

. IS THERE A "SMOKING GUN" FOR THE HOLODOMOR?

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The Ukrainian Holodomor and the Denial of Genocides
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In his seminal study on genocide, Leo Kuper observed that "governments hardly declare and document genocidal plans in the manner of the Nazis" [1]. Nevertheless, since modern states cannot function without large bureaucracies and elaborate communication systems, tell-tale records inevitably survive.

When the CPSU lost power and the Soviet empire fell apart, it was revealed that an elaborate paper trail of the 1932-33 famine and the Soviet authorities' involvement in it had been preserved in party and state archives. These documents are being slowly declassified, examined and published[2]. Historians can now give us a fairly accurate account of the catastrophe and ascertain the responsibility of Stalin and his collaborators.

As a result, scholars who previously hesitated to recognize the genocidal character of Stalin's forced starvation of Ukrainian farmers, have reexamined the question and readjusted their interpretations. In his latest book, Nicolas Werth comes to the conclusion that thanks to recent studies based on the new documents, it is now "legitimate to qualify as genocide the cluster of actions undertaken by the Stalinist regime to punish the Ukrainian peasantry by famine and terror"[3].

In this paper I analyze some of the main documents that provide smoking-gun evidence of genocide, in line with the definition of the crime given in the UN Convention of 1948: "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such".

The key criteria in the Convention are proof of "intent" and identification eligible "groups". Soviet documents corroborate the accusation against Stalin and his closest collaborators for deliberately exterminating millions of Ukrainian farmers, and show that the perpetrators targeted them as Ukrainians.

Furthermore these and other documents reveal that the genocide was not just against Ukrainian farmers, the focus of the attack was the Ukrainian nation in all its component parts and on all its territories within the Soviet Union.

The locus of this crime was thus the Ukrainian SSR, the predominantly Ukrainian Kuban, and the other regions of the RSFSR with sizeable Ukrainian populations. The simultaneous decimation of Ukrainian national elites, especially academic, cultural and political leaders, was an integral part of the destruction of the Ukrainian nation.

Stalin did not intend to kill all Ukrainians (nor is such an intent required by the Convention); his motive was to break the backbone of the nation by executing a sizeable percentage of the people and reducing the rest to servile obedience, to transform them into manageable cogs of the state mechanism. Stalin's means of destruction were varied: famine, shootings, exhausting forced labor.

The UN Convention does not require the establishment of motives for genocide, but determining the reasons for the act gives an insight into the rationale which led to crime and thus help us comprehend the perpetrator's intent. Stalin's measures against the Ukrainians were predicated on his political ambitions, two of which provided the motives for the eventual genocide[4].

The first was to extend socialism beyond the borders of the USSR. He realized that the Bolsheviks' initial attempt to export their revolution into Europe failed primarily because of the weakness of the Red Army. To resume Lenin's unfinished task, Stalin needed a powerful armed force, backed by modern heavy industry. Industrialization had to be financed by exporting natural resources, especially grain, which had to be extorted from the farmers at the lowest cost to the state.

War communism had shown that door-to-door requisition was costly, inefficient and politically dangerous. After the revolution, poor farmers appropriated and divided up the land of rich landlords. As a result, farmers lived better, ate more but sold less to the state. Marketable grain (sold outside the village) in tsarist times was provided by the large farms owned by landlords and kulaks. Now new large estates had to be set up in the form of sovkhozy and kolkhozy. These would give the state easy access to grain, produced by the newly enslaved peasants.

The immediate goal was not the increase of grain production (which could be expected to fall as a result of peasant opposition), but of the "marketable grain" to be delivered to the state. Since the main producers of grain were Ukrainians farmers, who had no tradition of the Russian semi-communal obshchina organization, they could be expected to offer stiff resistance to forced collectivization and confiscation of the fruits of their labor.

Stalin's second ambition was to bring a permanent solution to the national question, especially its crucial Ukrainian component. The 1926 census pegged the Ukrainian population at 31 million, of the Union's 147 million: 23 million in Ukraine, and 8 million in the rest of the USSR, mainly along the Ukrainian border.

Ukrainian national revival triggered by the Russian revolution forced Lenin to give the reconquered republic nominal autonomy in the form of a "sovereign" republic within a Potemkin-style Soviet federation. Subsequent policy of Ukrainization, or the local application of a general principle of korenizatsiia (nativization), allowed Ukrainians to add real national content to the pretentiously misleading form of "soviet republic"[5].

The Ukrainization of education, communications and administration, not only in Ukraine but also in the Ukrainian regions of the RSFSR, the de-Russification of urban centers by the influx of Ukrainian farmers, the demands on Moscow to transfer to the republic adjacent territories with Ukrainian population, the shifting of cultural orientation from Moscow and

to the West - all these pressures on the imperial centre could not be ignored by the Kremlin.

Stalin, Lenin's "magnificent Georgian" and foremost expert on the nationalities question, understood the dangers of active nation-building in Ukraine, in the best of times. Collectivization would only aggravate the situation. Over 85 % of ethnic Ukrainians were farmers and their sudden disenfranchisement could throw the countryside into such turmoil that not only grain production would be catastrophically reduced, but also farmers could gain the support of the national elites in a united rebellion of the whole republic to the spoliation of their country by Moscow.

Similar, if smaller, unrest could be expected in the Kuban' and other ethnically Ukrainian regions of the RSFSR. In the mid-1920s Stalin had written that the peasant question was "the basis, the quintessence, of the national question", that "the peasantry constitutes the main army of the national movement" and that "there is no powerful national movement without the peasant army"[6]. The stability and even the integrity of the Soviet empire would be threatened.

Genocide does not happen spontaneously. The targeted group is first identified, vilified and intimidated, then it is discredited in the eyes of the rest of the population, and only when it has been sufficiently isolated, is it submitted to total or partial extermination. In the summer of 1929 the GPU (political police) "uncovered" a nationalist conspiracy, headed by prominent Ukrainian intellectuals and conducting anti-Soviet work in villages and regional centers.

Over 700 people were arrested for, among other things, "anti-Soviet activity in the villages and district centers" and a show trial was held in March 1930, appropriately staged in a Kharkiv theatre. 45 members of this mythical Association for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU) were sentenced to death or long prison terms.

Arrests and trials of other mostly fictitious groups followed: Ukrainian National Center, Ukrainian Military Organization, etc.[7] The condemned were former members of the former Ukrainian national governments, Ukrainian armed forces, Ukrainian political parties, and prominent people in fields of education, culture and the arts.

The purpose was to terrorize the Ukrainian elites into submission and lethargy, and thus deprive the peasants of leadership on the national level. It should be noted that, in connection with the less severe famine in Russia, no parallel attack took place against Russian national elites or the Russian culture.

Stalin's war against the peasants began in earnest towards the end of 1929. In a two-pronged attack he ordered to "eliminate the dekulakization as a class" and to collectivize the middle and poor peasants. Divided into three categories, the kulaks were dispossessed and the most dangerous were shot.

The others were deported to the wilds of northern RSFSR, transferred to distant regions in Ukraine, or given strips of poor land outside the kolkhoz near which they lived. The intention was not only to provide kolkhozes with the confiscated land, cattle and machinery, but also to deprive the peasants of the more qualified leadership for their opposition to the authorities.

During the winter of 1929-1930, 90 thousand Ukrainian households were dekulakized, and a smaller wave more or less finished the job a year later. In 1934 Kossior, party boss of Ukraine, reported that 200 thousand farms had been dekulakized in Ukraine. Out of this number of about one million (5 members per family), several thousand were deported to the northern parts of the RSFSR and lost to the Ukrainian nation.

Collectivization went in unison with dekulakization: a major push was given in early 1930. By 10 March 1930 Ukrainian kolhosps integrated 64.4% of farmsteads with 70.9% of arable land. The operation was accomplished with the help of some 50,000 activists, sent from Russian and Ukrainian urban centers, with special powers to organize, punish, and terrorize.

Many poor peasants, paid for the service with confiscated goods, participated in expropriating their richer neighbors, but many others sympathized with the victims. Peasant rebellion swept Ukraine: in January-March 1930, 3,190 uprisings with over 950 thousand participants confronted the authorities.[8]

Hundreds of fliers were picked up by the authorities with such slogans as "Free Ukraine from Moscow rule", "Time to rise against Moscow yoke" and others. National and peasant factors were coming together. Stalin sounded a temporary retreat and in October of that year collectivization was down to 29 % of households and 34 % of arable land. But the reprieve was brief and a year later (October 1931) the figures rose to 68 % (for households) and 72 % for arable land, with a much higher percentage in the grain-producing steppe regions.

The effect of Stalin's revolution on the countryside was disastrous, especially in Ukraine and the Kuban. From 1929 to 1932 the evolution can be summarized in these four curt phrases: production down; state procurement up; grain export up; peasant food consumption down.

Farmers' opposition to collectivization, mismanagement of collective farms by incompetent administrators, neglect and slaughter of farm animals seriously hindered farming and brought down its production. Yet, enforced obligatory state procurement increased, and in 1931, 42 % of Ukraine's grain harvest was turned over to the state.[9]

Kolhosps delayed or completely failed to pay out stipends for "workday" (trudodni), and the their members had to rely on their meager and insufficient individual plots of land and a few domestic animals for subsistence. Undernourishment became generalized. But Stalin had reached his goal.

Grain exports rose from below one million tons in 1929, to: 5,832,000 tons in 1930/31 and 4,786,000 tons in 1931/32. It should be kept in mind that one million tons could feed four to five million people for one year. After two years of resistance and unequal struggle with the Communist authorities, the Ukrainian elites were cowed and most of the collective and independent farms despoiled of all their reserves. The republic was on the brink of a major catastrophe.

On 26 April 1932, Stanislav Kossior, the General secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, informed Stalin about "individual

Cases and even individual villages that are starving" but blamed it on "local bungling, errors, particularly in the case of kolkhozes." And, lest he displease his Kremlin masters, their lieutenant in Ukraine dismissed the tragedy with the affirmation that "all talk of famine must be categorically discarded."[10]

Yet famine there was and on 10 June H. Petrovsky, the head of the Ukrainian state and V. Chubar, the head of the Ukrainian government, sent separate letters to notify Molotov and Stalin of the appalling conditions in the Ukrainian countryside, and to ask for help.

Chubar admitted that cases of starvation among independent and collective farmers had already been signaled in December and January and that by "March-April there were dozens and hundreds of malnourished, starving, and swollen people and people starving to death accumulate in every village; children and orphans abandoned by their parents appeared".

Raions and oblasts organized aid from internal resources, but were obliged to do this "under conditions of acute food shortage, especially bread".[11] Noteworthy additional remark: "Petliurite and other anti-Soviet moods increased."

Petrovsky's letter was even more to the point. Having just returned from an inspection of the countryside, he realized the catastrophic situation of the farming population. He visited many villages and everywhere saw multitudes of people, mainly poor and middle peasants, starving, subsisting on surrogates.

Peasants scolded him, posed embarrassing question, reproached him, saying "why did you create an artificial famine, [...] why did you take away the seed material - this did not happen even under the old regime, why is it necessary for Ukrainians to travel for bread [...] to non-grain producing territories?".

Echoing Chubar, Petrovsky reported that "because of the famine, mass thefts are taking place in the villages." Pointing out that grain harvest is still six weeks off, and famine will only intensify, Petrovsky asks: "shouldn't assistance be rendered to the Ukrainian countryside in the amount of two or, at the very least, one and a half million poods of grain?" And he predicted that if help is not given starvation would drive peasants to pick unripe grain and destroy much of it.

Petrovsky's letter paints a bleak picture of the forthcoming harvest. Since the better grain had been seized by the state, seeds of poorer quality were sown and scattered more thinly. The young crops are good and the fields well weeded but the grain is sparse. Petrovsky was also struck by the large amount of unsown land. Aware of all these problems, the farmers complained to Petrovsky that the new grain procurements would be even more difficult to meet than last year's. "And this may very well be so", agrees Petrovsky.

Finally Petrovsky draws attention to the exodus of Ukrainian farmers. They are forced to seek food beyond the republic's borders, at "the Dno station, in the Central-Black Earth Oblast', in Belarus, and in Northern Caucasus", where grain is more readily available, and at much lower prices.

When Petrovsky suggested that farmers band together for these purchases, he

learned that the Commissariat of Transport has drastically reduced the sale of train tickets to peasants. Bewildered Ukrainian peasants needed Petrovsky: "Why are they banning trips for grain?"

If the two Ukrainian leaders believed their pleas and warnings of turmoil in the Ukrainian countryside would soften Moscow's position, they were mistaken. Their effect on Stalin, Kaganovich and Molotov was just the opposite. Writing from Moscow to Sochi, where Stalin was vacationing, Kaganovich criticized both Ukrainian leaders, even though he admitted that some aid would have to be given to Ukraine, and asked Stalin to decide on the amount. Stalin's response was more brutal and more ominous of things to come.

He condemned the hypocrisy of the two leaders, who only wanted to get "new millions of poods[12] of grain from Moscow" and "a reduction in the plan for grain procurement". Ukrainians must mobilize their own forces and resources for already "Ukraine has been given more than she should get".[13] Nevertheless, on 16 June the Politburo considered Ukraine's plea and granted about 8,500 tons[14], a paltry amount in comparison with the million and a half poods requested by Petrovsky.

Politburo's niggardly "largesse" must have provoked Stalin's ire, for in a letter to Kaganovich, Molotov and the Politburo he came back with harsh criticism of past errors and new instructions for the coming harvest. The Gensec blamed "mechanical equalization", which did not take into account the ability of the kolkhozes to deliver grain, and as a result of which, "fertile districts in Ukraine found themselves in a state of impoverishment and famine, despite a fairly good harvest."[15]

This is the only known acknowledgement of the Ukrainian famine by Stalin. He blamed regional authorities for being out of touch with the countryside and allowing kolkhozniks to travel around the entire European part of the USSR demoralize "our farms with their complaints and whining."[16]

Stalin proposed the calling of a top level conference on the organization of grain procurement and its unconditional fulfillment, and insisted that personal responsibility for grain procurement be delegated to the first secretaries of the Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus, and the other grain producing regions. "Personal responsibility" for "unconditional fulfillment" imposed from the top along the administrative vertikal became the watchwords of the 1932/33 grain procurement campaign, which would result in the genocidal famine.

On 21 June a telegram signed by Stalin and Molotov instructed Kharkiv to carry out "at any cost" the July-September plan for grain delivery. Two days later, Moscow answered Ukrainian Politburo's plea for 600,000 poods of grain with a terse resolution: "bar any additional grain deliveries to Ukraine."[17]

The III Conference of KP(b)U (6-10 July 1932) was devoted to the upcoming harvest and grain procurement. Stalin sent Molotov and Kaganovich to the meeting "to ensure genuinely Bolshevik decisions". Molotov informed the audience that Moscow had lowered Ukraine's quota but was adamant that the plan be carried out in full.[18]

Declarations from regional leaders that the farmers were starving, that much

land lay fallow, and that 100 to 200 m.poods of grain would be lost during harvesting did not bend the resolve of Moscow's envoys.[19] The conference adopted a resolution to carry out the plan of grain delivery "in full and unconditionally".[20]

It was largely in response to the tense situation in Ukraine[21], and in anticipation of new troubles in that republic that Stalin came up with his infamous decree, dubbed by the farmers "the 5 ears of corn law". Writing on 20 July to Kaganovich and Molotov, the Gensec complains of widespread theft by "dekulakized kulaks" and others, and proposes to write a law, which would make theft of property belonging to collective farms equal to similar crimes against state property, and "punishable by a minimum of ten years' imprisonment, and as a rule, by death".

"All active agitators against the new collective-farm system" and "profiteers and resellers of goods" writes Stalin, should be removed and sent to concentration camps.[22] He also wants stricter controls over the limited kolkhoz trade allowed by a 6 May 1932 law (kolkhozes allowed sell their surplus after 15 January 1933, after fulfilling the state procurement plan), made more liberal on 20 May 1932.[23]

A follow-up letter provides ideological explanation: in the same way that capitalism could not triumph without first making "private property sacred property", socialism will not finish off capitalism "unless it declares public property (belonging to cooperatives, collective farms or the state) to be sacred and inviolable".[24]

Returning to the topic on 26 July, Stalin insists on formal legality of the proposed operations: "we must act on the basis of law ('the peasant loves legality'), and not merely in accordance with the practice of the OGPU, although it is clear that the OGPU's role here will not only not diminish but, on the contrary, will be strengthened and 'ennobled' (the OGPU agencies will operate 'on a lawful basis' rather than 'high-handedly')".[25]

The joint Party-State decree "On the Protection of the Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms and Cooperatives, and on the Consolidation of Public (Socialist) Property" was issued on 7 August 1932. It became the main legal instrument used by the Soviet authorities to condemn millions of farmers to slow death by starvation. It repeated Stalin's declarations that all public property is "sacred and inviolable" and that individuals attempting to take possession of public property should be considered "enemies of the people".[26]

All collective farm property, whether in the field or in storage was decreed equal to that of state property and theft was made punishable by execution, which could be reduced to 10-year imprisonment only under mitigating circumstances. Advocating withdrawal from the kolkhoz became tantamount to treason and was punished with three to five years imprisonment in concentration camps. No amnesty could be applied in any of these cases.

The decree on State property was applicable on the whole Soviet territory but, as Stalin's letter to Kaganovich shows, it was primarily meant for Ukraine. Stalin thought the law was "good" and would "soon have an impact", and ordered a draft of directives from the C.C to the party, judicial and punitive organizations.[27] The Gensec then addressed the Ukrainian problem. The passage is highly revealing:

"The most important thing right now is Ukraine. Ukrainian affairs have hit rock bottom. Things are bad with regard to the party. There is talk that in two regions of Ukraine (it seems in the Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk regions) about 50 raion party committees have spoken out against the grain-procurements plan, deeming it unrealistic. It is said that the situation in other raion party committees is no better. [...] This is not a party but a parliament, [...]

Instead of leading the raions, Kossior kept maneuvering between the directives of the CC VKP and the demands of the raion party committees [...] Things are bad with the soviets. Chubar is no leader. Things are bad with the GPU. Redens is not up to leading the fight against the counterrevolution [...]. [underlined and doubly underlined in original - R.S.]"

Then Stalin brandishes the specter of Ukrainian separatism: "If we don't undertake at once to straighten out the situation in Ukraine, we may lose Ukraine." He reminds Kaganovich that Pilsudski and his agents are underestimated by Redens, and Kossior. He expressed utter contempt for the whole KP(b)U, composed of 500,000 members ("ha-ha", snickers Stalin), harboring Pilsudski's agents and "quite a lot (yes a lot!) of rotten elements, conscious and unconscious Petliurists".

Thinking undoubtedly of Ukraine's negative reaction to the destructive impact the just-passed property laws will have, Stalin warns: "The moment things get worse, these [party] elements will waste no time opening a front inside (and outside) the party, against the party."

Frustrated by the fact that "the Ukrainian leadership does not see these dangers", Stalin proposes to replace Kossior with Kaganovich and Redens with Balitsky, and eventually Chubar with Kaganovich. In this way Stalin intends to transform "Ukraine as quickly as possible into a real fortress of the USSR, a genuinely exemplary republic."

The task is urgent and calls for immediate action, for without "these and similar measures (the economic and political strengthening of Ukraine, above all its border raions, etc.), I repeat, we may lose Ukraine." [28] Kaganovich agrees, of course, and accuses Ukrainian party of creating a certain solidarity and "a rotten sense of mutual responsibility", not only in the middle echelons of the party, but also among its leadership. [29]

Stalin's exchange of letters with Kaganovich reveals the ambiance in which the policy of starvation will be implemented. The overall objective was to maintain a high level of grain procurement. To assure this, all challenge outside and inside the republic had to be eliminated, regardless of the cost. Stalin's raising of the specter of Pilsudski and Petliura agents running loose in Ukraine and infiltrating the Soviet party and state machinery was nothing more than a scare tactic and a rallying call.

He was well aware that by the summer of 1932, the weak Polish network and the few local collaborators had been rounded up by the GPU, which also arrested real and imaginary followers of Petliura whom Stalin had eliminated by assassination in 1926. Poland may have had some illusions about a Ukrainian insurrection in 1929-1930, but by 1932, the Poles realized that the starving population was in no shape to revolt.

The Soviet-Polish nonaggression treaty signed on 25 July 1932 was ample proof of the changing relations between the two neighbors.[30] The Pilsudski-Petliura scarecrow will continue to enjoy popularity in Soviet propaganda. While there was no serious threat from the Poles or the Ukrainian nationalists, a national insurrection could become a reality if the expected famine (implied in Stalin's phrase "the moment things get worse") could bind together the threatened middle cadres of the KP(b)U with the surviving peasantry. To prevent this eventuality the KP(b)U had to be purged and kept under close Moscow surveillance.

Stalin maintained that the 1932 harvest was good; historians today are more skeptical but consider it adequate to cover Soviet Union's internal needs. With the state reserves from previous year, there were enough supplies to feed every citizen of the Soviet Union.

Famine was brought about by the exorbitant amount of grain and other agricultural products taken from the Ukrainian peasants, and the way they were extracted. Ukraine's plan was excessive, and in spite of the protests from Kharkiv and three successive reductions, it remained so to the end.

Still, Ukraine delivered about a quarter of a billion poods of grain, or over 90% of its procurement quota. [31] In addition it handed over large quantities of meat, vegetables and other produce. Stalin insisted that state procurement have absolute priority. Following a CC VKP(b) directive, a KP(b)U resolution of 18 November reminded that "complete fulfillment of the procurement plan by collective farms and the MTS constitutes their primary obligation [...], to which all the other duties of the collective farm must be subordinated, including the duty to set up all sorts of funds: seed fund, forage and food supplies".[32]

Stalin was satisfied that he was achieving his goal. At a high-level party meeting, held on 27 November 1932, he gloated: "The party has succeeded in replacing the 500-600 million poods of marketable grain, procured during the period of individual peasant holdings by our present ability to collect 1,200-1,400 m.p. of grain. It is hardly necessary to prove that without this leap forward the country would have a famine [sic-RS], we would not be able to support our industry, we would not be able to feed the workers and the Red Army." [33]

The allusion to the famine, or rather to freedom from one, was an obvious lie, and the reference to the feeding of the workers and the Red Army - an overstatement; but then, Stalin's concern was not the feeding his subjects but the financing of Soviet industrialization with grain exports.

Obedience to Moscow's orders was assured in two ways: a) frequently repeated delegations to Ukraine and the North Caucasus Territory of Molotov Kaganovich and other high-ranking leaders to supervise the local authorities, and b) party discipline enforced from Moscow down the administrative structure. At the end of October 1932, two commissions were sent, one to Ukraine headed by Molotov, and the other to North Caucasus Territory headed by Kaganovich.

Stalin's emissaries supervised party meetings and forced them to pass resolutions on grain procurements, party discipline, stricter application of the 7 August property laws, the establishment of "black lists" of collective farms in arrears with grain deliveries, imposition of fines, etc. They also

instigated purges in party organizations and administrative structures. Kuban' was particularly hit with the expulsion of 43 % of the 25,000 party members, including 358 out of 716 party secretaries.[34]

In Ukraine, during November and first five days of December, the OGPU arrested 1,230 people, including 340 heads of kolhospy while 327 Communists were brought before the courts for sabotaging state procurements.[35] In the 18 November resolution quoted above, the Ukrainian CC reminded the directors of sovkhoz of their "personal responsibility as party members and civil servants for the fulfillment of the grain procurement".

"Personal responsibility" for the execution of instructions was a constant refrain in messages coming from above and became an important means for forcing recalcitrant cadres to carry out the Ukrainian genocide.

Dekulakization and deportation continued, on a smaller scale and were mostly of political and punitive nature. Arrests, beatings, and cruelty of all sorts abounded as before, only now the victims were weaker and less capable of resistance. Kolkhozes, villages and individual farmers in arrears on state procurement were put on "black lists", lost access to state-run stores, and could not buy such essentials as matches, kerosene, salt.

Fines amounted to a year and a quarter's worth of meat tax, without freeing the debtor from the unfulfilled grain procurement. "Activists" - the city workers and their komnezam helpers searched farmers' houses and yards, looking for the hidden grain.

There is no way of knowing what portion of the hidden grain was found by the flying brigades of activists, but official reports state that in Kuban they found 345,000 poods of grain in November, while searches in Ukraine from 1 December 1932 to 25 January 1933 yielded 1.7 million poods, in 17,000 hiding places.[36] What grain was found, was confiscated; if nothing was discovered, they took whatever edibles were seen, leaving the family to starve.

Peasants who could find some old religious medals or other mementos made of precious metals could trek to the city and exchange them at the torgsins (stores for foreigners) for vouchers, and then exchange them for food.

Hardier peasants would flee their villages and seek salvation in urban centers or in neighboring Belarus and RSFSR, where food was available. Accounts of Ukrainian peasants overloading trains, filling stations and wandering about Russian and Belarusian towns and countryside abound.

National and peasant questions became inextricably intertwined in Stalin's decree of 14 December 1932, issued under the banal title "On Grain Procurement in Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and the Western Oblast"[37].

Ukrainization was blamed for problems in grain deliveries and exemplary punishment was prescribed for sabotage in grain procurement: 5-10 years of concentration camp for a number of "party traitors" arrested in the Orikhiv raion of Dnipropetrovs'k oblast of Ukraine, and deportation to the North of the Poltavaska stanytsia of Kuban in the RSFSR.

The decree made the party and government chiefs in the three grain producing areas personally responsible for the completion of grain procurement by

January 1933. Ukrainianization presently is carried out in Ukraine, "without meticulous selection of the Bolshevik cadre", had allowed bourgeois-nationalists and Petliurites to join party and state institutions and set up their cells and organizations.

Absence of "revolutionary vigilance" by local party organizations let "counterrevolutionary elements" become directors, accountants, storekeepers, foremen in collective farms, members of village soviets. Similar accusation was brought against Northern Caucasus, with supporters of the Kuban' Rada figuring in place of Petliurites. This gave nationalists the opportunity to sabotage harvest and sowing campaigns and organize other counterrevolutionary activities.

Party and Soviet authorities in Ukraine and Northern Caucasus were ordered to extirpate these counterrevolutionary elements, execute them or deport them to concentration camps, including "saboteurs with party membership cards in their pockets".

The verdict against Ukrainization came in two parts. In Ukraine it was not formally prohibited, but Stalin insisted that it resume its primary vocation, that of promoting "correct Bolshevik implementation of Lenin's national policy", which in fact meant integration and assimilation.

Ukrainian authorities were instructed to "expel Petliurite and other bourgeois-nationalist elements from party and government organizations", and "meticulously select and recruit Ukrainian Bolshevik cadre". The signal was thus given for rapid curtailment of Ukrainization and return to a more sophisticated policy of Russification.[38]

Ukrainians of Northern Caucasus fared worse. "Non-Bolshevik 'Ukrainianization', which affected nearly half of the raions in the Northern Caucasus," and which was declared to be "at variance with the cultural interests of the population", was totally discontinued and replaced with Russification.

The use of the Ukrainian language was banned in public offices of local administration, cooperative societies, and schools. The printing of newspapers and magazines in the Ukrainized raions of Northern Caucasus was to switch immediately to Russian, and preparation were to begin immediately for the transfer in the fall of all Ukrainian schools into Russian.

The whole Poltava stanytsia was ordered to be deported and resettled with demobilized Russian Red Army soldiers, who would receive the abandoned land, buildings, equipment, and cattle. In fact, 2,158 families with 9,187 members were sent out before 27 December[39] and resettled a month later with 1,826 demobilized soldiers.[40]

Together with Medvedivs'ka and Umans'ka, the three Cossack stanytsias saw 45,000 persons deported to the North. On 15 December, Molotov and Stalin signed a similar ban on Ukrainization, for the rest of the previously Ukrainized Soviet regions in the RSFSR.

Stalin's anti-Ukrainization decree reveals the extent to which the dictator was ready to go, in sacrificing the Ukrainian nation on the altar of great-power ambitions. There is little doubt that the ban on Ukrainization was a sop to Russian chauvinism, especially in ethnically mixed regions

outside the Ukrainian SSR. National and social repressions reinforced one another, even if neither was acknowledged openly.

For the next several months after the condemnation of the abuses of Ukrainization and the Ukrainian sabotage of grain procurements, the Ukrainian countryside passed through some of the worst moments in its history. The litany of repressive measures is endless. 82 raions were deprived of manufactured goods for not fulfilling their quotas of grain deliveries.

On 19 December, Stalin orders Kaganovich and Postishev back to Ukraine to help Kosior, Chubar and Khataevich carry out the procurement plan. On 24 December, collective farms are ordered to deliver all grain in fulfillment of the plan, including grain put aside for seed and food. Direct orders to increase repressive measures, arrests and deportations increase. A real reign of terror seizes the republic and the Kuban.

On 22 January 1933 Stalin struck another crippling blow against the starving Ukrainian grain growers. The new secret decree, drafted by the Gensec himself, is perhaps the best available proof of the dictator's genocidal intent against the Ukrainian nation. Sent to Ukraine, Belarus and the neighboring regions of RSFSR[41], the document calls attention to the unrestrained exodus of peasants from the Kuban' and Ukraine to the near-by regions of Russia and Belarus.

Central authorities are said to have no doubt that these migrants, who pretend to search for food, are, in fact, Socialist-Revolutionaries and agents of Poland, sent to agitate, "through the peasants", in the northern parts of the USSR, against the kolkhoz system and the Soviet power. Addressees are reminded that a similar movement took place the previous year, but the party, soviet and police authorities of Ukraine did nothing to stop it. It must not be allowed to happen this year.

Stalin then orders the party, soviet and the repressive organs of the Northern Caucasus and Ukraine to prevent the exodus of their peasants to other regions of the USSR and directs them to close border crossings between Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus.

The GPU of the Russian oblast's adjacent to the quarantined Ukrainian and Northern Caucasus regions, and the transport section of the OGPU, are instructed to arrest all peasants from Ukraine and North Caucasus, who have managed to leave their territory, and, after segregating the counter-revolutionary elements, return the others to their villages.

The next day, the Politburo of the CC KP(b)U adopted a resolution to carry out Moscow's orders and forwarded the directive, along with additional instructions, for implementation by the appropriate Ukrainian authorities.[42]

The Ukrainian branch of the OGPU was ordered to instruct all railway stations not to sell tickets to peasants with destinations beyond the Ukrainian borders, without formal travel permission from the raion executive committee or a certificate of employment from construction or industrial enterprises.

Oblasts were told to take "resolute measures" to prevent massive departure

of their peasants, carefully check the work of agents recruiting peasants for work outside Ukraine, and to urge kolhospnyky and individual farmers not to depart without permission for other raions because they would be arrested there.

On 25 January, B. Sheboldaev, the party boss of the North Caucasus Territory, issued a similar order, adding instructions on the employment of internal forces and border troupes and the setting up of filtration points.[43]

Like the anti-Ukrainization decree of 14 December 1932, the 22 January 1933 directive, which closed the borders to the famished Ukrainian peasants was not the beginning but the culmination of processes that had started many months before. Petrovsky had complained to Stalin, back in June 1932, about the ban on train ticket for Ukrainian peasants who wanted to obtain provisions in Russia.

Evdokimov's telegram from Rostov-on-Don, which lagoda prepared for Stalin's attention on 23 January 1933, details the elaborate measures taken since November to prevent the flight of farmers from the Northern Caucasus Territory. Among these were roadblocks set up on the main arteries of peasant migration.

Transport authorities had arrested 11,774 persons and another 7,534 were incarcerated by other organs. In the same dossier, Balitsky's report from 22 January informed of massive exodus of peasants from Ukraine since December.[44]

Departures were registered in 74 raions, 721 villages and 228 kolhosps. In all, 31,693 persons left: 20,129 from Kharkiv oblast', 6,576 from the Kyiv oblast, 3,447 from Odessa oblast, and 1,541 from Chernihiv. Of these migrants about one third were collective farmers and two thirds individual farmers; 128 were activists. A check at the railway junction stations in the Kharkiv oblast revealed a great demand for long-distance tickets: in January 1933 16,500 such tickets were sold in Lozova station and 15,000 - in Sumy.

In the beginning of January 1933, the GPU began to apprehend agitators and organizers of these migrations and arrested over 500 of them. [45] As a direct result of Stalin's borders decree of 22 January 1933, 219,460 persons were arrested in the first six weeks of its application; some were sent to the Goulag, others punished in other ways, while 186,588 were sent back to their villages to face the famine.[46]

In the middle of March 1933, Kosior wrote unperturbedly to the Kremlin that "the famine still hasn't taught many kolhospnyky a lesson".[47] In his report from Kharkiv, dated 31 May 1933, the Italian consul general prognosticated on the devastation of the country: "The current disaster will bring about a preponderantly Russian colonization of Ukraine. In a future time, perhaps very soon, one will no longer be able to speak of a Ukraine, or of a Ukrainian people, and thus not even of a Ukrainian problem, because Ukraine will have become a de facto Russian region." [48]

There can be little doubt today that the famine was not only used by the Communist party for political purposes, but that it was actually created and directed by Stalin and his henchmen for that purpose. The regime's ultimate objective was to transform the backward empire into an industrial giant and

a military superpower that could export socialism abroad.

To achieve this, Stalin needed great quantities of marketable grain, which was to be extracted from the peasants "at any price" to the producers but at minimal price to the state. The most expedient way was to herd the peasants into collective farms, subject them to a direct control from the Kremlin, and in this way ensure maximum grain deliveries to the state.

The Kremlin knew that the peasants would resist and that the imposition of its will would result in the loss of millions of human lives, but that was of no concern for masters of a well-populated empire. Stalin's project required a homogenous and docile population. Revived Ukrainian particularism, taking advantage of the indigenization program, reinforced national unity at the expense of cohesion of the new "fatherland of world proletariat".

The two sources of resistance to Stalin's plans (national and social) became embodied in the same group - the Ukrainian farmers. Stalin decided to sacrifice a considerable part of this group in order to eliminate the opposition to his projects and to frighten the rest of the Ukrainian nation into accepting the role of cogs (as he liked to call them) of the great socialist mechanism.

The Stalin-Kaganovich discussion of the Petrovsky and Chubar letters (June-July 1932), the "five ears of corn" law (7 August, 1932), the condemnation of Ukrainization (14 December 1932), and the closing of internal Soviet borders on starving Ukrainian peasants, each provide smoking gun revelations about the genocide against the Ukrainian nation. But a multitude of other documents now emerging from the secret archives help us get a rounded understanding of the gigantic crime and the immeasurable suffering of its victims.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Leo Kuper, *Genocide. Its Politic Use in the Twentieth Century*. (Penguin, 1981), p. 35.

[2] Valerii Vasiliev & Yuri Shapoval (eds.), *Komandyry velykoho holodu. Poizdky V. Molotova i L. Kahanovycha v Ukrainu i na Pivnichnyi Kavkaz 1932-1933 rr.* Kyiv, 2001; I. Zelenin et al (eds.), *Tragediia sovetskoï derevni. Kollektivizatsiia i rasskulachivanie. Tom 3.* Moskva, 2001; *Stalin i Kaganovich Perepiska 1931-1936 gg.* Moskva, 2001; *Rozsekrechena pam'iat': Holodomor 1932-1933 rokiv v Ukraini v dokumentakh GPU-NKVD.* Kyiv, 2007; *Ruslan Pyrih (ed.), Holodomor 1932-1933 rokiv v Ukraini: dokumenty i materialy.* Kyiv, 2007.

[3] Nicolas Werth, *La terreur et le désarroi: Staline et son système.* Paris, Perrin, 2007.

[4] Discussed more fully in my article, "The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 and the United Nations Convention on Genocide", in Taras Hunczak & Roman Serbyn. *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933: Genocide by Other Means.* (Forthcoming.)

[5] For a thorough discussion of Ukrainization and its problems see James Mace, *Communism and the dilemmas of national liberation: national communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933.* Cambridge, Mass., 1983. See also Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1929-1939.* Ithaca & London, 2001.

[6] J. V. Stalin, "Concerning the National Question in Yugoslavia" Works. Vol. 7. Moscow, 1954. Pp. 71-72.

[7] *Rozsekrechena pam'iat'.* Pp. 75-81.

- [8] Valerii Vasil'ev & Linn Viola. Kolektyvizatsiia i selians'kyi opir na Ukraini (lystopad 1929-berezen' 1930). Vinnytsia, 1997. P. 91.
- [9] Nicolas Werth, *La terreur et le désarroi: Staline et son système*. Paris, Perrin, 2007. P. 118.
- [10] Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini: ochyma istorykiv, movoiu dokumentiv. Kyiv, 1990. P. 148.
- [11] All quotations and references to the two letters are taken from Komandyry velykoho holodu. Pp.206-215.
- [12] One pood = 16.36 kg; 1 ton - 61.36 poods.
- [13] *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence 1931-1936*. New Haven& London, 2003. P. 136.
- [14] For the allocation of the food aid, see Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini. Kyiv, 1990. P. 183, 187-188.
- [15] *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 138 (Underlined by Stalin).
- [16] *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 138-139..
- [17] Holod. 1990. P. 183 (doc. 63), P. 190 (doc. 68).
- [18] The original plan of 410 million poods (6.7 m.t.) was lowered twice to 356 and 274.8 million poods (5.8 m.t.; 4.5 m.t.) but 16 November was raised to 5.8 m.t. Rozsekrechena pam'iat'. p. 84.
- [19] For a detailed account of the deliberations see Komandyry velykoho holodu. Pp. 152-164
- [20] See part of the resolution in Holod1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini. Kyiv, 1990. P. 194-198
- [21] A secret OGPU report from around 20 July 1932 stated that "as for anti-Soviet manifestations, Ukraine occupies first place". "From 1 January to 1 July 1932, 118 counterrevolutionary kulak organizations were discovered, counting 2.479 members. In addition, along the lines of national counterrevolution we have unmasked 35 groups with 562 members." Tragedia, p. 421. Another secret OGPU report, dated 5 August, contains a section "National counterrevolution (U[krainian]SSR)" which relates the liquidation of 8 nationalist groups, two of which consisted of former members of the outlawed UKP (Ukrainian Communist Party). These people are said to have a leftist program and conduct systematic activity among members of the KP(b)U, arguing that the Soviet authorities are suppressing the Ukrainian culture. In their platform, claims the report, they declare war on the Soviet regime and Polish fascism, while in fact keeping links abroad and carrying out directives of the Second Department of of the Polish General Staff in Ukraine. Ibid. p. 443.
- [22] *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 164-165.
- [23] S. Kulchytsky, Tsina "Velykoho perelomu". Kyiv, 1990. P. 296. On 23 July Stalin sent a telegram to Kaganovich demanding the restoration and enforcement of last year's ban on transporting private bread supplies by rail or water. Tragedia, p. 428.
- [24] *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 166.
- [25] *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 169.
- [26] Tragedia, p. 453-454.
- [27] Stalin i Kaganovich Perepiska. Pp. 273-275; *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. P. 179-181. A follow-up secret "Instruction on the Application of the TsIK and SNK SSSR of 7 August 1932 About the Safeguarding of State Property", signed by the Chairman and the Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of the USSR and the Vice-Chairman of the OGPU, was sent out on 16 September to all republican and oblast authorities. Tragedia. P. 477-479.
- [28] On 12 August Stalin sends a note to Kaganovich asking him to keep secret for the moment the plan regarding Ukraine sent in the preceding letter. Tragedia. P. 276. To stiffen Kosior's resolve, in January 1933, Stalin sent him the more resolute Postyshev as his second in command; Redens

was replaced Balitsky in February 1933.

[29] Letter of 16 August 1932. Stalin i Kaganovich Perepiska. P. 283-284; Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence. P. 183-184.

[30] Timoty Snyder, Sketches from a Secret War. New Haven, Yale University Press. P. 104.

[31] Kosior spoke of 255 m.p. at the January plenum of the CC KP(b)U. Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini. P. 352. Davies and Wheatcroft give 3,584,000 tons, or 219 million poods, P. 478. Other authors give similar figures.

[32] Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini. P. 253.

[33] Tragedia. P. 559.

[34] Davies & Wheatcroft, The Years of Hunger. P. 178.

[35] Komandyry velykoho holodu. P. 50.

[36] Komandyry velykoho holodu. P. 49; Kulchytsky, Holod 1932-1933 v Ukraini iak henotsyd. Kyiv, 2005. P. 98

[37] Tragedia, Pp. 575-577; also in Holod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini. Pp 291-194.

[38] The Russification of Ukraine attracted the attention of the Italian consulate in Kharkiv. "In government offices the Russian language is once again being used, in correspondence as well as in verbal dealings between employees." See the "Italian Diplomatic and Consular Dispatches", Report to Congress. Commission on the Ukraine Famine. Washington, 1988. P. 446.

[39] G.G. Iagoda report to Stalin, 29 December 1932. Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD. Moskva 2003. P. 386.

[40] Nicolaas Werth, Le pouvoir soviétique et la paysannerie dans les rapports de la police politique (1930-1934). Rapport du 27 février 1933. http://www.ihtp.cnrs.fr/dossier_soviet_paysans/sommaire.html/

[41] Tragedia sovetsoi derevni. P. 634-635. The first English translation of the document appeared in Terry Martin, The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939. Ithaca and London, 2001. P.p. 306-307.

[42] Volodymyr Serhiichuk. Iak nas moryly holodom. Kyiv, 2003. PP 156-158.

[43] Tragedia, p. 636-637. Sheboldaev added more precisions on the filtration points three days later. Ibid. P. 638.

[44] Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD. Moskva 2003. P. 394.

[45] Lubianka. P. 392-393.

[46] N.A. Ivnitskii, Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie (nachala 30-kh godov). Moscow, 1994. P. 204.

[47] Tragedia. P. 657.

[48] "Italian Diplomatic and Consular Dispatches. Op. cit. P. 427.

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