSR, with Kharkiv, in eastern Ukraine as the new capital.

1924

Lenin dies and a power struggle for control of the USSR results between Leon Trotsky and Joseph Stalin.

# Holodomor Timeline

1925

Ukrainization policy leads to a cultural renaissance. The Ukrainian language is encouraged and some Ukrainian intellectuals join the Communist Party of Ukraine.

1928

Stalin gains control of the Soviet Union and Communist Party, introduces the first Five Year Plan, with collectivization of agricultural and industrialization.

1929

The Soviet authorities launch an attack on the potential leaders of resistance in Ukraine. A show trial is conducted of a fictitious Union for the Liberation of Ukraine which was accused of promoting an independent Ukraine.

During de-kulakization, over a half million Ukrainian farmers with their families are sent to Siberia, executed or sent to concentration camps. Uprisings against the Soviet government because of collectivization occurred, especially in Ukraine.

1930

The Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (independent from the Moscow Patriarch) is liquidated and the hierarchy are imprisoned or executed.

1932

Famine in Ukraine. 40% of the harvest in Ukraine is handed over to the government. Little is left for farmers on which to survive. They flee to cities and to Russia and Belarus in search of food.

APRIL 23 The Communist Party ends Ukrainization and liquidates all non-governmental literary organizations in Ukraine.

AUGUST 7 The "Law of the Five Stalks of Grain" allows for the death penalty or imprisonment for taking even a handful of grain from the fields. Unproductive villages are blacklisted and deprived of food (over one third of villages in Ukraine).

1933

There is widespread starvation in Ukraine, the Kuban, and the Caucasus. A secret decree blames Ukrainian nationalism for grain problems. The Ukrainian language is forbidden in the Kuban. The Ukrainian leadership is purged, replaced by non-Ukrainians, and the policy of Russification begins. The borders of Ukraine and Kuban are closed, preventing starving farmers from searching for food. Those caught stealing are sent to the gulag or sent home to starve. Moscow denies that there is a famine and rejects offers of relief.

Hitler comes to power in Germany. The United States formally recognizes the USSR and establishes diplomatic relations.

1934

The USSR is invited to join the League of Nations.

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