

29. HOLODOMOR WAS NOT ONLY 7 MILLION LIVES BUT ALSO
66 TONS OF GOLD, 1,439 TONS OF SILVER AS WELL AS
DIAMONDS AND ANTIQUITIES

Holodomor was also a large scale and effective pillage of people

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The official events to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor and repressions are over. Viktor Yushchenko should get a lot of credit for his commitment to the truth and determination to make his case in front of those who are not aware of the full measure of the manmade famine in 1932-1933.

Such awareness-raising efforts should have been undertaken earlier and on a larger scale. In my opinion, this year's commemoration was the most convincing, marking a watershed in the realization by Ukrainians of true dimensions, causes and consequences of the Armageddon that struck Ukraine in 1932-1933.

But: No matter what people are talking about, they are talking about money, runs Murphy's Rule 1.

It looks that only the horrors of the Holodomor can contradict this truth. But, in fact, the whole world must be told that the 1932-1933 Holodomor was not only the largest genocide recorded in history but also the most large-scale and effective pillage of people.

It was a kind of gold procurement, a gold rush the Communist style, with the victims taking out their family valuables from hiding places and bringing them to pillagers in the hope of putting off death from starvation or surviving.

We must admit that this idea took some time to dawn on the authors. It came when one of us asked his mother in a telephone conversation about how the family managed to survive the famine.

Their salvation, it turned out, was thanks to 7 massive gold things of rare beauty and purity presented by grandfather, nobleman Kyrychenko and captain of a ship in the Far East.

Having taken this gift of her father (in cash terms, it was a well-sized capital) to a Torgsin store, grandmother saved the family and many residents in her village of Monastyryshche, Ichnya rayon, Chernihiv oblast. The rest of the villagers died.

The big question came up quickly: how much wealth had been pocketed by the Communists in Ukraine? After digging in libraries and pestering several professors, we can point to some facts.

Torgsin stores (an abbreviation of "trade with foreigners") during the Holodomor became the only chain of state-run stores where the populace could buy some food essentials - but only for precious metals or hard currency.

Formally, the all-union chain was set in the summer of 1930 under the foreign trade ministry. In Ukraine, such stores began to operate actively since January of 1932, with starving peasants, not foreigners, as their customers.

The resolution "On creating the all-Ukrainian Torgsin office" was passed by the Ukrainian Economic Council under the government of Ukraine on June 29, 1932.

Government experts said that "the collection of hard currency held by the populace will play a major role", that "the gold kept in households must be collected via a chain of Torgsin stores and used to serve the interests of the proletarian state." Can the dates and directives be viewed as coincidental?

We compared the time and content of various resolutions and documents on setting up the Torgsin chain in Ukraine with Communist party resolutions to launch a genocide by starvation (on [1] raising grain procurement targets, on [2] "the three spikelets law" [law imposing criminal liability for taking even three spikelets from the state farm fields - Trans.], on [3] banning food trade in rural areas, on [4] combating "saboteurs" [peasants whom the authorities accused of sabotage of mandatory grain deliveries - Trans.] and others).

We were horrified by the perfectly synchronized timing of these documents.

The time pattern was as follows:

- 1) the party takes away all grain from peasants;
- 2) Torgsin stores take away all gold and hard currency. Further analysis of how the party and the Torgsin chain worked revealed that
- 3) everything was done to prevent the survival of Ukrainians.

In exchange for their gold and silver jewelry, peasants received coupons which they could later exchange for food. The exchange could take up to two months, and very often bearers of coupons were dead by the time they could get some food. There was a secret instruction to Torgsin salesmen: "do not promise customers a quick exchange."

According to eye-witnesses, many starving people died when standing in kilometer-long lines to Torgsins or immediately after they received food.

Here are some of the eye-witness reports:

NINA PEREPADA:

Every morning a 7-year-old boy Yury Perepada saw the following scene: horse-driven carts used to go along Khreshchatyk [Kyiv's main street - Trans.] One man was in the cart, with two other men escorting it by feet. Their mission was clear the street from corpses or those close to death.

The two lifted the bodies, put them on the cart and covered with matting. Children and adults walked the streets by-passing the dead. The bodies were reportedly taken to the Oktyabrsky hospital, laid up in layers and

from there taken to the Bajkove cemetery to be thrown in ditches and covered up with sodium chlorite.

He remembers that there was a commercial bakery in 6 or 8 Pushkin St. where they sold bread at very high prices. Still, the line of customers stretched farther than Prorizna St. People often died standing in the line." (The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: Evidence of survivors. Ed. By O. Mytsyk. Kyiv Mohyla Academy publishers, 2004 - Vol. 2).

HALYNA NAZARENKO:

"Since late night, we had to line for bread that tasted like sawdust. We stood in line all night, and broke into tens in the morning as they would allow only ten persons into the store.

Mom took her and dad's golden wedding rings to the Torgsin store, receiving several kilos of flour for them. From it, she made halushkas (boiled lumps of pastry)." (The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: Evidence of survivors. Ed. By O. Mytsyk. Kyiv Mohyla Academy publishers, 2004 - Vol. 2).

ANDRIY OPANASENKO:

In Kyiv I saw dying peasants from nearby villages. Those miserable creatures didn't look like humans. They didn't ask for food, they sat or lay, their bodies swollen and big like logs, under the walls of building on Podol's Upper and Lower Banks. The dead were taken to Babyj Yar to be buried. Half dead inhabitants were also taken there to die. (The Vechirny Kyiv, November, 1998).

LIDIYA KUZNETSOVA:

I well remember bread lines. Sometimes, they were several kilometers long. Those who lined for bread at dawn could get their small piece of bread only late at night. Mostly, they were peasants from nearby villages.

I remember how people from villages would get their bread, sit in the corner and die right there on the street. (The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: Evidence of survivors. Ed. By O. Mytsyk. Kyiv Mohyla Academy publishers, 2004 - Vol. 2).

Very often the starving peasants were intercepted by GPU (secret police) officers who arrested the alleged speculators and took away their bread. GPU often scattered peasants or locked them up - to ensure their deaths.

HALYNA AFANASYEVE:

I remember well how in the fall of 1932 Kyiv was full of starving and swollen peasants, trying to exchange their inexpensive possessions for bread or other food. A major inflow of starving peasants took place in the spring of 1933. The capital's squares and streets were full of live skeletons and swollen people.

Their numbers were especially large in the Polol district on the Upper and Lower Bank where there were many wide benches on which hundreds of poor victims crowded. They were sitting, lying and dying.

Every morning carts went around the city streets. Their teams consisted of a

horseman and his assistants who picked up dead bodies. Together with the dead, they also took away still living people. The dead and the half dead were taken to a church on the Horeva St. where they were piled up.

Around the church a deep and wide ditch was dug out in which they put the dead when the church was full of bodies. There was a bakery on the Upper Bank St. which sold bread at commercial prices. One could buy only one kilo of bread.

As the bread was in short supply, people stood in huge lines since late night. Militsiya (police) scattered lines of exhausted people, drove them into the church and locked them up there. They died in the church.

My mother Ulyana Khomenchuk got into one of such police raids and was locked up in the church. After 2 days they opened the church to get rid of the bodies and put new victims into it. But my mother was alive and was spared this satanic conveyor of death.

No one was swollen from starvation in our family, because we lived on the Trukhaniv island and gathered deadwood which we floated across the Dnieper and sold on the market. Besides, we had some valuables inherited by my mother. Traders willingly accepted the valuables in exchange for food.

In Torgsin stores, supplies of flour, lard, sausage, tinned food were abundant. In exchange for golden decorations we bought the cheapest brand of maize flour from which my mother baked pies and sold them on the market to feed her family. All Kyiv residents were involved in such business not to die from the famine. (The Samostijna Ukrayina, October, 1999).

The major cause of deaths of peasants, even of those who got food from Torgsin stores, was the mark-up, an officially allowed profit of a Torgsin salesperson which was the difference between the amount of gold accepted from the populace and the amount handed over to the bank. Very often, salesmen understated in their receipts the weight and quality of gold they took from starving people.

The mark-up could reach several kilos, with every gram of gold stolen from peasants paid for by their lives. There were other kinds of fraud in which Torgsin salesmen were involved, despite their high salaries and additional food rations. Torgsin stores bought gold from Ukrainians at much lower prices than those on the international market.

We cannot but agree with V. Marochko, Doctor of History, about another dimension of this criminal robbery: the gold, titled by the authorities as scrap gold, was a dangerous asset because it was part of sacred spiritual traditions.

Family valuables, crosses, wedding rings, baptizing crosses were kept in the families and handed over by one generation to another, adding to the national spirit.

October 1933, a chain of 263 Torgsin stores operated in Ukraine. Each store had its own network of smaller outlets. The largest number of Torgsins was in the Kyiv oblast (58), the smallest number in the Donetsk oblast (11) and the Moldavian autonomous Soviet republic (5). The chain had its specific targets for the purchase of gold and hard currency which, because they were

excessive, were never met.

The scale of the Communist-engineered gold rush matched the time frame set for the genocide: with 6 mn hard currency karbovanets earned by Torgsins in 1931, the figure ballooned to 50 mn in 1932 and to 107 mn in 1933.

Of the total amount of valuables sold by starving Ukrainians, 75.2% was precious metals, gold, silver, and platinum. Of the total amount of gold, 38% was in tsarist coins, or 18% of the total revenue received.

While in 1932 Torgsins "procured" 21 tons of gold (worth 26.8 mn karbovanets) and 18.5 tons of silver (worth 0.3 mn), the figures for 1933 were respectively 44.9 tons of gold (worth 58 mn karbovanets) and 1420.5 tons of silver (worth 22.9 mn).

It was extremely unprofitable for Ukrainian to sell silver as the price of it dropped threefold since 1917. Peasants were paid 1.25 karbovanets for 1 g of silver, with the price on the New York stock exchange at 1.8 karbovanets. Communist party revenues from such transactions were colossal.

The government allowed Torgsins to purchase diamonds in the fall of 1933 when gold and silver buying fell significantly as the populace had sold what they had and the number of Ukrainians dropped sharply. There was only one Torgsin store buying diamonds, in Kharkiv.

Ukrainians got 12 karbovanets for one carat of defective diamonds and 260 karbovanets for pure diamonds. Any guesses why such a huge disparity in pricing?

In four months alone, Torgsins bought 600,000 karbovanets worth of diamonds. In 1932-1933, the Soviet Union sold abroad antiquities, pictures and ancient jewelry worth 5.8 mn golden karbovanets.

Torgsins were not the only tools to rob starving Ukrainians. Who can count the money Ukrainians had to pay for food on the black market where the prices for bread were tens of times higher than even in the Torgsins?

Or the amount of gold pillaged by the authorities from individual farmers? A recount of such incident was given by war veteran Oleksij Riznyk in his article "Gold for the dictatorship of the proletariat" (The Ukrayina moloda, 23.11.2006, p. 11):

"In 1931-1932, the authorities launched a large-scale operation against individual farmers. Militsiya took groups of them to a prison in Vinnytsia. My father was one of them.

On arriving in prison, every farmer was told the amount of ransom in golden rubles he had to pay for his freedom. Militsiya officers rushed into the cell, took inmates by the hair and hitting their heads against the heads of others said, 'Oh, hear how the gold chimes.'

Some were taken to torture cells where they were beaten up, had their fingers broken by doors - until the victim agreed to name the sum of ransom sufficient for butchers. My father told them he had only 35 golden rubles

left. The militsiya officers happily took the money and let him go."

In conclusion, let us hear another eye-witness report: MYKAL from the village of Pukhivka, Brovary rayon:

It was in the spring of 1933. I was eighteen and was a student at Kyiv's college of teachers. The enrollment was 99 persons, while only 33 graduated from the college. Where are the rest 66 students? Some of them died and some of them left for good. Sahno Volodya died at the math lesson after working a night shift at the Ukrkabel plant. We carried him out and buried at the Lukyanivsky cemetery.

We ate at a students' canteen on Dyka street. They would give us a plateful of water with one pea, calling it soup. We got 150 g of bread a day. I prayed that nobody stole my bread coupons. The bread ration was so meager you didn't feel you ate anything.

One episode has remained engraved in y memory. We had a lesson in military training outside Kyiv near the Lukyanivsky cemetery. We were dog-tired but our instructor ordered us to run. Three of us didn't run, we sneaked away. There was a boy who had lived in an orphanage, Kostya. It was time to return, but he was sitting at a distance and didn't move.

When we came up to him we were scared stiff - he was sitting near a ditch full of children's corpses. They all lay in a mess: positions of legs, arms and bodies showed that they had been dumped in the ditch from a cart.

There were seven such graves there. They did it at night, bringing the bodies, dumping them and going away for more corpses.

Our instructor called us, but we were shaking and crying, especially the boy from the orphanage. He said: "This is going to happen to me, too."(1933: Famine; People's Book. - Memorial. /Compiled by L. Kovalenko and V. Manyak. Kyiv, 1991.)

If you divide the amount of gold and silver pumped out from Ukrainians by the Communist regime, you'll get 5 convertible karbovanets. Or 12 kilos of flour. That was the price of life, to be exact, the price of a horrible death of one Ukrainian.

Is there any place for graves on the cemetery of destroyed illusions?

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