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**'Remember the peasantry': A study of genocide, famine, and the Stalinist Holodomor in Soviet Ukraine, 1932-33, as it was remembered by post-war immigrants in Western Australia who experienced it**

Lesya Melnychuk Morgan  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**NOTRE DAME**  
A U S T R A L I A

## **‘Remember the peasantry’**

A study of genocide, famine, and the Stalinist Holodomor  
in Soviet Ukraine, 1932-33, as it was remembered by post-war  
immigrants in Western Australia who experienced it.

by  
Lesa Morgan

A thesis presented to the University of Notre Dame Australia in  
fulfilment of the thesis requirement for the degree of Doctor of Arts in  
the School of Arts and Sciences.

Fremantle, Western Australia  
© Lesa Melnychuk Morgan 2010



*This thesis is dedicated to the children  
who did not survive the Holodomor.*

*A generation lost.  
Their suffering not forgotten.*

*Ukraine Remembers – the World Acknowledges.*  
(The global motto for the recognition of the Holodomor)



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## Abstract

In 1936 Joseph Stalin offered what he called 'friendly advice' to his Communist allies in war-torn Spain: 'One should pay attention to the peasantry, which...is of great importance.'<sup>1</sup> So important, indeed, was the peasantry to the security of the Communist state that Stalin had adopted ruthless, widespread policies in the Soviet Union to ensure their compliance with the centralised regime in Moscow.

The devastating famine experienced in Soviet Ukraine from 1932 to 1933 was an example of such ruthless policies of Stalin's government. Some scholars argue that in the space of a year up to ten million people died in the famine now known as the Holodomor.

This is a research project exploring the history of Ukraine's Holodomor, exploring popular debate, scholarly research and survivors' memories. A small émigré community of Ukrainians settled in Western Australia in the post-war years, many of whom either experienced or witnessed the famine and now have harrowing stories to share. This research sought to further explore this relatively unknown famine through examining scholarly debate and primary source evidence, and by conducting interviews with more than forty survivors now living in Perth.

The material collated in the interviews contributes significantly to the scholarly and popular comprehension of the Holodomor. When compared to internationally accepted interpretations of the term, and compared to similar studies abroad, it is clear that the events of 1932-1933 were an act of genocide committed against the Ukrainian people.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Stalin to Largo Caballero, 21 December 1936, quoted by Nigel Townson, "The Spanish Civil War", University of Notre Dame Australia, 2009, p.233.





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Sasha must be acknowledged for his role in keeping me company and forcing me to take the necessary breaks to exercise. A patient, constant and, loyal companion.

More importantly I acknowledge the Ukrainian survivors who were willing to share their tragic stories and allow me to learn about their lives during the Holodomor and up to the present day. They finally broke their silence and in doing so broke Stalin's control over their lives. These people had incredible stories and incredible strength to live through the events that they were forced to endure. They are truly unsung heroes



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## Introduction

2008 marked the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of the world's most forgotten crimes. Soviet Ukraine's famine of 1932-1933 saw up to 10 million people perish as a result of mass starvation that was a direct outcome of the deliberate policies of the then Stalinist regime. Though ignored by the world then, and still largely forgotten, the event which has become known as the 'Holodomor' has slowly attracted attention and condemnation. A Canadian historian of Soviet Ukraine, Emeritus Professor Roman Serbyn, now argues that Stalin and his Bolshevik henchmen were ruthless and unafraid to kill Ukrainian people by the million.<sup>1</sup> Yevhen Sverstiuk, Ukrainian literary and social critic, publicist, and political prisoner under the Soviet regime, has called Ukraine's famine, one of the twentieth century's greatest tragedies while Federigo Argentieri has condemned it as 'the only famine to occur in times of international peace'.<sup>2</sup>

Ukraine has been known in history as the 'bread basket of Europe', renowned for its black earth belt and mild continental climate for agriculture. The country was subjected to what Oleskiw classified as 'Russia's ultimate economic weapon of mass destruction to subdue the people of Ukraine'.<sup>3</sup> Soviet Ukraine's famine of 1932-1933 (hitherto will be referred to as Ukraine's famine of 1932-1933, or the Holodomor) occurred less as a result of natural causes than as a result of repressive political measures. The famine was retaliation by the Soviet Government in response to the resistance of peasants to the policy of collectivization and Russian rule. Experiences of terror, mass executions, deportations and forced collectivization preceded the famine. Mass starvation was then provoked by severe grain requisition policies that were used to subjugate the Ukrainian peasants and subdue the growth of nationalist resistance. Faced with Ukrainian resistance to Russian rule, Stalin maintained a brutal control over the country considering its resources as 'vital to the existence and further expansion of Soviet Russia'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Roman Serbyn, "Roman Serbyn: Montefiore and My Comment," Williams, E. M., [www.SigmaBleyzer.com](http://www.SigmaBleyzer.com).

<sup>2</sup> Yevhen Sverstiuk, "Prayer and Memory...The Church and Denying the Famine. A Fact Hard to Grasp: The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) Is Still in the Thrall of Stalin's Policy of Silence.," ArtUkraine, <http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/praymem.htm>. Federigo Argentieri, "Holodomor, 75 Years On," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p.107.

<sup>3</sup> S. Oleskiw, *The Agony of a Nation. The Great Man-Made Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933. Forward by Malcolm Muggeridge* (London: The National Committee to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Artificial Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933, 1983), pp.9-11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.



The economic strength of Russia in the early twentieth century was based predominantly on agriculture. During the 1917 Revolution, the peasants distributed large estates amongst themselves, leaving the Soviet Government with less control over agriculture and its main saleable commodity, grain. To regain control of agriculture Stalin forcibly collectivized farms across the Soviet Union. By enforcing severe grain requisitions, the export of which financed large industrial development, Stalin knew that it would cause an ‘artificial’ famine. Andrea Graziosi, a historian of the Soviet era, has since noted that Stalin had admitted the likelihood of such a famine as early as at the Communist Party Congress in 1925.<sup>5</sup>

The Holodomor affected such Soviet regions as the Kuban, the Don and the Volga, which were largely populated by Ukrainians, and all parts of Ukrainian SSR (hitherto referred to as Ukraine), especially the southern and eastern oblasts (provinces).<sup>6</sup> According to Makuch and Markus ‘only an insignificant part of the population – the privileged rural communists and officials who were served by a special distribution system – did not experience hunger’.<sup>7</sup> A rationing system also sustained those in towns and industrial regions.

It was predominantly the peasants who faced the worst of the starvation.<sup>8</sup> Peasants of Ukraine are defined by Andrii Makuch and Vasyl Markus in the *Online Encyclopedia of Ukraine*, as being a social class who were largely engaged in subsistence agriculture. Until the 1930s they made up the ‘overwhelming majority of the Ukrainian population’. They were the people who were to contribute most in preserving and developing Ukrainian culture. Alexander Babyonyshev and Jean-Paul Himka stated that ‘the peculiarity of the peasants as a social stratum is the ability of their way of life and a conservative attitude towards traditions, language, and faith – in short, their fostering of national and ethnic characteristics’ despite having faced subjugation by powerful neighbors over many years.<sup>9</sup> In this style they resisted even the subjugation of Stalin’s Soviet empire.

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<sup>5</sup> Andrea Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War. Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 65.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.4.

<sup>7</sup> Andrii Makuch and Vasyl Markus, "Famine," University of Alberta, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/pages/F/A/Famine.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Alexander Babyonyshev and John-Paul Himka, "Peasants," Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/>.

Although it came to be what Leshuk designated as ‘one of the major European wars of the twentieth century’, Ukraine’s story of famine was lost to history for many years.<sup>10</sup> Yet Graziosi wrote that ‘the scale and the concentration of hunger-related deaths in Ukraine, and the policies then adopted by the regime, make the 1932-1933 famine a phenomenon which, at least in Europe, can be compared only to later Nazi crimes’.<sup>11</sup> Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, however, new histories have emerged which challenge those of the Soviet Communist era.<sup>12</sup>

Details about Ukraine’s tragedy were not commonly known in the west until the publication of Robert Conquest’s *Harvest of Sorrow* in 1986. With the assistance of James Mace, Conquest collected testimonies and archival material that documented the history of Ukraine’s terrible famine. Conquest remains the Senior Research Fellow and Scholar-Curator of the East European Collection at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University. His publication brought this hitherto unknown and unspoken event in the history of the Soviet Union to the attention of a wide Western academic and popular audience for the first time.<sup>13</sup> His work remains the most convincing, according to Hamalian, whose recent thesis was submitted to the history faculty of Ursinus College in Philadelphia. Hamalian’s thesis analyzes the works of some Holodomor historians. Despite the fact that some of the most recent data was not available to Conquest at the time of publication, the material uncovered by him and Mace his researcher, produced what is considered to be a thorough account of events surrounding the Holodomor.<sup>14</sup>

Conquest called the Holodomor a ‘terror-famine’ and outlined the context of forced collectivization alongside Stalin’s continued assault on Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>15</sup> Conquest’s work was based on the testimonies of survivors recorded in exile during the early 1950s. It was also one of the first attempts to quantify the millions that starved to death as a result of Stalin’s directives.<sup>16</sup> Following the release of Conquest’s *Harvest of Sorrow*, the US Congress

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<sup>10</sup> L. Leshuk, *U.S. Intelligence Perceptions of Soviet Power 1921-1946* (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003), p.57.

<sup>11</sup> Stephen G Wheatcroft, "The Scale and Nature of German and Soviet Repression and Mass Killings, 1930-45," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 8 (1996): p. 65; Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War. Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917-1933*.

<sup>12</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk assisted by Lisa Grekul, eds., *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine* (Kingston, Canada: Kashtan Press, 2008); Lubomyr Luciuk and Vasyl Humeniuk, *Their Just War: Images of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army* (Kingston, Canada: The Kashtan Press, 2007).

<sup>13</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*.

<sup>14</sup> David Hamalian, "The Soviet Famine of 1933: Unresolved Historiography" (Honors, Ursinus College, 2008).

<sup>15</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, p.4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p.299.

launched the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine to further collect the testimonies of its survivors and to study its history.<sup>17</sup>

The Commission on the Ukraine Famine convened six public hearings and heard hundreds of terrifying oral testimonies. They reached the conclusion in 1986 that the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933 was an act of genocide perpetrated by Moscow and aimed at destroying the Ukrainian people. The Commission stated that although 'millions of lives were irretrievably squandered over half a century ago' and could not be restored, they believed that a 'small measure of justice' could be ensured by 'setting the record straight and seeing to it that this story becomes part of the consciousness of future generations'.<sup>18</sup> That the Holodomor was an experience of genocide has since been a major focus of Ukraine and its current President, and will be further assessed in this thesis.

Following this political breakthrough by Ukraine's recognition of the Holodomor, further scholarly investigation of the event has been provoked by the creation of such research centres as HURI (Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute) and CIUS (the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies).<sup>19</sup> They have been responsible for many publications and projects uncovering the history of the Holodomor. The scholarship is further enhanced by the eventual release in 2006, by SBU (Ukraine's national intelligence agency), of archival material from the former Soviet Archives.<sup>20</sup>

The details and memories of the famine are now commonly referred to as Ukraine's Holodomor (death by starvation). This term is one used by Ukraine and Ukrainians in the Diaspora. The term is still being debated by some who do not recognize this event as having been deliberately orchestrated. Further discussion outlining the debate will be included elsewhere in this thesis.

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<sup>17</sup> *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine. Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine*, ed. J. E. Mace and L. Heretz, 3 vols. (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1990).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1732-33.

<sup>19</sup> Bohdan Klid, "CIUS and the 70th Anniversary of the 1932-1933 Famine: Making Known New Findings from Ukraine," Williams, E.M.

<sup>20</sup> Deutsche Press Agency DPA, "Ukraine Spy Agency Secret Archives on Soviet-Era Famines Opened up SBU Announces in Kyiv," Williams, E. M., [http://news.monstersandcritics.com/europe/article\\_1191722.php/ukraine\\_spy\\_agency\\_opens\\_secret\\_archives\\_on\\_soviet-era\\_famines](http://news.monstersandcritics.com/europe/article_1191722.php/ukraine_spy_agency_opens_secret_archives_on_soviet-era_famines); [www.ssu.gov.ua](http://www.ssu.gov.ua)

## The Ukrainian Diaspora in Australia

Experiencing waves of trauma, many of those who lived through the Holodomor in Ukraine then also encountered such catastrophes as Stalin's Great terror, German occupation in World War Two, invasion, and, in some cases, forced transportation to Germany as labourers. A

Province	Participants formerly of this province
Cherkasy	5
Chernihiv	1
Donetsk	2
Dnipropetrovs'k	2
Ivano-Frankivsk	2
Kharkiv	9
Khmelnysky	2
Kirovohrad	1
Kyiv	2
Mykolayiv	2
Odessa	1
Poltava	5
Rostov	1
Sumy	3
Volyn (now Zarudci)	1
Zhytomyr	2

Table 1: *Ukrainian provinces in which the Western Australian participants lived, 1932-1933*

is still a small community of approximately 100 people, some of whom experienced or remembered the famine in Soviet Ukraine. A few arrived in Western Australia after first migrating as refugees from other countries such as England. Their arrival was later in the 1960s.

This is a study of those Ukrainians who migrated to Western Australia from post-war Europe and who experienced or observed the Holodomor. The Holodomor has left these Ukrainian

common World War Two experience in Eastern Europe saw one child from each family forcibly transported to Germany to work for the Third Reich.<sup>21</sup>

At the end of the war, these Ukrainians found themselves in the Displaced Persons camps of Europe where they awaited migration to other countries, often outside Europe. Thus a Diaspora of Holodomor survivor commenced. These people migrated to countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and elsewhere. This study picks up the stories of those who migrated to Australia and, in particular, those who were accepted for migration to Western Australia.

164,100 Ukrainians were transported to Australia from the DP camps of Europe between 1947-1951. According to documentation collated by Nonja Peters, 1,254 Ukrainians were taken to Western Australia between 1948-1950.<sup>22</sup> Of that number there

<sup>21</sup> Ulrich Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers. Enforced Foreign Labour in Germany under the Third Reich*, trans. William Templer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.163-90.

<sup>22</sup> Nonja Peters, *Milk and Honey but no Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2001), p.292.



migrants with heartbreaking memories that have lived deep within their souls. Many claimed in their interview that distancing themselves from war-torn Europe was a prime factor in their choice to migrate to Australia. Yet, on arrival, they found that distance did little to erase the memories of their trauma. Those who remembered the events clearly proved to be an invaluable witness to one of history's largely untold stories.

Map 1: Oblasts/provinces in which Western Australian participants lived, 1932-1933.



Map 1: Rate of population decline in Ukrainian provinces, 1932-1933.

Map taken from M. Carynnyk, L. Y. Luciuk, and B. S. Kordan, eds. *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*. Edited by Richard Pierce, *Studies in East European Nationalisms*, No. 2. (Kingston, Ontario: Limestone Press, 1988), p. 1xiv.

The material generated in the interviews was startlingly similar to that collected by other scholars from Ukrainian communities in other parts of the world. Similar themes can be traced in the stories of those Western Australian survivors interviewed compared to those of other nations.<sup>23</sup> Many Ukrainians in Western Australia remained uncomfortable in speaking

<sup>23</sup> S. O. Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*, 2 vols. (Toronto, Canada: The Basilden Press, 1953); V. Maniak, *Testimonies from Kyiv. To Return to People Their History, and to History - the Truth.*, ed. W. W. Isajiw, trans. Nadia Nowytski, *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*. (Toronto, Canada: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003); W.W. Isajiw, ed. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research* (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003); Volodymyr. Maniak and Lidiya Kovalenko, eds., *Famine 33: People's Memorial Book* (Kyiv: Radyansky Pysmennyk Publishing House, 1991); Yury Mytsyk, ed. *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: The Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived. Part Two* (Kyiv: Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Publishing House, 2004); Iroida Wynnycky and Wsevolod W. Isajiw, "The Famine Witnesses: Oral Histories in North America," in *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine 1932-1933: Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*, ed. Wsevolod W. Isajiw (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003); Pavlo Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine," Ivan Dubylko, <http://mukr.problem.org/witness.htm>; Yuri Mytsyk, *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived: Part One* (Kyiv: Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Publishing House, 2003); Peter Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*, trans. Daria Myrna (Melbourne, Kyiv: Fortuna Publishing, 2007).

openly about their memories of the Holodomor. Silence and a persistent fear of speaking against the former Soviet regime had prevail for many years.

The people who participated in this study all lived in Western Australia at the time the research was conducted (2004-5). During the Holodomor they had been resident in one of sixteen oblasts within Soviet Ukraine, or of neighbouring Russian regions heavily populated with Ukrainians. Table 1 and Map 1 indicate the oblasts where the interviewees were resident during the Holodomor years. The greatest numbers came from Kharkiv, Poltava and Cherkasy oblasts which, as Map 2 suggests, experienced severe population losses in the years of the famine, the Holodomor.<sup>24</sup>

### **Research Aims and Questions**

There is much debate about the Holodomor within Ukraine and the Diaspora outside of Australia. The debate is centered on the cause of this particular famine, the number of people who died and why and what are the memories about the Holodomor. Apart from collecting as many testimonies from survivors and those remembering the Holodomor, the question of whether this constitutes genocide against the Ukrainian people (as a result of the considered unnatural causes of the 1932-1933 famine) has become part of international debate. The international dialogue now emanates as much from the governments of countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia as it does from survivors themselves. Canada has gone so far as to adopt a law on establishing a Day of Memory of the Holodomor Victims in Ukraine.<sup>25</sup> As of November 2008, thirteen countries had recognized the Holodomor in Ukraine as an act of genocide, as did Pope John Paul II in his address to Ukrainians on 23 November 2003.<sup>26</sup> The United Nations, however, has been unable to declare the event to have been one of genocide, faced with persistent pressure from Russia and its allies to do otherwise.

Part of the history of the Holodomor now rests within Western Australia. The people, now resident in this state who remember the Holodomor, have their own story to tell. Their stories will contribute to scholarly and popular knowledge of the event, and may help the

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<sup>24</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, pp.249-50.

<sup>25</sup> Deputy Foreign Minister Y. Kostenko, "Ukraine: Fourteen Foreign Parliaments Recognized Holodomor as Genocide," UkrInform - Ukraine News.

<sup>26</sup> Olena Honcharenko, *Ukrainian President Yushchenko Thanks Countries and International Organizations: For Recognizing Holodomor of 1932-1933 as Crime Against Humanity: [email] (Ukrainian News Agency, Kyiv, Ukraine, 2008 [cited 30<sup>th</sup> December];* Alekseyenko, Anna, Taras Byk, Markiy Datsyshyn, Volodymyr Hrytsutenko, Lubomyr Mysiv, and Oleksandr Voroshylo (2007) *Holodomor: Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930s* (The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory), p.20.

international community determine once and for all whether the Holodomor was an act of genocide. With this in mind, this thesis aims to achieve the following:

- Discover and understand what happened in Ukraine during the famine of 1932-1933;
- Record, thus recover, the memories of the migrants from Ukraine who came to Western Australia and who have either experienced or observed the Holodomor;
- Understand the immediate and long term impact of the Holodomor on the lives of the Western Australian migrants who were interviewed;
- Compare the findings of this Western Australian study to international ones, and in so doing, determine to what degree the Western Australian stories either complement or add to our understanding of the Ukrainian Holodomor; and finally to
- Assess whether this was an experience of genocide, based on the findings of this research as well as that of existing literature.

In order to achieve these aims it is necessary to examine the following issues:

- The events, experiences and nature of the Holodomor in Ukraine;
- Existing literature in the English language about the Holodomor, scholarly or otherwise, and the available primary source evidence;
- The central themes which have emerged from Holodomor literature in the past two decades;
- Current scholarly and popular debate regarding the Holodomor;
- Current comprehension regarding people who have faced traumatic events in their lives and who have since migrated to Australia;
- Whether there are survivors or others from Ukraine who remember the Holodomor now living in Western Australia;
- The extent and nature of the memories of those Western Australian Ukrainians who experienced or observed the Holodomor including their understanding of the Soviet repression, dekurkulization and collectivization policies; the means by which they survived the Holodomor; the experiences in Ukraine and eastern Europe in the wake of the Holodomor (including events provoked by World War Two); and, further, the long-term impact sustained as a result;
- The decision taken to leave Europe in the wake of war; the causes by which these migrants arrived in Western Australia; and the nature of their early life on arrival;
- The silence sustained by many of the Ukrainian migrants (here and abroad) regarding their experiences of trauma in the Holodomor;



- Whether the Holodomor experience, as recalled by the participants and debated by scholars, was one of genocide.

In considering these issues it will be argued that the memories of the Western Australian migrants are in many ways comparable and support the body of evidence which exists around the world. More importantly the experiences of these Ukrainian migrant refugees will add to existing literature regarding migrant trauma, add to and provide evidence to give credence to the scholarship that exists about the Holodomor and the debate about genocide.

In considering the aims of the research and developing answers to the research questions it is going to be argued that this study, with the memories of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 as told by the Ukrainian migrant refugees, will provide new material to add to that already existing about this period of Ukraine's history. The thesis will also argue that after reviewing and understanding the current literature surrounding the Holodomor and the memories of these Western Australian participants together with other testimonies, the experience of the Holodomor was clearly an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people by Stalin's Soviet regime.

The Holodomor will be remembered for the severe repressions and trauma that occurred as a result of the policies of dekulakization, collectivization, exile, religious persecution and mass terror. It will also be remembered for the unattainable grain requisitioning policies, the activists' brigades, the unbelievable starvation, the border closures prohibiting the search for food, as well as cannibalism. This period also witnessed Torgsin stores stripping Ukrainians of everything they possessed for bread. The memories of those who bore witness and the facts from the archives will paint a picture of a Soviet regime that sought to destroy the Ukrainian people in the cruelest way with policies that can only be classified as crimes against humanity.

### **Participants of this study**

The interviews for this research began on 14 September 2004 and concluded on 20 January 2005. In all there were forty-one interviews with Ukrainian Holodomor survivors living in Western Australia. It took considerable time to gain the trust of people. All were volunteers, some being encouraged to contribute by other participants or interested parties.

Of twenty-nine female and twelve male survivors interviewed for this study the ages as at 2004 ranged from seventy-eight to ninety-five years of age. The youngest was six years old

and the oldest was twenty-three years of age in 1932. An outline of those who participated in this project, including an indication of the regions from which they came, whether they were transported to Germany in World War Two as forced labourers, and the date of their arrival in Australia, is provided in Table 2.

The survivors interviewed had left Ukraine between the years 1940 – 1995. They left for various reasons. Danylo and Mykola who were in their teens during the Holodomor in Ukraine, had been conscripted into the army as young men.<sup>27</sup> Larissa left Ukraine to avoid deportation to Siberian gulags. Evhan's family were determined to escape Stalin's rule and escaped to Bessarabia. Through the good graces of some Germans the family managed to get on a train to Germany.<sup>28</sup> It can be surmised that they knew that the events in Ukraine were going to be hard on the family and their survival was dependent upon getting out of Ukraine.

Two survivors were not part of the post war migration. They left Ukraine in 1995 following their only daughter who had migrated ten years previously.<sup>29</sup> These last two survivors were the only interviewees who had left Ukraine rather than the DP camps of Europe. Gaining entry into Australia was not simple as they were already of a mature age and required the financial support of their daughter.

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<sup>27</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004); Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>29</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #13 "Fedor"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004); Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<b>Participant #</b>	<b>Year of birth</b>	<b>Oblast/Province during famine as stated by survivor</b>	<b>Forced labour Germany?</b>	<b>Arrival in Western Australia</b>	<b>Sex M/F</b>
1. Hanka	1926	Cherkasy	Yes	1949	F
2. Ivan	1923	Ivano-Frankivsk	Yes	1950	M
3. Josep	1925	Zhytomyr	Yes	1949	M
4. Olena	1923	Kyiv	Yes	1950	F
5. Evhan	1926	Kharkiv		1949	M
6. Theodora	1909	Dnipropetrovsk	Yes	1950	F
7. Halina	1923	Cherkasy	Yes	1950	F
8. Orysia	1923	Sumy	Yes	1949	F
9. Janina	1917	Kharkiv	Yes	1949	F
10. Bohdan	1914	Sumy	Yes	1949	M
11. Julia	1925	Chernihiv		1949	F
12. Nina	1922	Kharkiv	Yes	1950	F
13. Fedor	1923	Chernihiv		1995	M
14. Luba	1935	Odessa		1995	F
15. Darka	1922	Poltava	Yes	1949	F
16. Tonia	1927	Rostov-on-Don	Yes	1950	F
17. Volodya	1918	Kharkiv	Yes	1950?	M
18. Stefka	1923	Donetsk	Yes	1962	F
19. Fania	1924	Cherkasy	Yes	1950	F
20. Lesia	1925	Kharkiv	Yes	1949	F
21. Marko	1917	Dnipropetrovsk	Yes	1950	M
22. Larissa	1920	Ivano-Frankivsk		1989	F
23. Djenia	1924	Dnipropetrovsk	Yes	1950	F
24. Irka	1925	Kharkiv	Yes	1950	F
25. Halena	1926	Cherkasy	Yes	1948?	F
26. Valya	1920	Poltava	Yes	1949	F
27. Marika	1926	Khmelnysky	Yes	1949	F
28. Ella	1925	Zhytomyr		1950	F
29. Yurko	1910	Kyiv	Yes	1949	M
30. Katerina	1926	Sumy	Yes	1949	F
31. Danylo	1923	Poltava		1950	M
32. Suzanna	1924	Kirovohrad	Yes	1964	F
33. Petro	1923	Mykolayivka	Yes	1964	M
34. Zoya	1924	Kharkiv	Yes	1950	F
35. Mykola	1921	Mykolayivka		1949	M
36. Yulia	1918	Kyiv	Yes	1950	F
37. Sofi	1923	Volyn	Yes	1950	F
38. Maria	1924	Poltava	Yes	1948	F
39. Taras	1924	Mykolayivka	Yes	1950	F
40. Zirka	1923	Kharkiv	Yes	1950	M
41. Mila	1923	Poltava	Yes	1950	F

*Table 2: Western Australian Holodomor interviewee profile.*

The other thirty-five survivors of the Holodomor were taken forcibly out of Ukraine between 1942 and 1944 through Hitler's programme of importing young Ukrainian (non-Jewish) workers to labour in the factories and in agriculture to support their father land whilst Germany was at war. German forced labour was another major theme that emerged from this study.

Thirty-four survivors arrived in Australia as assisted post-war migrants between 1949 and

1950. Others arrived in 1962, 1964, 1989 and 1995. As already noted these were migrants who had initially migrated to the UK, for example, and decided to leave yet again for Australia.

Participants in the study were unsure of their status during the Holodomor, having been so young at the time. Some deduced that as their parents owned land, were dekurkulized or had substantial positions then they must have belonged to a particular class. It was only the older survivors who truly understood where their parents stood in the Soviet scheme of class.

It was valuable to discover what level of education was common for the survivors. Despite little formal education, many had conquered many seriously difficult events in their lives. They had raised and educated their children and provided so well for families here in Western Australia as well as in Ukraine over the years after migration. Suzanna had spent the least amount of time at school of all participants - two months. She had been a peasant child and remembers walking some distance to school in snow, though owning no shoes.<sup>30</sup> Poverty was a common story. Others spoke of sharing shoes with brothers, sisters and even a parent. Ten years was the most schooling received by any participant. Two survivors studied medicine at University some years after the famine, with one also retraining as a radiographer in Perth.<sup>31</sup>

Most migrant refugees upon arrival in Western Australia were unskilled and took up employment on the railways, at timber mills, in hospitals and hotels as domestics, waitresses and kitchen hands. Some found work in the Collie coalmines, freezer works, the Albany whaling station, fishing industries and on farms. Of this migrant cohort only the two with higher education were employed in professional positions during their working lifetimes. Most stayed in their place of employment, such as the Western Australian Government Railways for the duration of their working years.<sup>32</sup>

Peters provides a comprehensive overview of the difficulties of employment for DPs and the racial sentiment that impacted on workplace options. She notes anthropologist Caroline Kelly's report to the Commonwealth Migration Committee in 1947, that Australians became annoyed when a European peasant could earn enough money to send a child to university. Kelly claimed that Australians did not like to see the successes of the hard working European refugees. This led to Australians demanding that these migrants only be permitted work in

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<sup>30</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>31</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004); Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>32</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.192.

unskilled positions. Years of tenure and hard work saw some rise to senior positions within their workplace and a few opened their own businesses when an opportunity arose.<sup>33</sup> The migrant refugees worked hard to ensure that their families were adequately fed, clothed and housed.

The amount of education received in Ukraine seems to have made little impact on the diversity of experiences of the Holodomor. All discuss such experiences as separation from family and friends through death or transportation; unusual living, social and economic conditions; and the endurance of hardship and trauma. The interviewees vividly remember the starvation.

Confidentiality in the interview process remained of critical importance for many of the participants, some of whom continue to fear for their security despite having left the Soviet state and the KGB many decades ago. Twenty-nine survivors wished to remain anonymous and to keep their interview material confidential. The fear still abounds in Western Australia and distinguishes this study from others overseas. It must be impressed upon the reader that distrust of Russian authority still permeates the psyche of the Ukrainian migrants in Western Australia. Consider that in 12 May 2009, a copy of an original letter written by a Ukrainian migrant refugee in 1949 and addressed to the Minister for Immigration, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, was handed to the researcher. The letter (translated by an immigration official at the time) was prepared by one of the migrant refugees, on behalf of the Ukrainian national group, traveling on the S.S. *Amarapura*. It referred to their history under ‘the most terrible and criminal regime known in the history of mankind and of the world – Communist Bolshevism’ having faced ‘years of moral, spiritual and physical extermination and destruction of the Ukrainian race’. The letter is three pages expressing thanks for acceptance, to ‘the friendly shores of hospitable, freedom-loving and democratic Australia’.<sup>34</sup> Although the originator of the letter is deceased, the family was not willing to be named for fear of reprisals for the statements. The author will remain anonymous to the reader, as will the people involved in this study. The document will be included with interview documents and placed in a secure holding at the Battye Library Local History Collection, Western Australia.

To ensure their privacy, all participants were provided with a participant number and pseudonym, both of which are used when referencing the interviews in footnotes. Each was

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 186,89,92.

<sup>34</sup> Anonymous, 19th April 1949.

asked to identify which region they came from, and whether they had siblings within their families. Any such information is provided in the discussion when it is of importance.

Testimonies from witnesses of the Holodomor are available in different publications with examples of those from English language texts included throughout the historiography.<sup>35</sup> The information provided by the Western Australian participants is supported with citations to references providing similar accounts rather than repeating the same information. In so doing, we are presented with a richness of data regarding the Holodomor as survivors around the world now remember it. As more of the oral histories are recorded and interpreted, our knowledge of Ukraine's Holodomor is understandably enriched.

### **Children and Memory**

As with all oral histories, the research of this thesis has been complicated by the issue of memory and, in particular, the unique issues faced with the collection of memories gained in childhood. In this case, there were many years which separated the events being recalled and the interviews in which they shared. Memory, despite such complications, remains a critical tool in the telling of history. Elizabeth Loftus writes:

Without memory, life would consist of momentary experiences that have little relation to each other... without memory we would not have the sense of continuity even to know who we are... memory is central to being human.<sup>36</sup>

In order to reconstruct what is often partial truth, researchers in similar studies have turned to memories to capture the 'perceptions, the behaviour, the attitudes, the feelings and judgments of a particular human population at a particular moment of its past and in its particular circumstances'.<sup>37</sup> Memories have become a privileged way to enter the past of social memory. This is not, of course, without complication.

Memory is an historical source for history and yet history may never capture elements of memory. Nonetheless, memory is still widely embraced by oral historians as a unique source of historical record. Elizabeth Loftus, a specialist in eyewitness testimony, defends memory as

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<sup>35</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*; Maniak, *Testimonies from Kyiv. To Return to People Their History, and to History - the Truth*; Isajiw, ed. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*; Maniak and Kovalenko, eds., *Famine 33: People's Memorial Book*; Mytsyk, ed. *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: The Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived. Part Two*; Wynnycky and Isajiw, "The Famine Witnesses: Oral Histories in North America."; Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine."; Mytsyk, *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived: Part One*; Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*.

<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth F. Loftus, "Tricked by Memory," in *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience*, ed. Jaclyn Jeffrey and Glenace Edwall (New York: University of America Press, 1994), p.18.

<sup>37</sup> Donatien Dibwe dia Mwembu, "Politics and the Collection of Memories in Congo," *Journal of the International Oral History Association: Words and Silences* 2, no. 1 (2003): pp.13-15.

a form of knowledge.<sup>38</sup> The reliability of oral history sources can be further strengthened by comparison with other historical records or oral sources related to the same topic, in order to check their validity or authenticity.

The feelings of intense suffering endured by those remembering the events of the Holodomor for example may never be fully captured for us to understand.<sup>39</sup> According to LaCapra, 'witnessing based on memory – has emerged as a privileged mode of access to the past and its traumatic occurrences'.<sup>40</sup> Memory only belongs to an individual. Historical writing, together with memories, are complementary in order for us to understand the values of both positions. Dates, numbers and names are provided by historical research but memories are the irreplaceable experiences of the people involved. Testimonial witnessing such as that of this study usually takes place many years after the event and raises questions of accuracy of memory, especially in the case of young children. There have been studies of children's memories and their subsequent mental traces that shed some light on this issue.

Anne E. Grey at the Auckland University of Technology explores the concept of children's autobiographical memory that is evident from the age of four years and above. She says it is irrelevant to assess whether the memory is true or false but believes the importance lies in the personal meaning the memory provides to the child's life. Grey also notes autobiographical memories are long lasting and are normally generated in a sustained fashion from the ages of three or four. They emerge as a result of the child's cognitive and language development as well as the context and culture in which he or she lives.<sup>41</sup>

There is no question the memories of those Ukrainian children who remember the Holodomor, now living around the world, have been long lasting and sustained for many decades. Ihor Kopotiyenko testified in Ukraine that his Holodomor experience as a six-year-old child made 'an indelible imprint' in his mind. Mykola Hordiyenko speaks of the event 'echoing in their families' for years.<sup>42</sup> Vasyl Nesterenko, who was also a young boy at the time, says he remembers very well his mother killing his dog to feed him during the famine.

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<sup>38</sup> Jaclyn Jeffrey and Glenace Edwall, eds., *Memory and History. Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience* (Lanham: University Press of America. Institute for Oral History, 1994), p.19.

<sup>39</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp.19-20.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.11.

<sup>41</sup> Anne E. Grey, "Children's Earliest Memories: A Narrative Study," Australian Early Childhood Association, Academic OneFile <http://find.galegroup.com/itx/start.do?prodId=AONE>.

<sup>42</sup> Stefan Lemieszewski, "The Day's Readers Remember," *The Day*, <http://www.usenet.com/newsgroups/soc.culture.baltics/msg04620.html>.

He recalls the soup made with his dog leaving a lasting impression. He speaks of still 'choking up at the thought'.<sup>43</sup>

While the aims of this thesis are, principally, to collect those memories of Ukrainians who remember the Holodomor, now in Western Australia, and to examine the long-term impact those memories had on their life, it is also clear that the collection of those memories offers credible witness to an empirical study of the Holodomor. Some factors which might influence our judgement of the credibility of the data include firstly, the memories were gained by children who were not necessarily fully cognizant of all facts in relation to the event as they unfolded; secondly, the difference in time between when the events were remembered and when they were recounted, was more than seventy years, suggesting some memories may now not be as accurate as when events took place; and thirdly, that the participants have remained in a tightly-knit émigré community in Perth, which may give rise to the suggestion that they have exchanged information over time and, thereby developed an altered, shared memory of the event.

A further study with five and six year old children conducted by researchers at Wilfrid Laurier University in Canada and Deakin University in Australia was reported in the July 2007 issue of the *Journal of Child Development*. The results show children's memories of events occurring long ago may be more accurate than those having taken place recently. The lead author of the study, associate professor of psychology Kim P. Roberts, notes memories of events by child witnesses to be credible and should not be automatically dismissed because of the time factor.<sup>44</sup>

From my observation, however, before and during the collection of data, it is clear that the Holodomor has been remembered and little discussed within this community. Rather, as noticed by researchers of the Holodomor in other countries, experiences of the Holodomor have been little discussed, so great is the persistent trauma of individuals surrounding the event. This has, in part, reduced the opportunity for collusion within a community which may

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> K. P. Roberts and M.B. Powell, "Children's Memory of Long-Ago Events May Be More Accurate Than Previously Thought. Summarized from *Child Development*, Vol.78, Issue 4," <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2007/07/070720100026.htm>.



have otherwise led to the creation of a shared memory or myth. The credibility of participants of other similar research has not been questioned.<sup>45</sup>

The psychological and physical impacts of the Holodomor are not yet documented in any known study. Dr. Martin, University of Toronto, suggested during a presentation at 'The Holodomor of 1932-1933: A 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine-Genocide' Conference, November 1, 2007 that it would be useful and fascinating to study the psychological effects of the Famine.<sup>46</sup> It would appear that historians have focused upon documenting testimonies and the historiography first and foremost whilst survivors are alive before delving into other related issues. The testimonies of this study provide us with some understanding of the effects of this event and they will be raised in Chapter 7 of the thesis.

### **Research Method, Sources and Collection of Data**

The data collection in two parts was, first a documentary analysis of literature available on the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933, and, secondly, the major collection of interviews. The most up-to-date material was sourced from scholars whose research had been published in English and would be understood more readily by the researcher as well as scholars in Australia.

The research for the first part was sourced from those already published documents, articles, books and testimonies that have been published about the Holodomor of 1932-1933, and the second part was sourced from the interviews of the Ukrainian migrant refugees in Western Australia who lived and remembered the event in Ukraine. The second part was most important for it involved those who were witnesses to this event in Ukraine's history and provided material that clearly outlined the horrific outcome of a sadistic regime and the long term effects of such outcomes on the human psyche. Their stories have added to and supported such existing evidence already available elsewhere.

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<sup>45</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*; Maniak, *Testimonies from Kyiv. To Return to People Their History, and to History - the Truth*; Isajiw, ed. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*; Maniak and Kovalenko, eds., *Famine 33: People's Memorial Book*; Mytsyk, ed. *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: The Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived. Part Two*; Wynnycky and Isajiw, "The Famine Witnesses: Oral Histories in North America."; Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine."; Mytsyk, *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived: Part One*; Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine; 1932-1933 United States. The Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, "Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: First Interim Report of Meetings and Hearings of and before the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine Held in 1986: Organizational Meeting, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1986: Meeting and Hearing, Washington, D.C., October 8, 1986: Hearing, Glen Spey, New York, October 26, 1986: Hearing, Chicago, Illinois, November 7, 1986: Hearing, Warren, Michigan, November,"* Washington, D.C. G.P.O., <http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/1986/508618>.

<sup>46</sup> Andrij Makuch, "Holodomor Conference in Toronto," Toronto Office, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, [www.utoronto.ca/jacyk/HolodEnglish.doc](http://www.utoronto.ca/jacyk/HolodEnglish.doc).

The intention was to source publications no more than twenty years old if possible. Some exceptions were required in order to obtain specific historical data. It became clear that there was not a plethora of 'current' English language material based on the Holodomor available to scholars in Western Australia. In order that the situation was addressed in Australia at some future date, the priority was intensified to source resources that could become part of a collection of publications in English, for Australians, regarding the Holodomor. Details of publications were sourced from comprehensive bibliographies such as that of the Shevchenko Scientific Society, Inc. and prepared by Cheryl Madden of Providence College, Rhode Island.<sup>47</sup> These were available online and provided a guide to search for relevant resources that were located overseas. Most of the most recent publications were purchased by the researcher in order to have them immediately at hand.

Journals were the most appropriate for information regarding migrant trauma related to recent refugees having sought asylum and sanctuary from genocide in Australia. Generally speaking information was accessed via journals, books and archival documentation – some of which has only recently been released. Some sources of information were only available through electronic media, such as the most current material released from the Kremlin's archival collections and those such as the Documents from the State Archive of Kiev Oblast for example.<sup>48</sup> Valuable information based on the Holodomor and in English, was made available through different electronic sources providing up-to-date material based on current Ukrainian historical and economic issues.

Recording oral history serves to identify and fill in the gaps of written historical record. The difficulty for Ukrainian recorded history, however, is that the historical reality of Ukrainian Soviet history was not officially recorded. This is something that the current Ukrainian President Yushenko has begun to address and is urging historians to pursue.

Testimonies recording the Holodomor began with Ukrainian émigrés in the Diaspora in the early 1950s and then later in the 1980s. Further testimonies also emanated from Ukraine in the early 1990s, after Independence.<sup>49</sup> They were a collection of narratives by Ukrainians describing what they saw and experienced during the Holodomor. The Ukrainians who had survived the Holodomor or remembered the events shared their histories with scholars who

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<sup>47</sup> Located at <http://www.shevchenko.org/famine/default.htm>

<sup>48</sup> "Part 2: From Bolshevism to the New Order: Museum-Archive of the Transition Period in Kiev, 1942," Primary Source Microfilm.

<sup>49</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*; Maniak and Kovalenko, eds., *Famine 33: People's Memorial Book*.

had begun Holodomor related studies. Because of such testimonies in the Canadian Diaspora, the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC) developed an archival depository for the Holodomor of 1932-1933. The oral history accounts were from three different projects: the 'Harvest of Despair Project', the 'UCRDC Project' and the 'Commission on the Ukraine Famine Project'.<sup>50</sup>

The 'Harvest of Despair Project' specifically gathered material for a documentary film on the Holodomor. Twenty-five interviews were recorded and the film won nine major awards at film festivals. The UCRDC Project is an ongoing project, collecting interviews in whichever format possible, as well as archival material. Interviews from the 'Commission on the Ukraine Famine Project' were sourced and included in this UCRDC collection. All interviews were collected between 1981 and 1990. Interviewees were from Canada, the United States, Great Britain, Germany and France. People interviewed were between two and thirty-eight years old at the time of the Holodomor with the majority between nine and twenty-five years old.<sup>51</sup>

It was valuable to research these projects and determine how the studies were conducted and possible issues that might have been encountered. The UCRDC interviews were structured, in the Ukrainian language and sought to describe the place that the survivors lived at during the Holodomor, as well as a description of life as far back as the survivor could remember. The survivors were asked for names of people who had starved to death and also names of officials who were responsible for arrests, dekurkulization and food seizure. The interviews were held in survivor's homes to lessen the trauma and Iroida Wynnyckyj and Wsevolod Isajiw described them as very emotional for all parties involved.<sup>52</sup> They provided appropriate guidelines for conducting the Western Australian study.

The authors noted that in 1981 it was difficult to find survivors willing to be interviewed, with the fear of reprisals against family still in the Soviet Union being given as the reason. Out of the total of 164 interviews gathered, sixty-five were recorded anonymously. Once Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, this situation changed and many people were no longer as nervous. However, the number of survivors has decreased and, those left were small children at the time. It was felt by the Centre that 'the memories of the children's experiences are a particular, distinct type of testimony'.<sup>53</sup> Similar anxiety among participants was witnessed in

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<sup>50</sup>Wynnyckyj and Isajiw, "The Famine Witnesses: Oral Histories in North America," p.69.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p.69.

this study also, as was the challenge of dealing with memory of people who had, mostly, been children at the time of the event.

Prior to deciding which method of interview method would be embraced for this study, it was determined that it would be appropriate to research current schools of thought involving interviewing survivors of significant traumatic events. The one that stood out above all others was research conducted with Holocaust survivors. Documentation based on the Shoah Foundation's collection of stories was valuable in providing a framework upon which to plan the interview process to be used in this particular research project. It was decided to use an open-ended interview technique that would use one major question as its core, with other questions prepared to ensure the flow of information and achieve the aims of the study. The interviewees were offered the option of being interviewed in Ukrainian, which lessened the pressure that they may have felt in participating in this study. As a result, there occurred a flow of conversation that described the events of the Holodomor as they remembered them.

It was believed that by allowing an open ended flow of discussion on the part of the interviewees, more richness of data would ensue. The interviews provided the researcher with many hours of data that did not end with the end of the Holodomor but that continued with the events that moved well past those years. It was clear that the Holodomor was not the only defining traumatic event in their lives but that they faced many hardships that were to have left them with memories that have never left their consciousness. This was a unique outcome of this study.

The data was gathered over a period of three years during 2003 to 2005, from people who volunteered to share their experiences with an Australian-Ukrainian researcher. It took some time for these people to come forward but eventually 41 people volunteered and were prepared to have their stories recorded. The Ukrainian migrant community in Western Australia numbered only approximately 100 active parishioners who might have lived in regions having experienced the Holodomor. These people belonged predominantly to the Ukrainian Orthodox community in Perth, Western Australia.

The Ukrainians who had volunteered to be interviewed had responded to a flier that had been sent to every known address of Ukrainians in Western Australia. Most were based in Perth. The addresses used were Parish records from the Ukrainian Catholic Parish of St. John the Baptist in Perth. The Parish priest supported the study and gave permission for these fliers to be sent out. There were a few Orthodox Ukrainian respondents whose partners attended the

Catholic Church. The Orthodox priest declined to provide such a list and it was felt that as this was the congregation most affected by the Holodomor and he was probably protecting their privacy. He did however suggest that his parents be interviewed as they were both survivors. Both priests, also made frequent announcements to their congregations about the study and encouraged anyone who remembered the Holodomor to contact the researcher. Initially few people volunteered to be interviewed but once the study got under way they were either prompted or persuaded by gatekeepers to telephone the researcher for an interview or be telephoned to arrange one.

After the initial, slow contact from prospective interviewees, more members of the community showed interest in participating. It was suspected that one of the gatekeepers within the community, who was working very hard at encouraging participation in the study, was in fact a survivor herself. Unfortunately she declined to be interviewed citing her age and lack of memory of the time but made up for it by working hard as a facilitator of the project. She was the conduit between members of the Orthodox parish and unknown (to the researcher) members of the very small Ukrainian Baptist parish. She was determined to see that this history and the testimonies were preserved for the Australians and Ukrainians in Western Australia. It was felt that there might have been quite a 'difficult' background to her life that she simply did not wish to disclose or share but she desired that this event needed recording. There were probably more Ukrainian migrants like her whose stories will be lost.

All interviews were initially recorded on audiotape. Most interviews lasted approximately two to three hours. The telling of the stories began with the Holodomor and ended with life here in Perth. There was so much to tell and the interviewees focused on making sure as much as possible of what they remembered was recorded. Whenever they had forgotten something they apologized for their age and wished that their memories were better.

One of the basic outcomes of the research was to examine and list the common memories or themes that had evolved from previous testimonies sourced at the beginning of the research. The interviews from this study were also investigated to discover the themes. They were compared to those already published and sourced. The themes were similar. The interviewees apportioned blame for the Holodomor on Stalin and the communist regime at the time.

There was much material emanating from the interviews and it was decided to break it up into sections rather than construct one chapter dealing with the memories. Consequently a chapter of memories of times before the Holodomor was constructed to begin the analysis, followed

by memories of the Holodomor years and then finally the memories of escaping the starvation and life after the Holodomor.

One interviewee, Julia, reluctantly refused to have her story included in the study a few days after her interview had occurred. The audio taped interview was returned to her, as was the paperwork relating to it, immediately after she 'phoned requesting those items'.<sup>54</sup> However, after some thought over a few months, this lady contacted the researcher and requested that the audio tapes and notes be collected again. She wished to have her story told in order that her daughter might someday read and understand it. She had not shared this part of her life with her family. It was a common lament.

As the Ukrainian migrants realized that there was confidentiality and respect for their stories, they were encouraged to volunteer and be interviewed. Following the guidelines of courtroom specialist in eyewitness testimony Elizabeth Loftus, the interviewees were 'allowed to naturally describe through speaking the contents of their memories' which provided what Loftus believes to be, 'more information for judging the probable veracity of the underlying memory'.<sup>55</sup>

The interviewees were not interrupted whilst they were talking. The only time the researcher found the need to speak was to prompt someone who was perhaps challenged by the content brought up in the interview and needed to be asked some questions at times when their own nervousness impeded the thought processes. The main question asked of all interviewees was:

- What do you remember of the years of 1932-1933 in Ukraine, the years we now call the Holodomor?

For most interviewees this was enough to unleash the memories and many issues evolved from their stories. In the event that they found it difficult to speak, the separate set of questions were utilized to facilitate further discussion. That was not a common problem however as people were ready to share their life story and provided more than enough information about many aspects surrounding the event in their lives and more.

The extra questions on standby were:

- How did you and your family survive the Holodomor?
- Did people die in your village?

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<sup>54</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #11 "Julia", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>55</sup> Loftus, "Tricked by Memory," p.27.

- Did you leave your village during the Holodomor?
- Have you spoken to anyone about your experience?
- How has the Holodomor affected your life?
- What would you like to see happen with the information about these interviews?

Initially it was felt that finding ten volunteers to be interviewed would be fortunate in the small Ukrainian community in Western Australia. The outcome of 41 was surprising and will ensure that this study forms a valuable contribution to the debate and understanding about the Holodomor.

### **Data coding**

The interview data was coded and analyzed with NVivo version 7 qualitative analysis software, to discover the major themes or categories.<sup>56</sup> The coding broke down, examined, and categorized data into what the NVivo software defines as ‘free nodes’ or themes. This data coding or free nodes represented the first phase of data analysis. This process included any thoughts, beliefs and feelings that were recorded during and after the interviews.

Qualitative data analysis requires the organization of data in such a way that any patterns, themes, forms and qualities are discovered. For this data to be credible it required much more than simply reading to find out what information had been generated from the interviews and field notes. It was important to gain a rich understanding of the survivors’ experiences and feelings from the data collected. This part of the analysis focused carefully on the research question and the search was for a richness of survivors’ experiences as recommended by Adri Labuschagne.<sup>57</sup>

One of the interesting outcomes of using NVivo software for the data analysis was the provision of an overview of the number of references of a theme or free node made within each interview and overall in all interviews. This assisted in determining the importance of each theme in terms of the number of survivors raising it as one of their memories of the Holodomor. The themes that emerged reflected the same issues discussed within the literature review of the period in question. The software provided a clear delineation between the themes and allowed the merging of related theme data where initially it might have been thought that some should stand alone. For example, it was originally felt that ‘intimidation’ was a separate theme but when writing up the results it was clear that this material was clearly

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<sup>56</sup> QSR Nvivo Ver. N7, QSR International Pty Ltd, Doncaster, Victoria.

<sup>57</sup> Adri Labuschagne, "Qualitative Research - Airy Fairy or Fundamental?," *The qualitative Report* 8, no. 1 (2003).

seen to relate to the theme of ‘silence’ as the intimidation felt by the survivors led to the lifelong silence in discussing the events of the Holodomor.

### **Data analysis**

Ethnographers are known to begin data analysis before the collection of data has been completed.<sup>58</sup> This is usually because they have a limited knowledge of the people being studied and they begin to analyze as they proceed. This certainly occurred to some degree in this research project and it was possible to develop a picture regarding the survivors of the Holodomor of 1932-1933. Other research projects that were not part of the original research design such as ‘forced labour to Germany’, were identified with the analysis process. These are projects that could be addressed at the completion of this particular study.

The formal analysis of this research project began with the initial translation of audio-taped interviews. Only four interviews were conducted in English. Initially the translations began upon the completion of each interview. Sacks emphasized the use of taped interviews in order to work with actual occurrences of talk.<sup>59</sup>

Reflections on specific details that can be extracted from recorded conversations can provide particularly useful information that is otherwise lost. Even speech mannerisms painted a story about a person being interviewed. There were important reasons for the use of audio-taped recordings for this study. Silverman advocates the use of audio taped interviews because they are able to be replayed as often as required in order to enhance the translations.<sup>60</sup> This is especially so as the interviews were often translated after a few had been conducted. The audio-tapes preserved the sequence of discussion and will remain a public record alongside the translation.

### **Reliability**

Hammersley describes the search for reliability in qualitative research as ‘revolving around detailing the relevant context of observation’.<sup>61</sup> It was therefore important that any fieldnotes and transcripts related to the Holodomor interviews were extensive and detailed, giving

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<sup>58</sup> M. D. LeCompte and J. Schensul, *Designing & Conducting Ethnographic Research* (Walnut Creek: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 1999); R S Weiss, *Learning from Strangers. The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies* (New York: The Free Press, 1994).

<sup>59</sup> D. Silverman, *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage Publications, 2001).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.230-32

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p.225



careful attention to the context of observation.<sup>62</sup> Ensuring transparency was important in supporting the reliability of the research, particularly as scholars world wide are working very hard to collect and collate such material for Ukraine's historical records.

Within such interview data ethnographers look for patterns that may be derived from thought, behaviour and any other interactions with the person being interviewed. In the case of the survivors these patterns of thought, statements and actions were repeated in the various interviews and with the different participants.<sup>63</sup> The common tropes were similar for most interviewee's stories.

Reliability was proven in formally interviewing the people whose memories had been recounted many years ago by others who remembered the Holodomor, family members or the researcher herself. The stories did not change. Whether the story was recounted around a dinner table or formally during this interview period, it was the same. The first interviewee, whose daughter sat in on the interview, had her story corroborated by the daughter who spoke of hearing that story time and time again throughout fifty years of her lifetime.<sup>64</sup>

By documenting the overall structure, approach and methodological framework of this research carefully in this thesis, it should be possible to replicate this study. For reliability to be assured procedures have been documented as extensively as possible and in a detailed manner, as outlined by Kirk and Miller.<sup>65</sup>

## **Validity**

Winter states that there was no common definition of validity. Validity he said could be argued as being the notion of truth and, the claim to it being central to the research process.<sup>66</sup> Maxwell notes that a valid account of such an experience must respect the perspectives of the people who were in the particular situation.<sup>67</sup> The survivors were the ones with the experience of the time and events in question and the research process of this study was mindful and respectful of that throughout the project.

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<sup>62</sup> J. Kirk and M. Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*, ed. J. van Maanen, 45 vols., vol. 1, Qualitative Research Methods (London: Sage Publishing, 1986).

<sup>63</sup> D. M. Fetterman, *Ethnography: Step by Step*, 2nd Edition ed., vol. 17, Applied Social Research Methods Series (London: Sage Publications, 1998), p.96.

<sup>64</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>65</sup> Kirk and Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*.

<sup>66</sup> G. Winter, "A Comparative Discussion of the Notion of 'Validity' in Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *The Qualitative Report*, <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR4-3/winter.html>.

<sup>67</sup> J A Maxwell, "Understanding and Validity in Qualitative Research.," *Harvard Educational Review* 62, no. 3 (1992).

Kerlinger suggests that the test to measure validity is to ask whether we are measuring what we thought we were trying to measure in the interview.<sup>68</sup> In fact, the claims to validity need to question for whom the research was valid and in whose interest was this claim to truth being made?<sup>69</sup> In this case the interview technique was open enough to allow the interviewees to present everything that they believed related to the original question posed to them about the Holodomor. Most of the survivors went on to relate the story beginning with the Holodomor and concluding with, in most cases, the present day. This was a common trope. The Holodomor was not the one decisive part of the narrative. It was a journey of events that were clearly felt to be linked by the survivors to the Holodomor and their lives. The study was valid for the survivors and their testimonies laid claim to the truths that they themselves outlined.

One could agree with Winter that validity as related to qualitative research, actually remains with the representation of the survivors, the purposes of the research and, the appropriateness of the processes involved.<sup>70</sup> It was the role of the researcher to accept the stories and statements made as being the truth of the survivors, rather than judge their authenticity. The truth of the survivors' accounts of the period in question were trusted and deemed worthy of investigation. They were considered plausible, confirmable and credible in view of emerging evidence and believed to be representative of a group of people living in Western Australia who remembered this event in their lives.

The same information and stories shared by different people in different countries who did not know each other during the years of the Holodomor in Ukraine, must give credibility to issues raised during these interviews even if the memories are of seventy, eighty and ninety-year-old survivors. Linton as cited by Hoffman, concludes in her study of real world events that:

Events were likely to endure in memory if they have these features:

- (1) They were perceived as highly emotional at the time they occurred;
- (2) The subsequent course of events made the event appear instrumental or perceived as a turning point and;
- (3) The event was relatively unique, not blurred by repetition.<sup>71</sup>

These pointers held true for the memories of the Holodomor survivors.

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<sup>68</sup> F. Kerlinger, *Foundations of Behavioural Research* (New York: Holt, 1964).

<sup>69</sup> Winter, "A Comparative Discussion of the Notion of 'Validity' in Qualitative and Quantitative Research."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> A. M. Hoffman and H. S. Hoffman, "Reliability and Validity in Oral History: The Case for Memory," in *Memory and History. Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience*, ed. J. Jeffrey and G. Edwall (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 1994).

Western Australian Ukrainian memories of the Holodomor match the primary source material, testimonies of other survivors in Ukraine and throughout the Diaspora, as well as further emerging archival documents.

The survivors omitted what Primo Levi referred to when he wrote that an extremely valuable element was missing in testimonies. It was the element of numbers of deaths.<sup>72</sup> The survivors of the Holodomor, similar to Primo Levi at the time of his experience of the Holocaust, did not know the extent of deaths. Researchers and scholars focused upon the Holodomor are still debating the numbers who perished. The survivors in Western Australia however, were particularly focused on recounting what they had personally experienced, seen and what they could remember, as requested for the study.

The researcher focused upon the effects of this event on the survivors and accepted fully that the survivors' stories were their truths. When focusing on reliability measures this qualitative study was concerned with the meaning of the lived experiences within the social context of those experiences. The emphasis in this research was to understand the time in question from the perspective of the survivors who remembered it and, to understand the effect that this event had on their lives.

### **Limitations of Study**

One of the most important considerations in researching the historical material related to this Ukrainian Holodomor was that the publications used would be in English. As this historical period is not well known nor understood by many Western Australians, it was a conscious decision to ensure that most of the historical content could be accessed through English publications. However, it was necessary to use Ukrainian publications where there was no translation of particular material or when it was a unique or new source published in Ukraine and not yet translated.<sup>73</sup> The spoken Ukrainian language skills of the researcher limited access to any documents in the Ukrainian or Russian languages.

There was also a conscious effort to try and utilize material that had been published in the last two decades. The very latest publications, for example, contain valuable primary source archival material that was important to include and acknowledge. Much of this material has not been previously available to researchers. Professors Shapoval, Serbyn and their associates,

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<sup>72</sup>Marco Vigevani, "Words, Memory, Hope (1984) [Interview with Primo Levi, from 'Le Parole, Il Recordo, La Speranza', *Bollettinodella Comunita Israelitica Di Milano*, Xi, 5, May 1984]," in *The Voice of Memory*, ed. Marco Belpoliti and Robert Gordon (New York: The New Press, 2001), p.250.

<sup>73</sup> B.A. (Head of Editorial group) Smoliy, ed. *Famine 1932-1933 Years in Ukraine, Reasons and Consequences* (Kyiv: Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of sciences of Ukraine, 2003).

key researchers in Kyiv and Canada, recently produced publications that provide a selection of such material. Their work contains documentation from the former Soviet archives and publications that have previously been extremely difficult to access or were unpublished.<sup>74</sup>

### **Statement of stance**

It was important to make a conscious effort in recognizing that everyone's experience was unique, although with a common thread. This formal recognition was addressed by the deliberate reporting of the research process as suggested by Eli and others.<sup>75</sup> The noting of the researcher's personal feelings during the process was kept alongside the fieldnotes of the interviews. The stance of the researcher has been explicit throughout the reporting of the findings which is a valuable part of the reporting process in qualitative research.

Knowledge of Ukrainian, both spoken and written, was an asset in conducting the interviews in Ukrainian, if so desired by the survivors, with the ability of translating them into English.

It would be of little surprise to recognize that the historical material that was accessed almost daily once this project began was extremely moving. The clearly documented sources and reference material as well as the visual material presented by the movie *Harvest of Sorrow* and others like it, left a profound impact.<sup>76</sup> The horrors were of a scale that was certainly equal to any other such documentaries regarding other human rights abuses. This particular episode had not however, had the same exposure. It was that singular aspect that made it so disturbing.

Despite the fact that this history was understood by many historians and people overseas, with the generation of considerable publications, conferences and courses focusing on the Holodomor in different institutions, this was not the fact in Western Australia.

These events had occurred with terror and ferocity to people within the Western Australian Ukrainian migrant refugee community the researcher had grown up in. It was natural that there was anger and despair felt at the treatment meted out to them, especially as they were children at the time. The feelings were further based upon the fact that this event in Soviet history was not well known in Western Australia and that there was no understanding

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<sup>74</sup> Yuri Shapoval, ed. *The Famine - Genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine* (Toronto: The Kashtan Press, 2005). Roman Serbyn, "The Holodomor: Reflections on the Ukrainian Genocide. 16th Annual J.B. Rudnyckyj Distinguished Lecture. Friday, November 7," (The U of M Archives & Special Collections: 331 Elizabeth Dafoe Library 2008).

<sup>75</sup> M. Ely et al., *On Writing Qualitative Research: Living by Words* (London: The Falmer Press, 1997).

<sup>76</sup> Slavko Novytski, "Harvest of Despair: The 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine," (Canada: Yevshan Corporation, 1984).

surrounding this group of migrant refugees. These people had faced extreme hardship, migrated and had quietly made a life for themselves whilst maintaining a fearful silence about their past terror lest the KGB sought to silence them forever.

The sheer cruelty and trauma endured by the Ukrainians became evident from the interviews. To listen to their memories of the Holodomor and understand how the human spirit was able to continue enduring subsequent challenges to their spirit was a moving experience. The Holodomor was the start of many traumatic events in the lives of these people and one has to admire the strength and resilience that they had in dealing with each phase of their lives.

The Holodomor, as with the ensuing German occupation, forced labour in Germany, Displaced Persons camps, and migration to Australia, was aligned with separation either by death or forced transport from parents, relatives and friends. Placement in unusual living, social and economic conditions was without choice and with enduring hardship and trauma. The stories of the Holodomor specifically reflected unbelievable situations, with the main aspects focused upon starvation and the acquisition of food. It must be remembered that these were the memories of children at the time.

It was decided that the discussion of the themes in the Western Australian study would include material from other testimonies and related publications. By linking them thus would support the discussion and quotations from the Western Australian Ukrainians and would provide some comparison and validation for their memories. The simple matter-of-fact tone, in which they spoke about the Holodomor, one of the most traumatic historical events in their lives and the relating of their stories without fuss, needs to be highlighted again, as an extraordinary aspect of the interviews. Conquest made such a note at the beginning of his historic publication which the researcher was not able to comprehend until having begun this study.<sup>77</sup> The Ukrainian migrant memories are the oral history that must be heard and must be recorded.

The amount of information that emerged from the interviews about the Holodomor provided a richness of data of this event as the Ukrainians remembered it. It can be argued that people remember such events very well. The Ukrainian migrants remembered the Holodomor particularly well albeit highlighted by unique instances in their experiences. The material provided a comprehensive outline of their different memories and was worthy to include as much of it as possible as the core of this study. The same themes were reflected throughout.

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<sup>77</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.8.

The material will be the voice not only of these people but that of those who were permanently silenced. It will contribute to the scholarship about Ukraine's Holodomor of 1932-1933.

The recorded memories consisted of major events in the lives of young Ukrainians during the years before, during and after the Holodomor of 1932-1933. The people interviewed were for the most part very quiet and unassuming and not highly visible members of their community. Perhaps as a result of having faced such past trauma they wished to simply live quietly, peacefully and privately. In fact, it was interesting for the researcher (an active member of the small Ukrainian Catholic community in Perth), to meet many people who were total strangers from the very small Ukrainian Orthodox and Baptist communities in Western Australia. Although they kept to themselves their memories were clear. It became quite evident that there was more than enough to obtain a picture of what they had experienced and what had defined their young lives during and after the Holodomor.

### **Thesis structure**

This study seeks to analyse the events of the Holodomor and uncover the memories of those survivors who have since migrated to Western Australia. In order to develop the picture I have structured my thesis according to the following format. The literature review will consider the issues related to the events leading up to the famine through the historiography and current scholarship. It will outline those key researchers and documentation both past and present as well as an inclusion based on the deniers of the famine. The literature review will also address migration with its related issue of the refugee plights of those who have escaped repression. This is part of the experiences of the Ukrainian migrant refugees about whom this thesis is based.

By including a chapter that provides an overview of the historical events prior to the Holodomor, the intention is to ensure that the event is clear within the context of the history at the time. The material from the interviews will be broken up into four different chapters allowing the thesis to include as much material as possible from the interviews of the Ukrainian migrants.

The chapter which records the Ukrainian migrant's memories of the time before the Holodomor, begins the documentation followed by a chapter outlining the memories of the experiences during the Holodomor itself. Memories of escaping the starvation and life after the event follow on as per the interviews. Throughout those chapters some evidence from

previous studies has been included as a comparison with what other Ukrainian survivors had previously said about the same themes. A final chapter is devoted to specifically discussing the long term effects of the Holodomor on the Ukrainian migrant refugees. This then delves further into the issues surrounding the Holodomor and determines if and what affect such a trauma has had on their lives. This last section documents a little discussed outcome of the Holodomor.

The chapters will start at the beginning of the experience for the Western Australian Ukrainian migrants, including comparable material from other similar studies elsewhere and end with enough evidence to have achieved the aims set for this study. There will be enough evidence to argue that this event occurred, left these migrants with indelible memories that have influenced their lives and that it could be constituted as genocide against Ukrainian people. The concluding Chapter Eight will provide both an analysis of the data explored and also discuss the concept of genocide. It will examine genocide within the context of Ukraine's Holodomor in light of current literature and the information extrapolated from this study.

### **Significance of the study**

The memories of Western Australian migrants are in many ways comparable and support the body of evidence which exists around the world. Therefore these stories, this new material, add to the scholarship with more evidence to give credence to that which already exists about the Holodomor. Having investigated all of the material used in this research study it was undoubtedly an experience of genocide.

The study will outline why this event in Ukrainian Soviet history was important to investigate in the Western Australian context and will also determine the value to history of such research. The Ukrainian migrant's memories are an important source of data to understand the events surrounding the Holodomor and also the hardships endured at the hands of Stalin's Soviet regime.

It has been noted that at the height of the famine, the Holodomor Ukrainian villagers were dying at the rate of 17 per minute, 1,000 per hour and 25,000 per day. President Victor Yushchenko of Ukraine estimates that up to ten million people perished during the Holodomor and it is known that at least three million of the victims who died during 1932-

1933 were children.<sup>78</sup> At the same time that people were starving to death it is known that the Soviet Union was dumping 1.7 million tons of grain on Western markets.<sup>79</sup>

An entire generation of Ukrainian children were annihilated or damaged in the Holodomor. A generation was lost and memories of the experiences have left their indelible mark. Children saw death and suffering as part of daily life and came to accept such horrors as part of the mental strain to survive the hunger. In some instances the outcome of starvation was suicide or cannibalism. The children were likened to those observed later in the Nazi extermination camps:

Their heads like heavy balls on thin little necks, like storks, and one could see each bone of their arms and legs protruding from beneath the skin, how bones joined, and the entire skeleton was stretched over skin that was like yellow gauze. And the children's faces were aged, tormented, just as if they were seventy years old. And by spring they no longer had faces at all. Instead they had bird like heads with beaks, or frog heads – thin, wide lips – and some of them resembled fish, mouths open. Not human faces.<sup>80</sup>

In many cases the children were the last survivors of their family. Children as old as seven were responsible for their younger siblings. Harrison, writing about Stargardt's research on children's lives under the Nazis, notes one poignant finding, when children actually realized that their parents were 'defeated and impotent, they became the family breadwinners, impelled by hunger to beg, thief and trade sex for food'.<sup>81</sup>

Some children were simply taken to larger towns and left with a hope that someone would take them in and care for them. This was the case with some of the survivors who were interviewed for this study. Conquest similarly notes how some children fell in with groups of youngsters who occupied unfinished buildings and survived by trapping birds or begging. It was known that criminals set up slaughter houses for children, as was discovered by the State Political Directorate, the GPU (*Gosudarstvennoye Politicheskoye Upravlenie*) in Poltava.<sup>82</sup> The lucky ones survived in orphanages but when faced with overcrowding they were transferred to

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<sup>78</sup> Press Office of the President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko, "#1. Ukrainian President to Commemorate Famine Victims," Morgan Williams. Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*.

<sup>79</sup> Inc. Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation - USA, "Ukrainian Genocide of 1932-1933," Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation - USA, Inc., <http://www.ukrainiangenocide.com/index.html>.

<sup>80</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, pp.283-85.

<sup>81</sup> Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War. Children's Lives under the Nazis* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005).; Red Harrison, "Innocents of Nazi Solution," *The Weekend Australian*, 2-3 July 2005, p.R15.

<sup>82</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, p.288.



an open 'children's town' where they were not fed and starved to death away from public scrutiny.<sup>83</sup>

The regions of Poltava, Verkhnedniprovs'k and Kirovohrad are especially remembered for the child mortality and brutalities occurring in their towns, as are Kyiv, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovs'k and Odessa. The Kuban and the Don regions that were inhabited by Ukrainians faced the extremes of the Holodomor.<sup>84</sup> The survivors interviewed for this study were the children of that era and many were orphaned and grew up without their parents. Their memories are still horrifying despite the passage of decades.

They took everyone. They took father ... They did not want to take little children. They took my mother. She tried hard to get away from them but couldn't do anything. I saw her screaming. I understood absolutely nothing about this – where am I and why am I? When they were taking me around to the different houses [to see if someone would take her in] they said that I was a wealthy Kurkul's daughter, a capitalist's child. No-one took me. You know it was like a kitten, they take it, feed it and it sits in a corner.<sup>85</sup>

There is a school of thought that places the current dilemmas of an independent Ukraine back in time with a country of traumatized survivors who became 'voiceless cogs in the Soviet Union's bureaucratic machine'.<sup>86</sup> Michael Ellman comments that this was one of the worst episodes of the Soviet period that witnessed cruel 'political persecution'. He joins many researchers in calling for further research and discussion of the significance of the Holodomor.<sup>87</sup>

The world has not fully understood the outcome of Stalin's policies. The subsequent crimes during his term of office that have born statistics of deaths such as those above. Studies such as this will contribute to the history an understanding of such trauma on the psyche of people. There are questions that need to be answered to explain the lack of knowledge in Western Australia and the reluctance that survivors have had in this state to discuss the Holodomor. This study adds value to the current scholarship regarding the Holodomor and collection of testimonies. The stories substantiate those that have been collected elsewhere and also provide an important addition to current collections of migrant history in Western Australia. The Western Australian Battye Library's [part of the State Reference Library] local history

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid., pp.288-90.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p.280.

<sup>85</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth2004).

<sup>86</sup> Oleh W. Gerus, "Ukraine Famine Monument Unveiled in Dauphin, Manitoba," [ArtUkraine.com](http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/famonument.htm), <http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/famonument.htm>.

<sup>87</sup> M. Ellman, "Soviet Repression Statistics: Some Comments," *Europe-Asia Studies* 54, no. 7 (2002): pp.1164-65.

collection has been earmarked as a depository of this migrant work. The library has requested involvement with the results of this study.

The story of the Ukrainian Holodomor is not as familiar as other more historically acknowledged tragedies such as the Holocaust or Armenian, Cambodian, Rwanda or Bosnian genocides. The struggle of memory against forgetting was a very real concern with this historical event as was the reality of actually losing the stories through death of the people who could be contacted. In fact, some of the survivors who were interviewed have already passed on and others who could have been interviewed have also since died. The stories have been lost to history. All scholars engaged in the study of this event in Ukraine's past history face the dilemma of collecting the memories as quickly as possible before they are lost through natural ageing or death. Andreopoulos speaks from the position of those who engage in oral history research:

Milan Kundera, the exiled Czech novelist, has written that 'the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting'. This single remark, in my view sums up the human predicament today and put the burden of responsibility exactly where it falls – on writers, and now more than ever, on scholars... National catastrophes can be survived if (and perhaps only if) those to whom disaster happens can recover themselves through knowing the truth of their suffering. Great powers, on the other hand, would vanquish not only the peoples they subjugate but also the cultural mechanisms that would sustain vital memory of historical crimes... When modern states make way for geopolitical power plays, they are not above removing everything – nations, cultures, homelands – in their path. Great powers regularly demolish other peoples' claims to dignity and place, and sometimes as we know, the outcome is genocide. In a very real sense, therefore, Kundera is right; against historical crimes we fight as best we can, and a cardinal part of this engagement is the struggle of memory against forgetting.<sup>88</sup>

The Holodomor occurred to a nation about which the world still knows very little. Ukraine was not Russia but was part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at the time. It was a country with its own history, language and cultural identity. People have come to understand a little more about this country since the 'Orange Revolution' of 2004.<sup>89</sup> The Orange Revolution was the catalyst for Ukraine to move towards democracy after elections that year. It was a peaceful movement that saw Ukrainian's public protest about what was seen as dishonest tampering of election results.

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<sup>88</sup> G. J. Andreopoulos, ed. *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1994), p. 135.

<sup>89</sup> National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, *We Are Marching* (Kyiv: Publishing House of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, 2005). [This revolution in Ukraine was a peaceful nation wide civic movement that fostered Ukraine's move towards democracy after the elections in that year].

The following chapters will summarize the shifting historiography and some of the political debates surrounding the Holodomor scholarship. The data analysis will take the form of the survivors' voices telling the story of their experiences. Published material will be included to outline aspects of the historical moments of the times in question but the chapters will be structured in such a way in which the silenced will be given voice via the memories of the Ukrainian refugees who migrated to Western Australia.

# Chapter 1

## Literature Review

This chapter will outline previous and recent studies of the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933 and place this research into the context of existing scholarly debate. The concealment of many stories regarding the event by Stalin and successive Soviet regimes has since provided a challenge to historians, preventing the open discovery of events and experiences at the time. Since the opening of the Soviet archives however, much new material related to the Holodomor has provoked the reinterpretation of events. Distinguished University Professor David Marples, department of History and Classics of the University of Alberta states although this event has become integrated into the new national history of Ukraine, it has progressed alongside 'public disputes and political dissention'. Marples notes the fostering of 'emotional academic debate in the West' with little consensus being reached thus far on some issues such as the national ethnic perspective.<sup>1</sup> This thesis will focus specifically on the Ukrainian ethnic perspective and the effects of the Holodomor on the Ukrainian people and the nation itself. It will also address the related issues of refugees and refugee trauma, a current focus of Australian scholars.

### Opening the books

Ukraine is located north of the Black Sea and borders Russia, Byelorussia, Poland and Romania. It is one of the largest countries in Europe and is predominantly made up of flat plains and rolling hills. It is asset rich in terms of the fertile humus rich soil that covers almost two-thirds of its landscape. Ukraine's religious background is pivotal to understanding its cultural identity which has provided its citizens with some comfort during difficult periods of its history, not least of all during the Holodomor. Ukrainians have traditionally been Orthodox Christians but Roman Catholics (Uniates), Jews and Muslims have also been represented.<sup>2</sup> The country was part of the old Russian Empire and, after an attempt at independence following the 1917 revolution, Ukraine came under eventual control of the newly established United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).<sup>3</sup>

Joseph Stalin came into power from 1924 after Lenin's death. He attempted to create a uniform and compliant society based upon his interpretation of Marxist ideology and the renunciation of Ukrainian national identity, Stalin used food as a weapon of mass destruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Marples, "Debate: Ethnic Issues in the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine," *Europe Asia Studies*, p. 505.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Johnstone, *Ukraine*, Lonely Planet (China: The Bookmaker International Ltd, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

The Ukrainian nationalist opposition to the Soviet project was crushed as Stalin began his systematic annihilation of any 'traditional and community leadership'.<sup>4</sup> The scale of the constant purges and terror to which people were subjected was unprecedented. Canadian Ukrainians initially brought this period of history to public notice in the West.<sup>5</sup> Testimonies of Ukrainian migrant survivors began the flow of documentation related to Stalin's treatment of Ukrainians. The subsequent discovery of archival evidence has confirmed that despite their public silence on the issue at the time, Western democratic governments were aware of the terrible events of 1932-1933 in Ukraine.<sup>6</sup>

Ukrainian scholar from the Université du Québec of Montreal, Roman Serbyn, noted that by the end of the 1980s, British, Italian and German diplomatic archives 'provided the definitive evidence necessary to establish the historicity' of the famine of 1932-1933, the Holodomor. Diplomatic dispatches such as those sent by Moscow during 1932-1933 were regularly forwarded from diplomats, British subjects and Soviet citizens reporting on what was occurring in the regions affected by the famine.<sup>7</sup>

After the fiftieth anniversary of the Ukrainian Holodomor in 1983, scholars such as Conquest; Mace; Kulchytskyi; Magocsi; Graziosi; Smoliy; Carynyk, Luciuk and Kordan; Isajiw; Kovalenko and Maniak had begun to collect and published information about Stalin's genocide in Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> Kulchytskyi altered his original interpretation of the events of the Holodomor after discovering damning material within Russian archives. He was to become a prolific Ukrainian writer on the subject of the Holodomor. As with many Soviet and Soviet-Ukrainian writers, his articles only began to appear in eastern European journals and newspapers after 1988, following Soviet President Gorbachev's 'glasnost' (openness) reforms. From July 1988, almost all Ukrainian magazines published items related to the

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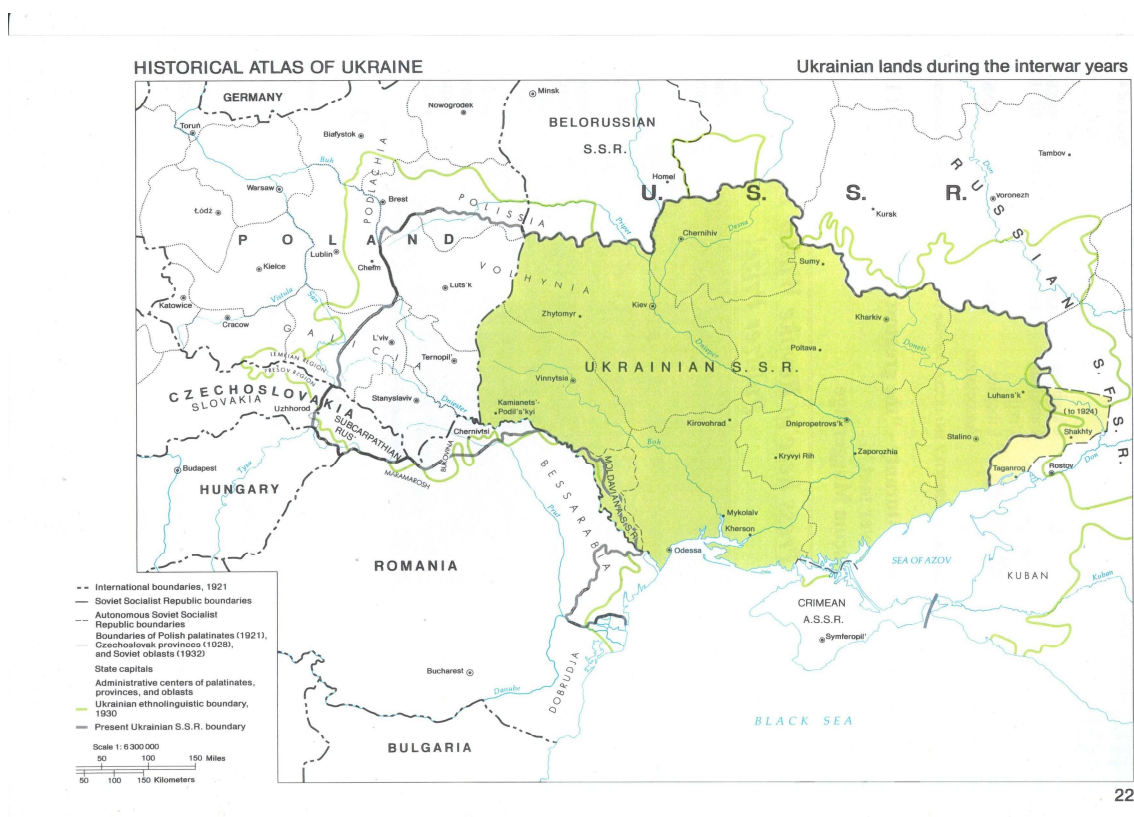
<sup>4</sup> Gerus, "Ukraine Famine Monument Unveiled in Dauphin, Manitoba."

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> M. Carynyk, L. Y. Luciuk, and B. S. Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, Studies in East European Nationalisms, No. 2 (Kingston, Ontario: Limestone Press, 1988).

<sup>7</sup> Roman Serbyn, "Famine in Ukraine," League of Ukrainian Canadians, <http://www.lucorg.com/luc/itemIII3.php>. Carynyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in O Pavlyshyn, "Famine Bibliography," in *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933*, ed. W. W. Isajiw (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003). Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*; J. Mace, "I Was Chosen by Your Dead Legacy of the Famine: Ukraine as a Postgenocidal Society," [ArtUkraine](http://www.ArtUkraine.com), [www.ArtUkraine.com](http://www.ArtUkraine.com); P. R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996); Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War. Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917-1933*; Smoliy, ed. *Famine 1932-1933 Years in Ukraine, Reasons and Consequences*; Carynyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*; Isajiw, ed. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*; Maniak and Kovalenko, eds., *Famine 33: People's Memorial Book*; Ewald Ammende, *Human Life in Russia* (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1936).



Map 3: Ukraine during 1920-1941<sup>9</sup>

Holodomor.<sup>10</sup> The current Ukrainian president made the following comment about those who still deny the Holodomor:

Those who deny the Holodomor today loathe Ukraine deeply and resolutely. They hate us, our spirit and our future. They do not deny our history but deny Ukraine.<sup>11</sup>

The President's paper from a 2008 article in the *Wall Street Journal*, notes the decades of silence in discussing what he called 'the greatest national trauma'. Talk of the Holodomor had been a crime against the Soviet state and the famine was a deliberate attempt to destroy Ukraine. He also notes that:

Each Ukrainian family knew from bitter personal memory the enormity of what happened. They also knew that it had been inflicted on them deliberately to punish Ukraine and destroy the basis of its nationhood.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> P. R. Magocsi, *Ukraine: A Historical Atlas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p.22.

<sup>10</sup> Pavlyshyn, "Famine Bibliography." p.192.

<sup>11</sup> President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko, "Ukrainian Genocide of 1932-1933: 75th Anniversary," Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation - USA, Inc., <http://www.ukrainiangenocide.com/index.html>.

<sup>12</sup> President of Ukraine Victor Yushchenko, "Holodomor," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p.191.

President Yushchenko acknowledged that Russian people were also among Stalin's victims but he wished that the international community understood this crime was an act of genocide and to support the position that Ukraine has now formally endorsed with a law recognizing the Holodomor was an act of genocide.<sup>13</sup>

The world has witnessed much suffering throughout the twentieth century. Accumulated lists of losses to genocide have been generated by different agencies such as the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. While the United Nations ensures that these events do not go unnoticed or forgotten, this event is proving difficult to resolve as genocide.<sup>14</sup> Weitz's publication investigated four major genocides and he accepted and thus included that of Ukraine's.<sup>15</sup> He outlines those aspects that led to the Ukrainian event being classified as genocide. Totten also provides a more inclusive outline in his text designed to be used in the teaching of genocide. He covers ten case studies from noted scholars in the field of genocide studies.<sup>16</sup>

Genocide scholar Irving Horowitz views genocide with a topology in which 'the level of state-induced repression is the key variable'. He also defines the ensuing genocidal-societies as those in which 'the state has arbitrarily taken the lives of citizens who deviate from its ideology.'<sup>17</sup> This can be related to the measures facing Soviet Ukraine during 1932-1933. Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn state that Leo Kuper has made more contributions to the comparative study of genocide than any scholar since Raphael Lemkin. Kuper appears to be more concerned with the increase of genocide in modern history and examines the situation in Stalin's Soviet Union and the Holodomor. The authors noted that at the time of publishing there was not enough evidence regarding Ukraine since the archives of the USSR were inaccessible at the time to establish intent of the perpetrator. This aspect has since changed dramatically with more archival evidence being released since 2003.

It is especially significant that this study of Western Australian migrants who remember the Holodomor should have germinated in 2003. That was the year during which Ukraine, as a

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 191-92.

<sup>14</sup> Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, "Information [Booklet]," (Sydney: Shalom College, University of NSW, 2003), p.3. ; Reuters, "Genocides Helped Make 20th Century Bloodiest Ever," Williams, E.M.

<sup>15</sup> Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Samuel Totten, ed. *Teaching About Genocide: Issues, Approaches, and Resources* (Connecticut: Information Age Publishing, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, "Conceptualizations of Genocide and Ethnocide," in *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, ed. Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Canadian Studies, 1986), p.184.

newly independent nation, finally spoke out publicly on the issue of the Holodomor. The Ukrainian President, Parliament, and Cabinet argued that this period of history constituted an act of genocide on the part of Josef Stalin and the Soviet regime that he led.<sup>18</sup> 2003 was also the year when hundreds of formerly highly classified files from the 1920s and 1930s were transferred into the Russian State Archive of Social and Political History from the former Politburo archive and thus made them accessible to Ukrainian scholars.<sup>19</sup>

### **Holodomor oral histories: Comparative studies**

Recording oral history serves to identify and fill in the gaps of written historical record. The difficulty for Ukrainian history, however, is that much of its Soviet history was not recorded at the time. This is something that the current Ukrainian President has begun to address and is urging historians to pursue by continuing to research and investigate archives and also record oral histories.

Iroida Wynnyckyj and Wsevolod Isajiw note that in 1981 it was difficult to find survivors willing to be interviewed, with the fear of reprisals against family still in the Soviet Union being given as the reason. Out of the total of 164 interviews gathered in the ongoing Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC), sixty-five were recorded anonymously. Since Ukraine gained its independence in 1991, this situation changed and many people are no longer as nervous. However, the number of survivors has decreased and those left, were small children at the time. It is felt by the Research and Documentation Centre that 'the memories of the children's experiences are a particular, distinct type of testimony'.<sup>20</sup>

It must be said that most of the same structure was used in the current Western Australian study of migrants who remembered the Holodomor of 1932-1933. The stating of names of people who had starved to death and the naming of officials who were responsible for arrests did not emerge however. The interviews were kept open ended and, if such information was shared, it was unsolicited.

Western Australian academic Olijnyk Longley draws attention to the fact that interviewing people such as Ukraine's refugee migrants could be dealing with what is essentially:

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<sup>18</sup> His Beatitude Constantine, His Grace Stefan, and M. Sawkiw, "Joint Statement: On the 70th Anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine- Genocide of 1932-1933," Morgan Williams.; Shapoval, ed. *The Famine - Genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine*.

<sup>19</sup> Ihor Siundiukov, "Holodomor 1932-1933 in Ukraine: Documents: Materials," E. Morgan Williams.

<sup>20</sup> Wynnyckyj and Isajiw, "The Famine Witnesses: Oral Histories in North America," p.69.



A huge chasm between the world of the narration (the *now* of the telling) and the world of the other place, the lost home, which becomes super-charged with emotional and mythological energy because it is (often) *the place of no return*.<sup>21</sup>

She went on to say that:

Narratives [biographies] of a past experienced in a far distant place can more convincingly achieve the appearance of closure through the structure of a story about a person or persons.<sup>22</sup>

Resources and scholars involved in this topic of research in the diaspora as well as Australia became clear as did key documents and their source especially after visits by the researcher to the National Archive Library in Canberra as well as, Kyiv Ukraine for the best possible information pertaining to the Holodomor. However, as Lubomyr Luciuk states, in referring to the history of Ukraine during the 1930's, 'the classic study remains Robert Conquest'.<sup>23</sup> Few publications regarding Ukraine or the Soviet Union treated this topic to any great extent other than to mention collectivization and the Great Terror. Alan Rosenbaum's work on comparative genocide, with Green's chapter on the Ukrainian genocide, was an example of a publication that provided an entire chapter specifically devoted to this event.<sup>24</sup> Richard Overy's publication provided a few pages that at least specifically mentioned the event but with few major details.<sup>25</sup> The search process clearly determined that any resources that were to illicit useful information focused upon the topic of the Holodomor and in the English language, would need to be recent publications.

The Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Center was a most important source of material to begin researching the history of this particular famine. Their archive collection was established in 1988 and contains legal and government documents with photographs, unpublished memoirs as well as over 800 audio and video interviews. Such material unearthed valuable source material with the latter published in the already noted major *Oral History Commission of the Ukraine Famine, vol.3* and also used in the production of the film *Harvest of Despair*.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> K. Olijnuk Longley, "Remembering Rublivka: Life Stories from Lost Worlds," University of Western Australia, <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/motspluriels/MP2303kol.html>. [*italics author's emphasis*].

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Shapoval, ed. *The Famine - Genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine*.

<sup>24</sup> Alan S. Rosenbaum, ed. *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview press, 2001).

<sup>25</sup> Richard Overy, *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia* (London: Penguin Books, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> "Harvest of Despair: The 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine," (Yevshan Corporation, 1984).

The Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association sources were valuable with material related to the Holodomor, as was the Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation.<sup>27</sup> The latter's pamphlet provided not only reading material, details about associated websites and also basic details about the Holodomor, but has been used as a useful handout at Conferences and Seminars.<sup>28</sup>

One particular website that was of particular value with its archived publications was the ArtUkraine website.<sup>29</sup> Many current papers, photographs and documents have been collected and made available for researchers. The papers and documents are by scholars from around the world who have delved into the history of the Holodomor and importantly offered an up-to-date overview of developments in the field. The website also provided an archived collection of photographs of artworks as well as other materials pertaining to Ukraine's past history and present developments. Prominent scholars such as Mace could be sourced for his collection of papers relating to this history.

A further website of interest was that of Orlando Figes, professor of history at Birbeck College, University of London. Interviews and archival data used in the research for his book *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* provided worthwhile investigation and valuable insights into the Stalin period of history.<sup>30</sup>

Contemporary material related to Ukrainian issues is provided by the Action Ukraine Report–AUR.<sup>31</sup> The material is provided by the same publisher and editor of the ArtUkraine website. The Action Ukraine Report is an international newsletter. It provides the latest Ukrainian news, analysis and commentary from professionals within Ukraine and around the world. It is a network that brings historical, political, cultural information regarding Ukraine, from those who are responsible for it. The press office of the Ukrainian President, historians, directors of various scholarly academies such as the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine are contributors via respective publications and organizations whose contributions are scrutinized for this online report.

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<sup>27</sup> Ukrainian Civil Liberties Association (Toronto: Canada, 200502919), [www.uccla/sources.htm](http://www.uccla/sources.htm).

<sup>28</sup> *Ukraine's Genocide Famine: We Cannot Allow the World to Forget*, (Chicago: Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation - USA, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> "[www.Artukraine.com](http://www.Artukraine.com)."

<sup>30</sup> Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Picador, 2008), [www.orlandofiges.com](http://www.orlandofiges.com).

<sup>31</sup> L. Baldassar, C. V. Baldock, and R. Wilding, *Families Caring across Borders: Migration, Ageing and Transnational Caregiving* (London: Palgrave MacMillan 2006).

## Principal scholars

The first recognition by a government of the existence of the famine came in 1987 with the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, Vladimir Shcherbitsky, providing Soviet recognition of the Holodomor. Kulchytsky (now the Deputy Director of the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine), although a loyal Communist Party member at the same time, realized that as information was being exposed about the events surrounding the famine of 1932-1933, there needed to be an official statement made to uncover the truth. In 1990 the Communist Party admitted that Stalin was the perpetrator of a crime in relation to the Holodomor. Political transition had taken place by then and in 2002 President Kuchma also spoke of the cruel deaths by starvation:

We have to admit – it was genocide. A purposeful, meticulously planned genocide against the Ukrainian people. And it is not a small matter that we now can, and are obliged to remember. The communist regime could not put up with the existence of people who were free and independent of it. Free people, whose personal independence was based on working their own land, had to be eliminated. Even executed by famine – no price was considered too high. Blows were delivered methodically and purposefully. First they took the last of what was left, then they dragged out what was hidden, they took people into hostage, barred roads to cities. They ripped out the grain-growing soul of Ukrainians, broke the back of the nation and consciously provoked cannibalism.<sup>32</sup>

The initial analysis of the famine by writers within Ukraine came during 1988 from literary journals such as *Dzvin* and authors such as Kulchytsky.<sup>33</sup> Ukrainian officials were being forced to expose the truth and begin to show respect for those who were the victims. It is said that writer Ivan Drach had used the word Holodomor for the first time at a writer's congress in 1986 and by 1988, Musiyenko published the word in *Literaturna Ukrayina* [Literary Ukraine]. The developing momentum resulted in a compilation of a people's book of memories by Volodymyr Maniak and Lidiya Kovalenko.<sup>34</sup> This became a major work in beginning the recording of survivor testimonies.

The Reverend Yuri Mytsyk, who in 1996 became head of the History Chair at the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, began collecting eyewitness accounts of the Holodomor and has subsequently published two such volumes not yet translated into English.<sup>35</sup> Drach, Maniak and Mace organized a symposium in 1990 which saw the emergence of documents from state archives. Marochko and Shapoval began searching through the KGB documents and

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<sup>32</sup> Romyr & Associates and Romyr Public Relations, "The Great Famine-Genocide in Soviet Ukraine (Holodomor)," *The Romyr Report: Ukraine, Political Analysis Quarterly* 1, no. 15 (2003).

<sup>33</sup> Pavlyshyn, "Famine Bibliography," pp.192-93.

<sup>34</sup> Maniak, *Testimonies from Kyiv. To Return to People Their History, and to History - the Truth.*, p.134.

<sup>35</sup> Mytsyk, ed. *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived: Part One*; Mytsyk, ed. *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: The Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived. Part Two*.

Ukrainian historians in Ukraine began to uncover material about this event.<sup>36</sup> Authors and scholars such as Ammende; Carynnyk; Conquest; Gregorovich; Kuzio; Luciuk, Kordan and Mace; Magocsi; Margolis; Pavlyshyn; and Wheatcroft for example, were to follow and, assisted in awakening discussion with their different research and publications.

The late James Mace once suggested that ‘Those who study Ukraine seriously are a fairly small and closely knit group’.<sup>37</sup> This is no longer the case, given the large growth in the number of scholars now at work on the Holodomor. Mace had great respect for serious Ukrainian scholars such as Shapoval, Kulchytsky, Panchuk, Bilas, Vynnychenko, Marochko and others. Mace also noted the Institutes of History, Literature, Philosophy, the Congress of Ukrainian Intelligentsia, the Ukrainian Society, Union of Writers, Memorial, and Association of Independent Researchers of the Famine Genocide, for example, who are actively engaged in issues related to the Holodomor.

Other scholars whose work also focuses on issues relating to the Holodomor include Ludmila Pekarska, the curator of the Shevchenko Library and Archive in London; Marko Pavlyshyn (Monash University in Australia); Yuri Mytsyk (Kyiv Mohyla Academy in Ukraine); Mark von Hagen (Columbia University in the USA); Johan Dietsch [previously Ohman] (Lund University in Sweden); Lubomyr Luciuk (Royal Military College of Canada) and also Director of Research at the Ukrainian Civil Liberties Association in Canada. Roman Serbyn has been classified by the International Coordinating Committee of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Holodomor, as one of the top five Holodomor Scholars in the world today.<sup>38</sup> Apart from their publications and understanding of this history, some of these people have provided personal contact time, online support and, valuable up-to-date information that has added to known Holodomor research.

Most recently, papers have been collated in an edited publication by Luciuk.<sup>39</sup> The contributors discussed a range of issues pertaining to the Holodomor. Apart from scholars whose works have already been cited other historians and authors such as Ihor Stebelsky, Jacques Vallin, France Mesle, Serguei Adamets, Serhiy Pyrozhkov (Ambassador of Ukraine, Moldova), Donald Rayfield, David Saunders, Federigo Argentieri, Steven Jacobs, Alexander

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<sup>36</sup> J. Mace, "The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: The Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived...A New Book from Ukraine.," Art Ukraine Information Service, <http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/mace20.htm>.

<sup>37</sup> James E. Mace, [email]17th February 2004.

<sup>38</sup> E. M. Williams, "Roman Serbyn, Canada."

<sup>39</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk assisted by Lisa Grekul, eds., *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*.

Motyl, James Marson, Jonah Goldberg and Colin Duncan have added to the discussion and to this thesis.

Marples calls for new scholarly monographs in English to offer a wider spectrum of ideas on the subject of the Holodomor. His current project involves work with the copied (and purchased from Kyiv in 2006) Central Archive on the Ukraine Famine. The key priority of the CIUS Stasiuk Program in the coming 2-3 years is the Famine-Holodomor in Ukraine.

Marples, together with several hired assistants, has begun a systematic study of the archive, a copy of which is held by the University of Alberta Library. The archive contains over 6,000 pages of information. The project is long-term and the focus is toward producing a major manuscript in 2013, which will be the 80th anniversary of the Holodomor. His focus echoes that of the past President Yushchenko of Ukraine to encourage scholars to research and publish. His aim is for a more up-to-date study of the Holodomor in English.<sup>40</sup> Marples' recent paper reflects much of this study.

It must be noted that some of the scholars listed have been presented with prestigious awards for their work. The awards have become clear indicators of their standing within the community of Holodomor scholars. Conquest, based for many years at the Stanford University's Hoover Institute as a Fellow, received the US Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2005 for his Holodomor research. Conquest, along with Italian Professor Graziosi from Naples University, and Maniak (posthumously) were conferred with the award of 'Yaroslav the Wise Orders V' (the highest presidential honour bestowed by the President and Parliament of Ukraine) in November 2006, for their contribution to research on the Holodomor, drawing attention to the world and, being active in public activities regarding the genocide. Author Tkachenko received an Order of Merit III.<sup>41</sup> Maniak's wife, Kovalenko-Maniak (posthumously) received the 'Order of Princess Olga III' for her work in colation with her husband on their landmark book about the Holodomor.<sup>42</sup>

Conquest has also been a recipient of the Ukrainian Presidential Medal of 'Jaroslav Mudryi, Kievan Prince' for his work on the Ukrainian Holodomor of 1932-1933, in his book *The Harvest of Sorrow*.<sup>43</sup> He has received many other awards and accolades for his contribution to

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<sup>40</sup> David R. Marples, "Debate: Ethnic Issues in the Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine," *Europe Asia Studies* 61, no. 3 (2009): p.511.

<sup>41</sup> Mykola Savchuk, "President Yushchenko Honors Andrea Graziosi, Robert Conquest, Voldymyr Maniak, Lidia Kovalenko-Maniak, Marian Kots, Borys Tkachenko and Petro Yaschuk for Their Work Regarding the Famines in Ukraine," E.M. Williams, Action Ukraine Report - AUR.

<sup>42</sup> Lidiya Kovalenko and Volodymyr Maniak, *Famine 33: People's Memorial Book* (Kyiv: Radyansky Pysmennyk Publishing House, 1991).

<sup>43</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*.

Soviet history but this work remains one of most meticulously researched and major scholarly works on the Holodomor. James Mace is also listed alongside Conquest and is considered a 'hero of Ukraine' with his own awards from the Ukrainian President, albeit posthumously. These awards have recognized the outstanding work accomplished on behalf of the Ukrainian people about genocide that has gone unnoticed in history for many years.

### **Testimonies and memoirs**

Research conducted on Ukraine's Holodomor has so far concentrated on the historical archives and the recording of testimonials or memoirs. Outcomes of research are still emerging with the revelations from released archival material not only from Ukraine but also from those countries that held diplomatic posts in the former Soviet Republics.

Carynnyk, Luciuk and Kordan published evidence from British documents about Ukraine during the Holodomor.<sup>44</sup> Their publication was invaluable in determining and confirming conditions in Ukraine at the time. The collated correspondence outlined the many Soviet decrees being passed at the time, as well as the effects of the famine. The material is a collection not only of diplomatic communications but also of 'relief workers and trade officials'.<sup>45</sup>

British archives have provided some of the most important documents about the Holodomor by virtue of being one of the first European nations to have established diplomatic ties with Soviet Moscow. Britain was seen to have known more about the Soviet Union than any other country.

William Strang, the Counsellor of the British Embassy, informed the Foreign Office in May 1933 that the crisis was seeing an 'acute' number of letters regarding famine conditions in Ukraine. The letters were appealing for the British government to save the Ukrainian people from what was described as the regime that had reduced working people to 'starvation, barbarity and even cannibalism'. 'England save us who are dying of hunger' was the plea.<sup>46</sup> It has become clear from such documents that the British Foreign Office knew what was occurring in Ukraine and had been clearly informed of the plight of starving Ukrainians.

Reports sent back home from attachés posted in the Soviet Union have been invaluable in unraveling the history. While Germany had three Consulates in Ukraine, Italy's Ambassador

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<sup>44</sup> Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xiv.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xxiii.

Bernaldo Attolico was in Moscow with consulates in Georgia, Leningrad and Odessa and also with vice-consulates in Kharkiv, Batum and Novorossiysk. It is known that twenty countries maintained missions in Moscow in the early 1930s. These were Afghanistan, Austria, China, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Persia, Poland, Sweden and Turkey.<sup>47</sup>

While the many dispatches to the various foreign offices have assisted in determining the existence of the famine and the terror imposed on Ukraine, they are a disturbing reflection on the attitude and political motivations of these nations that resulted in no action being taken to protest Stalin's actions.

An example of the lack of response can be seen with the Ukrainian National Women's League of America begging the United States government to request that the American Red Cross establish a Ukrainian base to assist some form of relief from other countries. The State Department concluded that it could not become involved. According to government officials, because the famine was not affecting American citizens it could not intervene nor would the Red Cross involve itself with relief operations without the request or consent of the government of the country involved.<sup>48</sup>

### **The artificial famine as genocide**

Documents discovered in the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Soviet history, originally discovered by representatives of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Rome, eventually found their way to James Mace. The Consul Gradenigo, who was in the consulate in the Ukrainian SSR capital of Kharkiv, said in one of his dispatches dated 31 May 1933, that 'there was no doubt that the famine was artificial, designed to change the ethnic material in Ukraine, and intended to solve the 'Ukrainian problem' once and for all'.<sup>49</sup>

Mace attached such documents as an appendix to his 1986 report to a United States Senate Commission on the Ukrainian Famine. The Congressional commission eventually published six volumes of documentation on the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933.<sup>50</sup> It produced a final report that was submitted to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and to the United Nations Office in Geneva in May 1990. This should have become an international alert to this event

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. l.iii.

<sup>48</sup> M. Carynyk, "Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, the United States and the Ukrainian Famine," in *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, ed. Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), p.135.

<sup>49</sup> James E. Mace, "Ukrainian Manmade Famine of 1932-1933," Williams, E.M., <http://artukraine.com/famineart/mace2.htm>.

<sup>50</sup> "U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Report to Congress. Adopted by the Commission, April 19, 1988. Submitted to Congress April 22, 1988," U.S. Government printing Office, <http://mwukr.prob.org/findings.htm>.

but according to the President of the Commission, Jacob Sundberg, it was overshadowed by an incident that was to capture international interest, the vandalizing of Jewish cemeteries in France.<sup>51</sup>

Sundberg notes that contemporary research is revealing further archival information regarding Stalin's personal role in the organization of the famine. He notes the work by Shapoval in revealing such research and the question of intent of genocide. Sundberg raises the notion of a state, acting through the dealings of those exercising state powers, with genocidal intent, and being responsible for committing the crime of genocide. He states that this should be applied to the case of Stalin and the Soviet Union and he believes that Ukrainians 'are right to expect acknowledgement'.<sup>52</sup>

Gregorovich believed that three findings of the Report to the U.S. Congress summed up the main points:

1. There is no doubt that large numbers of inhabitants of the Ukrainian SSR and the North Caucasus Territory starved to death in a man made famine in 1932-1933 caused by the seizure of the 1932 crop by Soviet authorities.
2. The victims of the Ukrainian famine numbered in the millions.
3. Joseph Stalin and those around him committed genocide against Ukrainians in 1932-1933.<sup>53</sup>

Within Ukraine and the Ukrainian diaspora there are now many organizations and institutions supporting Holodomor research. These include such organizations as the Association of Famine Researchers in Ukraine; Kyiv Mohyla University; the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory; assorted US Congress Branches and university departments as well as institutes such as the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI); the Harriman Institute at Columbia University; the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre and the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association (both in Toronto, Ontario). There are many more universities now focused upon this event and holding events to reveal new material.

Organizations, people and researchers have dedicated themselves to unraveling the history, uncovering the truth, rewriting the history books, conducting symposiums, outlining new evidence, presenting testimonials and providing some sort of support for the Holodomor

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<sup>51</sup> Jacob W. F. Sundberg, "International Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp.69-76.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p.76.

<sup>53</sup> Andrew Gregorovich, "Genocide in Ukraine 1933," *Famine - Genocide in Ukraine 1932-1933* [www.faminegenocide.com/resources/genocide/index.html](http://www.faminegenocide.com/resources/genocide/index.html).



survivors and those remembering the events. The Memorial Association, based in Kyiv, has devoted many years to exposing Stalin's crimes and providing financial and day-to-day help for many victims left in difficult economic circumstances from which they have never recovered. Such organizations have a desire to create public awareness and educate people about the Holodomor.

The causes, chronological sequence and consequences of the Holodomor are now available to scholars through various newly discovered archival sources. The Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine in Kyiv holds documents dated 1932-1933 that relate to the activities of Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of Ukraine and the Departments of the Central Committee of Ukraine. These documents 'contain resolutions, directive letters and telegrams from the Central Committee of All-Union Communist Party, the Soviet of People's Commissars and corresponding organizations in Ukraine; correspondence from local Party committees and executive committees of local Soviets; official and private appeals of oblast (regional) Party committees to higher Party authorities; memoranda and information reports from branches of state security, justice and prosecutor's office, letters from private persons' and so on.<sup>54</sup>

According to the State Archive the documents are said to be organized into four sections:

1. Grain procurement policies in Ukraine.
2. Escalation of food shortages, large-scale starvation and mortality among the peasantry.
3. Political attitudes and political unrest among the peasants and some members of grassroots Party organizations. Incidents of mass withdrawal from collective farms.
4. Measures (unfortunately late) taken by the Central Committee and the People's Commissariat to constrain the scale of the disaster.<sup>55</sup>

As Serbyn notes, 'a multitude of documents from the secret archives' give us a better understanding of this incredible crime and the suffering of those who experienced it.<sup>56</sup>

Sources of information for Holodomor research can be said to emanate from many different places outside what was Soviet Ukraine at the time. Soviet Press records of the period negating the evidence of a famine; eyewitness reports from those who managed to escape the

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<sup>54</sup> State Committee of the Archives of Ukraine, "1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine: Archival Materials from the Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine (Former Archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine)," Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine, <http://www.archives.gov.ua/Sections/Famine/Documents/PSM.php>.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Roman Serbyn, "Is There a "Smoking Gun" for the Holodomor?," UNIAN, [www.unian.net](http://www.unian.net).

Soviet Union; foreign affairs officers' reports working in the Soviet Union at the time; refugees of various nationalities escaping across frontiers (Ukrainian Jews escaped to Persia, Germans fled to Manchuria and India); letters from famine victims and reports from journalists of different nationalities living or secretly traveling through Ukraine at the time.

During the 1920s and the 1930s Graziosi noted that approximately 70,000 - 80,000 foreign workers and engineers were in the Soviet Union. The testimonies of those workers match that of modern scholarship regarding the Holodomor years. Their accounts presented a vivid picture of life in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and had some impact in the west. They wrote about the dispossessed kurkuls, the starving women and children waiting at railway stations, the deportation of peasants, the shantytowns, the abandoned children begging for bread, widespread disease and militia trucks carrying away dead bodies. Many foreign workers remarked that 'the USSR was in the early 1930's a country in war'.<sup>57</sup> Photos taken by an Austrian specialist who worked in Russian industry until 1934 in Kharkiv and those of Dr. Dittlof a German company director in the north Caucasus served to substantiate those reports of the Holodomor.<sup>58</sup>

Primary source material such as Pidhainy's testimonies of the Holodomor have been discussed with related causes and effects throughout this thesis.<sup>59</sup> Marquis, in conducting his research for a Master's thesis, discusses the transcripts of twelve survivors' testimonies.<sup>60</sup> However, he has followed previous researchers by not entering into any analysis of the interviews. This has been understandable considering the primary concern has been to gather testimonies from people. It was one of the objectives of this researcher to determine whether there were lasting effects of this period of terror and starvation on the lives of the survivors and uncover what they were.

One recent study by Johan (Ohman) Dietsch at Lund University in Sweden who investigated Ukrainian subjugation by the USSR as 'demonstrated by the ravages inflicted upon the populace by the Holodomor... and the formation of national and personal identities'.<sup>61</sup> Dietsch's focus will be a further unique addition to current publications. His thesis, entitled

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<sup>57</sup> Andrea Graziosi, *A New, Peculiar State. Explorations in Soviet History, 1917-1937* (London: Praeger Publishers, 2000), p.223-24.

<sup>58</sup> Ammende, *Human Life in Russia*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>59</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*.

<sup>60</sup> C.A. Madden, "The Ukrainian Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933, and Aspects of Stalinism: An Annotated Bibliography-in-Progress in the English Language," The Shevchenko Scientific Society, Inc., <http://www.shevchenko.org/famine/default.htm>.

<sup>61</sup> Lesia Chernihivska, "Holodomor: The Ukrainian Genocide, 1932-33."

'Making Sense of Suffering. Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture', was made available in 2006.<sup>62</sup>

Dietsch echoes much of what Subtelny states in the early 1990s, that one of the major functions of the diaspora has been to 'speak up for Ukrainian interests, when compatriots in Soviet Ukraine were forced to be silent'.<sup>63</sup> His thesis was not so much an overview of testimonies as an analysis of issues related to the Holocaust as well as the Holodomor. Dietsch discusses the fact that the 'introduction of the Holocaust into the history courses and Ukrainian historical culture has competed with the introduction of the Holodomor'.<sup>64</sup>

One most recent work has been that of David Hamalian in his honors thesis *The Soviet Famine of 1933: Unresolved Historiography*.<sup>65</sup> His work analyses the debates that have been ongoing for two decades in trying to 'explain one of the worst tragedies of the twentieth century'.<sup>66</sup> Graziosi in his contribution in 2008 about this tragedy believes that 'genocide cannot but be possible'. He notes that Stalin and his regime worked on mass- extermination to break the peasantry with an anti-Ukrainian policy that caused genocide; the genocide was 'willfully maneuvered towards this end [genocide] once it became about as a unwanted result of the regime policies' and 'the scale of both punishment and terror reached extreme dimensions'. The Holodomor 'was motivated and constructed theoretically and politically, linking the social to the national question'.<sup>67</sup>

Graziosi outlines the consequences of famine and states that the use of hunger was able to break the resistance of the peasant; it guaranteed Stalin victory over them; opened the door to the 1937-1938 terror; allowed the subjugation of the most important republic and transformed the Soviet federal state into a despotic empire. Worse still though, it left a legacy of immense grief within the Ukrainian families who were barred from dealing with the Holodomor due to the ban on discussing the famine. The Holodomor he said, 'seriously impaired the traditional society's structures that slowed down and distorted nation building'.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Johan Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering: Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*, 280 ed. (Sweden: Lund University, 2006).

<sup>63</sup> Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1992), p.572.

<sup>64</sup> Johan Dietsch, "Making Sense of Suffering: Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Culture. [Dissertation Abstract]," (Lund University, Department of History, 2006).

<sup>65</sup> Hamalian, "The Soviet Famine of 1933: Unresolved Historiography".

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>67</sup> Andrea Graziosi, "Why and in What Sense Was the Holodomor a Genocide?," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp.153-55.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p.153.

In May 2007 the Permanent Representative of Ukraine, His Excellency Mr. Yuriy Sergeyev called for the United Nations to ‘contribute to the commemoration of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great famine of 1932-1933 (Holodomor)... by adopting a relevant document’ related to the issue of genocide. He went on further to say that Ukraine did ‘not intend to establish responsibility... for the acts committed on the territory of Ukraine in 1932-1933’ and emphasized ‘that policies and acts of the then totalitarian regime should be blamed for the man-made famine’.<sup>69</sup>

Some scholars of this event in history are now more firm than the above political statement in confirming that the Holodomor be classified as genocide. They have declared that Stalin’s approach in dealing with the Ukrainian countryside should be recognized as genocide.<sup>70</sup> James Mace, a Holodomor scholar who had called this event genocide from the beginning of his research with Conquest stated that he remained:

Convinced that for Stalin to have complete centralized power in his hands, he found it necessary to physically destroy the second- largest Soviet republic, meaning the annihilation of the Ukrainian peasantry, Ukrainian intelligentsia, Ukrainian language, and history as understood by the people; to do away with Ukraine and things Ukrainian as such.<sup>71</sup>

One of the problems has been the United Nation’s requirement of providing specific proof of intent. This has been an area of contention in genocide research as already covered. Recent archival documents have been able to provide such proof and these are being noted in recent publications to support the notion of genocide. Mace’s 2003 paper included in Luciuk’s recent publication, discusses the different documents uncovered from archives, such as the Moscow Politburo decree signed by Stalin and Molotov in December 1932. Other documents note the direct roles that Molotov and Kaganovich had for example, in overseeing grain procurements in Ukraine and the Kuban in October 1933. Mace noted in 2003 that there were enough eyewitness accounts, memoirs and documentary evidence to provide more evidence on the

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<sup>69</sup> His Excellency Mr. Yuriy Sergeyev, "61st United Nations General Assembly Session On: Civilization and the Challenge for Peace: Obstacles and Opportunities," United Nations, <http://action-ukraine-report.blogspot.com/2007/05/aur844-may-18-enduring-crisis-in.html#a23>.

<sup>70</sup> Mace, "The Day."; G. Donovan, "Group Calls U.N. To Recognize Famine Was Act of Genocide," *National Catholic Reporter*, April 25th 2003; Chernihivska, "Holodomor: The Ukrainian Genocide, 1932-33."; "U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Report to Congress. Adopted by the Commission, April 19, 1988. Submitted to Congress April 22, 1988."; J Wilkinson, "70th Anniversary of Soviet-Induced Famine and Genocide in Ukraine," Myroslava Oleksiuk, <http://edm.ais.co.uk/weblink/html/printable.html/ref=127>; His Beatitude Constantine, His Grace Stefan, and Sawkiw, "Joint Statement: On the 70th Anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine- Genocide of 1932-1933."; L. Kuper, "The Genocidal State: An Overview," in *State Violence and Ethnicity*, ed. P.L. Van den Berghe (Niwot: University of Colorado Press, 1990); Shapoval, ed. *The Famine - Genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine*; Isajiw, ed. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*.

<sup>71</sup> Mace, "The Day."

invasiveness of Moscow's interventions in Ukraine during that period of time.<sup>72</sup> That material has been substantively added to since that time.

Andrij Semotiuk, a Canadian and former UN correspondent and Human Rights Commission tribunal panel member, notes Stalin's own responses to Churchill in 1942 when asked about the stresses of carrying out the policy of collectivization. He was to say 'the Collective Farm policy was a terrible struggle... 10 million [dead]'.<sup>73</sup>

Ukrainian Professor Yuri Shapoval in discussing the same issue in his most recent work, had noted that in Stalin's letter to Kaganovych, his main concern was in losing Ukraine [outlined elsewhere in the thesis as 'the Ukrainian Question'] and the need to quickly change the situation and to establish Ukraine as 'a real fortress of the U.S.S.R'.<sup>74</sup> Shapoval states quite strongly that the newly discovered archival documents clearly indicate 'it was the meticulous organization of the execution of Ukrainian peasants that invested the Holodomor, i.e., forced starvation in Ukraine, with a character of genocide'. He went on to say that the three main people who were responsible for implementing Stalin's severe repressive measures were Molotov, Kaganovych and Postyshev. At the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine, Postyshev reported that '1933 was the year of the defeat of Ukrainian nationalist counter-revolution'.<sup>75</sup> A final member of Stalin's hierarchy was Balytsky who became head of the GPU of the Ukrainian SSR. These men were to implement the harshest measures based on repressive elements to crush any resistance to the grain requisitioning. The methods used to punish the people were outlined in the chapters outlining the memories of the time in question.

These methods were repeated in Luciuk's recent publication. They included: fines in kind; a ban on selling or trading in food; a ban on deliveries of manufactured goods; the buying up of gold and other assets; an internal passport system and no availability of imported foodstuffs. The 'deliberate destruction of Ukrainian peasant farmers, intellectuals, government officials, and anyone accused of 'Ukrainian Nationalism' provided additional grounds to consider the Kremlin's actions as genocide'. Shapoval strongly suggests that Ukraine suffered the most

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<sup>72</sup> James E Mace, "Is the Ukrainian Genocide a Myth? (Originally Published in the Canadian American Slavic Studies Journal, Vol. 37, No.3, 2003, 45-52)," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomir Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp.54-55.

<sup>73</sup> Andrij. J. Semotiuk, "Evidence Proved Genocide Occurred " BIGMIR Internet, <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/oped/29075/>.

<sup>74</sup> Shapoval, ed. *The Famine - Genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine*, p.4.

<sup>75</sup> James Marson, "Holodomor Denial Protects Russia's Self-Image," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p.197.

and that 'there were clear signs of genocide'.<sup>76</sup> Shapoval includes details of reports in 1932 and 1933 from the Japanese Consul in Odessa and the Polish Consul General, who note the Ukrainian peasants specifically, were in a pitiful state, living in a state of desolation, with emaciated bodies, begging for bread. The Polish Consul General's report noted that this was not the case in neighbouring Russian regions. The reports of people holding such office refute the thesis of a Soviet-wide famine.

Postyshev at the time was the manager of a campaign to suppress Ukrainian culture. He was Stalin's personal Moscow commissar and as Second Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine ruled Ukraine dictatorially throughout this period of time.<sup>77</sup> Serbyn stated that Stalin not only knew about the famine raging in Ukraine during 1932-1933, he 'was its chief architect and overseer'. He was the one who sent Molotov and Kaganovych to organize the unreasonably high grain requisitioning.<sup>78</sup>

Although Stalin banned the word famine on media releases and any official documentation at the time, he was found to have written the word in a letter to Molotov in 1932 which stated that local mismanagement was responsible for a 'state of ruin and famine' in many Ukrainian regions. At the time there were grain reserves of over three million tons that could have been sent to feed the starving regions. Nothing was done to organize any famine relief for the peasants as would have been reasonably expected from any nation facing such a catastrophe.<sup>79</sup> Rather Moscow rejected outside aid or relief and further more, exported over a million and a half tons of grain over both years in question.

The Soviet system had in place a passport system to control movement of people out and into Soviet Ukrainian regions. This did not stop some however from travelling to Belarus and Russia where the situation was not that grim and bring some foodstuffs back to the villages. In January 1933 a directive by Stalin and Molotov signed a directive to stop any railway tickets being sold to Ukrainian peasants.<sup>80</sup>

Serbyn succinctly provides a clear overview of those regions being the prime targets of Stalin's directives. He states that the majority of deaths from famine were Ukrainians living in

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<sup>76</sup> Yuri Shapoval, "The Struggle for History: Recognizing the *Holodomor*," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp. 80-86.

<sup>77</sup> Makuch and Markus, "Famine."

<sup>78</sup> Serbyn, "Famine in Ukraine."

<sup>79</sup> Nicolas Wirth, "Case Study: The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933," [http://www.massviolence.org/The-1932-1933-Great-Famine-in-Ukraine?id\\_mot=44&](http://www.massviolence.org/The-1932-1933-Great-Famine-in-Ukraine?id_mot=44&).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

the Ukrainian SSR and those Ukrainians in neighbouring regions of Russia. Serbyn states 'the correlation between the ethnic and social identities of the group forming the vast majority of famine victims is inescapable'.<sup>81</sup> The peasants had been the main proponents of Ukrainian national revival, their cultural elites were almost entirely annihilated and it is said that by 1933 any hint of Ukrainianization was being replaced by new policies to enforce Russification. Serbyn ascertains that it was clear within Soviet records that Stalin's repression was being aimed specifically at Ukrainians.<sup>82</sup> He notes a GPU report by 'a Communist functionary' who was speaking to a group of collective farmers in the Kharkiv oblast and who stated that:

The famine in Ukraine was brought about by in order to reduce the number of Ukrainians, resettle in their place people from other parts of the USSR and, in this way, crush all thought of independence.<sup>83</sup>

Steven Jacobs, professor at the University of Alabama, notes what he called the 'ongoing consensus of the academic-scholarly community... that the fate which befell the kulak Ukrainian peasantry during the years of the Great famine 1932-1933, was indeed genocide'. He notes an address of Lemkin's in 1953 when he states that the destruction of the Ukrainian nation was a classic example of Soviet genocide. Lemkin cites the attacks on Ukrainian intellectuals whom he classes as the brain of the Ukrainian people; attacks on the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church which he describes as the soul of the Ukrainian people; the starvation and famine faced by the Ukrainian peasant farmers as well as what he states was the 'fragmentation of the Ukrainian people' by their dispersion out of Ukrainian regions and integration of others into those regions.<sup>84</sup>

Motyl agrees with those scholars whose belief that the Holodomor was genocide and notes that Stalin and his regime 'practiced genocide as part of its policies toward its subject populations'. He further notes that along with the 20 million non-Russians, Russians were 'shot, starved, or worked to death'. It was an unwillingness to assist the famine that collectivization and subsequent policies such as the closure of borders that 'intensified the Holodomor's impact and permitted it to run its deathly course'.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Serbyn, "Famine in Ukraine."

<sup>82</sup> Roman Serbyn, "The *Holodomor*: Genocide against the Ukrainians," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p. 68.

<sup>83</sup> Mace, "Is the Ukrainian Genocide a Myth? (Originally Published in the Canadian American Slavic Studies Journal, Vol. 37, No.3, 2003, 45-52)," p.57.

<sup>84</sup> Steven Jacobs, "Raphael Lemkin and the Holodomor: Was It Genocide?," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine* ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp.163-64.

<sup>85</sup> Alexander J. Motyl, "Looking at the *Holodomor* through the Lens of the Holocaust," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp.175-76.

## Ukraine's Genocide Bill

Ukraine's Parliament adopted a Bill on 28 November 2006 that labelled the Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. Furthermore, this genocide has been attributed to Stalin and the Soviet regime of the time, resulting in 10 million Ukrainian deaths.<sup>86</sup> The Holodomor itself was focused upon the eastern part of Ukraine as well as ethnographic areas outside Ukraine with large Ukrainian communities, such as the Kuban [south east Ukraine] and eastward to the Volga.

Ukrainian lawmaker Bespaliy states that the Bill was 'a belated move but our obligation to remember' and also says that 'those who do not remember do not have a future'.<sup>87</sup> 'How can it be called anything but genocide,' said seventy-eight year old survivor Kateryna Kryvenko. Kryvenko had attended the commemoration in Kyiv in November 2006 and recalls:

Crying at the feet of Soviet officials as they ransacked her family's village home, carting off what little food her family had managed to hide under a floorboard. She said authorities took everything, and her father and three brothers and sisters died.<sup>88</sup>

The President of Ukraine made the following statement in one of his recent speeches to his nation. It has been reproduced in a brochure by the World Congress of Ukrainians with the support of the Ukrainian Parliament.

I address you on behalf of a nation that lost about ten million people as a result of the Holodomor genocide... we insist that the world learn the truth about all crimes against humanity. This is the only way we can be sure that criminals will no longer be emboldened by indifference.<sup>89</sup>

History has failed to condemn the perpetrators and, unlike Germany and Japan who must atone for their wartime crimes, the Russians have long resisted the call at the United Nations to label the Holodomor genocide and honour the survivors.<sup>90</sup> In response to such denials the call has only grown stronger. The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches petitioned to declare the Holodomor an 'act of genocide'. The council included Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim leaders and it presented their petition to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan in

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<sup>86</sup> Natasha Lisova, "Ukraine Recognize (sic) Famine as Genocide", In The Washington Post (Tuesday, November 28, 2006) (The Associated Press, 2006, cited 29 November 2006), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/28/AR20061128006...>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Mara. D. Bellaby, "Ukraine Marks 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of Famine", In The Washington Press (The Associated Press, cited 29 November, 2006) <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/25/AR20061125002...>

<sup>89</sup> Anna Alekseyenko et al., "Holodomor: Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930's" (Ukrainian World Congress Holodomor Working Party, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2007)

<sup>90</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk, ed. *Not Worthy. Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times*, (Kashtan Press: Kingston, Canada, 2004), p. 7.



2003.<sup>91</sup> President Yushenko now has the 2007 Bill declaring the Holodomor genocide and hopes that this will be formally adopted by the United Nations.<sup>92</sup>

Historian Oleh Gerus of the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies at the University of Manitoba stated that Hitler in witnessing a 'general indifference to Stalin's engineered mass starvation of Ukrainians', was 'certainly encouraged to launch his planned extermination of the Jewish population'.<sup>93</sup> The ramifications of such a concept are grave indeed. Dietsch cites Hryshko who stated that 'only the Jewish victims of Nazi genocide in World War II can be compared to the Ukrainian victims of Soviet genocide... but even this cannot eclipse the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933'.<sup>94</sup>

The crimes of Josef Stalin are far greater than those heinous ones of Adolph Hitler and as Margolis stated, with Roosevelt and Churchill allied together to destroy Hitler they destroyed would could be construed a lesser threat and unleashed a greater one in the Stalin and the Soviet Union.<sup>95</sup>

Two writers of Jewish descent living in Ukraine were able to provide eyewitness accounts of the Holodomor in their publications. Grossman had worked in the Donbas region in the early 1930s and Kopelev had been a communist activist during those years.<sup>96</sup> These authors have added to our understanding of the history of the human loss of this period with eyewitness accounts of the persecution.<sup>97</sup>

Mazurkevich in her closing statement of the U.S. Commission on the Ukrainian Famine notes that although millions of lives had been lost:

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<sup>91</sup> Dmytro Soloviy and Stephen Shumeyko, eds., *The Golgotha of Ukraine. Eyewitness Accounts of the Famine in Ukraine Instigated and Fostered by the Kremlin in an Attempt to Quell Ukrainian Resistance to Soviet Russian National and Social Enslavement of the Ukrainian People* (New York: Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, 1953), p. 11.

<sup>92</sup> Cited in Olga Volkovetska, *Foreign Minister Tarasiuk Attributes Russia's Position on Severe Famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933 to Its Reluctance to Give Appraisal to Crimes of Communist Regime*, Williams, E. M.

<sup>93</sup> Oleh W. Gerus, *The Great Ukrainian Famine - Genocide*, University of Manitoba, [www.umanitoba.ca/centres/ukrainian\\_canadian/newsletter/2001/dauphin\\_monu...](http://www.umanitoba.ca/centres/ukrainian_canadian/newsletter/2001/dauphin_monu...)

<sup>94</sup> Johan Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering. Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*, 280 ed. (Sweden: Lund University, 2006), p. 124.

<sup>95</sup> Eric S. Margolis, "Remembering Modern History's Greatest Crime," *UNIAN Ltd.*, <http://unian.net/eng/news-254567.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Vasily Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, trans. Thomas P. Whitney (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2000); Lev Kopelev, *The Education of a True Believer*, trans. Gary Kern (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

<sup>97</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing*; Kopelev, *The Education of a True Believer*.

We can in some small way ensure the small measure of justice, justice that derives from setting the record straight, by seeing to it that this story becomes part of the consciousness of future generations.<sup>98</sup>

## Deniers

My friend Hnatek and I were going to school. Spring was starting, it was wet, snow melting wet. We were walking and after an hour Hnatek fell like horse. He fell in the mud. I went to him and saw blood coming out of his nose. Poor thing – he was so hungry and weak that he couldn't even walk.... Well, we heard that people were dying. In our village there was one poor family that had five children. They all died. Father and mother went together, one was left, but then all died. They took them on the carts because there was nothing with which to make coffins... They buried them. Later people died in the fields. Someone died here another there and then I heard that there was cannibalism.<sup>99</sup>

Such memories by survivors have accumulated and yet between 1932 and 1991 the Soviet regime denied that any famine had occurred. Such denial had a very long history. The use of the word 'famine' in references to the events in Ukraine at the time led to severe punishment and/or death.<sup>100</sup> Those in the West who knew and spoke out were either not believed or ignored.<sup>101</sup> Ellmen joins Mace as one of many historians, who believe that the silence initially surrounding the famine was not accidental, but was part of an intentional policy and act of genocide. Such historians have since concluded that there was clear evidence of the Soviet policy being the key factor contributing to an artificial famine.<sup>102</sup>

There have been many deniers of the Holodomor. Historians based in North America who were involved in Russian and Soviet studies during the Cold War era 'were often trained by Russian émigré scholars' and it has since been argued, gave Ukraine's history of famine scant attention nor credence. Kyivan cultural writer Natalia Bilotserkivets notes in 1995 that the USSR's Ambassador to Canada, Alexander Yakovlev, whom she calls 'the ideologue of Perestroika', states that: 'The famine of 1933 was nothing more than an exaggeration of bourgeois nationalists'.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> J. E. Mace and L. Heretz, eds., *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933. Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), p.1732.

<sup>99</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth 2004).

<sup>100</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.259.

<sup>101</sup> C. Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia* (London: Ganta Books, 2000), p. 4.; J.E. Mace, "The Politics of Famine: American Government and Press Response to the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 3, no. 1 (1988).; Carynnyk, "Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, the United States and the Ukrainian Famine.;" Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*.

<sup>102</sup> Michael Ellmen, "The Role of Leadership Perceptions and of Intent in the Soviet Famine of 1932-1934," *Europe - Asia Studies* 57, no. 6 (2005): p.841.

<sup>103</sup> Natalia Bilotserkivets, "A Cruel Lesson," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, <http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/1995/049522>.

The editor of a Canadian communist publication in Manitoba was to similarly note the Holodomor never happened and that it was a hoax. He went so far as to state that the Kurkuls were armed and financed by Nazi Germany and were conducting a systematic campaign of assassination of Soviet government officials.<sup>104</sup> To add insult to injury, the aforementioned article was published during the seventieth anniversary of the Holodomor.

Remarkably, even the collapse of the Soviet Union during 1991 has not led to the complete overthrow of this culture of denialism inside Russia or by its sympathisers. Although not outright denial of the Holodomor actually occurred, current Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin in opposing the recent classification of genocide given by the Ukrainian Parliament to the Holodomor, states that 'Ukraine was *politicizing* the issue'. The once Ukrainian Prime Minister and now President, Viktor Yanukovich, proposes the use of the term 'tragedy' rather than genocide to describe the Holodomor because he does not want to spoil ties with Russia. Recent resolutions by Russia's State Duma refuse to recognize the Holodomor as genocide, with Russia constantly challenging the very existence of Ukraine as a state.<sup>105</sup> Natasha Lisova in discussing these developments notes that:

Russia has been careful to avoid any actions that could subject it to compensation claims from victims of Soviet-era wrongs.<sup>106</sup>

Russia's perspective was most evident during a 2009 debate between Emeritus Professor Serbyn with Professor Kulchytski speaking on the Ukrainian position and Professor Wheatcroft with Professor Kondrashin speaking from the Russian perspective at a public forum at the University of Melbourne in March 2009. The topic was *Holodomor – Genocide or not?* The debate deteriorated with an outburst by Wheatcroft waving a booklet prepared by scholars from Ukraine, USA and Canada, published to inform the world about the Holodomor, and calling out that 'it was propaganda'. He was referring to the statement noting 7 to 10 million deaths resulting from the Holodomor. What Professor Wheatcroft did not clarify to the audience was that this was a joint statement by 65 UN member states and adopted by the 58<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly on 7 November 2003.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Ken Kaltunyk, "The Famine That Never Was," Manitoba Regional Committee, Communist Party of Canada (Marxist- Leninist). [Email from Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organizations].

<sup>105</sup> Shapoval, "The Struggle for History: Recognizing the *Holodomor*," p. 85.

<sup>106</sup> Natasha Lisova, "Ukraine Parliament Recognizes Soviet-Era Famine as Genocide [Associated Press]," Ukemonde, <http://www.ukemonde.com/holodomor/index.html>.

<sup>107</sup> *Holodomor: Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930s*, (Kyiv: The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, 2007), p.3.

### Recognition of interest in the West

Meanwhile much of the reignition of contemporary interest in the West regarding the Holodomor can be attributed to a campaign held at the end of the 1990s to revoke the Pulitzer Prize of *The New York Times* reporter Walter Duranty. Duranty was based in Moscow during the 1930s and published inaccurate and misleading pro-Soviet accounts of the period in question.<sup>108</sup> Luciuk tirelessly campaigned to have the Pulitzer Prize revoked from Duranty and during a lecture tour to Perth in 2003 outlined the campaign and distributed information about the Holodomor. As part of the campaign, people were encouraged to send a protest postcard to the Pulitzer Committee headquarters in New York.

The campaign to revoke Duranty's Pulitzer was a significant issue related to the history of the Holodomor for it sought to dispel the inaccurate information and propaganda that had been fed to the west by someone who was awarded journalism's highest accolade for reporting about events in Ukraine during 1932-1933. The anti-Duranty campaign gained momentum in America and Canada as well as in other parts of the world. Taylor echoed the sentiment of many when he wrote that Duranty had become the symbol for the West's failure to recognize and understand the Holodomor at the time.<sup>109</sup> Cynics might suggest that succumbing to the temptation of an automobile, a comfortable apartment and a mistress by the KGB might have had something to do with Duranty's stance at the time.<sup>110</sup>

The method used to inform and lodge such a world-wide protest was the brainchild of the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association. Eventually more than forty-five thousand postcards signed by people the world over were mailed to the Pulitzer Prize Committee demanding that it revoke Duranty's prize.<sup>111</sup> This campaign was restarted in 2008.

The postcard campaign provoked the interest of many throughout Ukraine and the Diaspora. It accounted for this researcher's curiosity surrounding the historical period in question being seriously aroused for the first time. It became important to uncover the Western Australian Ukrainian migrants' stories and contribute to scholarly research pertaining to this event in history. In the words of Condoleezza Rice, if you have 'the opportunity to explore the state of

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<sup>108</sup> M. B. Kuropas, *Honoring Lubomyr Luciuk: Giving Credit Where Credit Is Due* (E-Poshta, 2003 [cited 15 September 2003]; Canadian Civil Liberties Association, UCCLA: Revoke Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize Section (UCCLA, 2003 [cited 8 October 2003]), <http://www.uccla.ca/issues/genocide/>

<sup>109</sup> Cited in W. W. Isajiw, ed. *Famine - Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research* (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003), p. 91.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.88.

<sup>111</sup> Victor Malarek, "Ukrainians Demand Pulitzer Be Revoked," in *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times*, ed. Lubomyr Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2004), p.108.

human knowledge as it stands today' you should 'search for the truth and ...teach and enlighten those within it'.<sup>112</sup>

Although Ukraine has had deniers, such as *The New York Times* reporter Duranty, it has also had those who were able to witness first hand the famine conditions at the time and report what they saw honestly and publicly. One such reporter was the Welshman Gareth Jones who worked for the London *Evening Standard*. Jones managed to evade the Soviet authorities in March 1933 and walk for forty miles through villages ravaged by famine and closed to foreigners. He spoke to villagers and stayed in their homes. His accounts were evidence of the effects of the starvation from the people who were affected by it. Jones has since taken on hero status amongst Ukrainian survivors and those involved with this particular event in history.<sup>113</sup> His contemporary eyewitness testimony is also a powerful antidote to the denials of Duranty and others. Jones was banned from returning to the USSR by the Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Maxim Litvinov, under the charge of espionage. He became a marked man.<sup>114</sup>

Just prior to Jones' press reports another journalist, Malcolm Muggeridge had published three similarly damning reports about Soviet policy in Ukraine. Unfortunately his articles carried no weight as he was too afraid to sign his name to his reports. Nevertheless his articles in *The Manchester Guardian* in 1933 were actually the first eye witness accounts published in the United Kingdom.<sup>115</sup> These two journalists are believed to be the only two who tried to expose the Holodomor of Ukraine.<sup>116</sup>

The lack of western reporting of the Holodomor is believed by many historians to be critical to the lack of public awareness and of potential Western aid reaching Ukraine during the Holodomor itself. This explains why researchers such as Conquest, Mace, and Luciuk focused upon these journalists whenever discussing the Holodomor.<sup>117</sup> Indeed Jones' work has taken on such prominence regarding the Holodomor that a plaque honouring his effort was unveiled on the 2 May 2006 at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Professor Luciuk and the

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<sup>112</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "The Role of the Educated Person," in *Go Forth and Do Good*, ed. Wilson D. Miscamble (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1995), pp.248-49.

<sup>113</sup> Margaret Siriol Colley, "Gareth's Expose of 1933 Soviet Ukrainian Starvation," Colley, Nigel, <http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/>.

<sup>114</sup> Margaret Siriol Colley, "A Curtain of Silence: An Essay of Comparison," *Canadian American Slavic Studies: Holodomor: The Ukrainian Genocide 1932-1933 75th Anniversary* 42, no. 3 (2008): p.305.

<sup>115</sup> J. Koshiw, "The 1932-33 Famine in the British Government Archives," in *Famine - Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933*, ed. W. W Isajiw (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and documentation Centre, 2003), p.61.

<sup>116</sup> Colley, "A Curtain of Silence: An Essay of Comparison," p.297.

<sup>117</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, pp.320-21. Luciuk, ed. *Not Worthy. Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times.*

Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association played their part in this action. The historical marker has been prepared in English, Welsh and Ukrainian languages. The millions of Ukrainians who died during the Holodomor as well as Western Australian survivors such as Orysia quoted below, relied on people like Jones to have the courage to give their suffering a voice:

In the villages they could no longer bury them. No, they were wrapped or the communists transported them in a bullock cart. They threw them and dug a ditch and buried them like cats or dogs. It is said, and you will read about it, that 10 million died but that is only what is known. There were more who died.<sup>118</sup>

Nevertheless, the period since 1945 has been one of growing popular consciousness in the West regarding the horrors of genocide. The Jewish Holocaust, for example is widely regarded as a 'warning from History' regarding the threat posed by racism and ethnic supremacism. Historian Robert Conquest proposed three reasons why, in his opinion, the history of the Holodomor has not been similarly etched into global consciousness. The first one was related to the simple fact that the word 'peasant' is not a common term for Americans or Britons, and it is not for Australians either. The history of the Ukrainian peasant is not aligned with that of the farmer from those countries.<sup>119</sup>

The second reason he cited was related to the nationhood of Ukraine. Independence has only been fully recognized since 1991 and with that comes the confusion with the language. The Ukrainian language is close to the Russian language but has not been clearly recognized as unique. The country is historically associated as being part of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union and has not yet lost that connection in many circles despite having been independent for some years.<sup>120</sup>

Finally, it was the concealment of facts by Stalin and the Soviet authorities. This had a profound affect upon any future knowledge of the existence of this event and subsequent research and understanding to uncover the details. This has been the most challenging issue for historians and survivors alike. It has ensured that for fifty years and more evidence of this historical event has remained in the archives and not available for research or public discussion.<sup>121</sup>

Krawchenko and Serbyn, in determining the lack of public awareness in the west at the time of their 1986 publication, believe that it is related to the lack of a critical body of scholarship

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<sup>118</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."

<sup>119</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.5.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

regarding the Holodomor.<sup>122</sup> They set about organizing a conference to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary in 1983. Such conferences have shed light on aspects of the famine and supported publications from the early 1950s, such as Pidhainy's and Pigido-Pravoberezhny's publications.<sup>123</sup> Krawchenko had already outlined his discourse in his earlier publication.<sup>124</sup> The Holodomor was seen by these researchers as a famine, deliberately brought about by Stalin to purposefully annihilate the Ukrainian people.

The story of the Ukrainian Holodomor has remained largely unknown in history, with relevant material remaining buried in Soviet archives for decades. The information and actions have been denied by the perpetrators for many years. It makes the Holodomor unique in that as Ammende stated, the genocide was, 'an act of policy carried out for political ends in peacetime'. Mace stated that it was as if 'Hitler had won the war and people only remembered the model camp of Theresienstadt not Auschwitz or Treblinka'.<sup>125</sup>

Following political changes in the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, emerging evidence resulted in moves to classify the Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation. The final report of the International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine was presented to the United Nations in Geneva during 1991. The World Congress of Free Ukrainians was responsible for establishing this commission in 1988 and included well known jurists from the UK, Canada, France, the United States, Sweden, Belgium and Argentina.<sup>126</sup>

The report concluded that the famine, or Holodomor, did take place and cost the lives of estimated 7.5 million Ukrainians.<sup>127</sup> The commissioners also asserted that it was estimated then that approximately 5 million deaths in 1933 and 10 million deaths throughout the 1930s were a result of this famine.<sup>128</sup> The findings determined that Joseph Stalin and those in his inner political circle in the Soviet Union committed genocide against Ukrainian People in

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<sup>122</sup> Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering. Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*, 122 #224.

<sup>123</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies.*, S O Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, 2 vols., vol. Vol. II (Detroit, USA: Globe Press, 1955)., F. Pigido-Pravoberezhny, *The Stalin Famine. Ukraine in the Year 1933* (London: Ukrainian Publishers Ltd, 1953).

<sup>124</sup> B. Krawchenko, *Social Change and Consciousness in Twentieth-Century Ukraine* (London: Macmillan Press, 1985).

<sup>125</sup> Ammende, *Human Life in Russia*, p.iiiv.

<sup>126</sup> (President) Jacob W. F. Sundberg, "International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine. The Final Report 1990," (Toronto: World Congress of Free Ukrainians, 1990).

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>128</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p. 559.

1932-1933.<sup>129</sup> The members of this commission agreed that Stalin and the Soviet government deliberately used the Holodomor to denationalize Ukrainians and that the 'top leadership of the USSR bears responsibility for this'. They did not conclude that that it was genocide however. It was only the chairman who did, thus dissenting from the majority finding.<sup>130</sup> Stalin in writing about the 'peasant question' in the mid-1920s wrote that:

The peasantry constitutes the main army of the national movement ... there is no powerful national movement without the peasant army.<sup>131</sup>

After 1991 and the Commission's report, fresh scholarly work was published. The intellectual renaissance that began with Robert Conquest's work had gained momentum. Margolis, for example, discusses the outcome of such new research conducted on KGB archives following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The results of the latest works are now being published by historians. Ukrainian historians suggest that the figure of Ukrainians who died through the effects of starvation is nine million or higher. Margolis notes that these accounts estimate that twenty-five percent of Ukraine's total population was eliminated.<sup>132</sup>

Such harrowing figures had previously received anecdotal confirmation from Stalin himself. Stalin had informed Winston Churchill that collectivization and dekurkulization had cost ten million peasants lives.<sup>133</sup> The discussion centered upon the need to take such measures to enforce collectivization. The current Ukrainian parliament also records the total number of victims of the Holodomor at ten million Ukrainians.<sup>134</sup> The figures although an issue under discussion with historians, serve to realize the extent of those who perished and the size of this catastrophic event and permit the reader to compare it with other known genocides.

Carynnyk, Luciuk and Kordan have published documents of the period in question. These documents range from letters from victims as well as other correspondence sent to British diplomatic officers regarding the famine. 'We are starving' was the lament made by workers in the Kolguginskii district to the acting counselor of the British Embassy in Moscow, William Strang. This report occurred whilst the Soviets were exporting food to England. 'Do not forget to communicate this message' was added to this document and thus has become

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<sup>129</sup> "U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Report to Congress. Adopted by the Commission, April 19, 1988. Submitted to Congress April 22, 1988.."

<sup>130</sup> Ihor Siundiukov, "In the Merciless Light of Memory," *The Day Weekly Digest* (No. 24, Tuesday September 4, 2007), [www.day.kiev.ua/187297/](http://www.day.kiev.ua/187297/).

<sup>131</sup> Roman Serbyn, "Is There a "Smoking Gun" for the Holodomor," UNIAN, <http://www.unian.net/news/print.php?id=222452>.

<sup>132</sup> E. Margolis, "Remembering Ukraine's Unknown Holocaust," *The Toronto Sun*, December 13th 1998.

<sup>133</sup> Alan Bullock, *Hitler and Stalin: Parallel Lives* (London: Fontana Press, 1991), p.312.

<sup>134</sup> Lisova, "Ukraine Recognize (as Spelt in the Article) Famine as Genocide."



part of an emerging body of material supporting the notion that this was a man made famine.<sup>135</sup>

Such important documents regarding the Holodomor clearly indicate that people could have changed the course of events had those in authority acted upon the emerging information at the time. Unfortunately, although influential people were aware, nothing was done to alleviate the plight of the millions of Ukrainians. There were political reasons behind western nations ignoring the plight of the Ukrainian people and these were covered substantially by Carynyk, Luciuk and Kordan.<sup>136</sup>

Subtelny, Graziosi and Koshiw's chapters in Isajiw's edited publication report on the connection between what was labeled the 'Ukrainian Question' and the Holodomor.<sup>137</sup> Their material was based upon diplomatic reports from German, Italian and British embassies during the 1930s. These archival reports track the crisis and provide further evidence such as that of Dr. Otto Schiller, a German agricultural attaché in Moscow who reported on districts depopulated by the famine.<sup>138</sup>

It was not until the former Soviet archives began to release documents that a true appreciation of the horrible effects of the famine became possible. Damning evidence surfaced following Ukraine's independence in 1991. 'The truth [about the 1932-1933 famine] has only become common knowledge for the international public in the years since Ukraine's independence', said Ukrainian President Kuchma in a statement to the memorial service in Kyiv, 22 November 2003.<sup>139</sup>

Adding to recent emerging evidence is Shapoval's accounts from archival documents concluding that 'it was the meticulous organization of the execution of Ukrainian peasants that invested the Holodomor, i.e., forced starvation, in Ukraine, with the character of a genocide'.<sup>140</sup> Shapoval, Professor of Historical Sciences at the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Kyiv), outlines the systematic and exact methods that were used against the Ukrainian villages. These he lists as fines in kind; a ban on trading food; stopping the deliveries of manufactured goods to independent homesteads; ban on leaving Ukraine by

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<sup>135</sup> Cited in Carynyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, p.xiiv.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Isajiw, ed. *Famine - Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*.

<sup>138</sup> Orest Subtelny, "The Famine in Western Archives. German Diplomatic Reports on the Famine of 1933," in *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*, ed. Wsevolod W. Isajiw (Toronto: Ukrainian anadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003).

<sup>139</sup> R. Zakaluzny, "Millions Mourned," *Kyiv Post*, November 27 2003.

<sup>140</sup> Shapoval, ed. *The Famine - Genocide of 1932-1933 in Ukraine*, p. 6.

closing the borders; introducing a passport system that bound peasants to a specific territory; purchasing valuables from peasants through Torgsin stores that extracted gold and valuables in return for small amounts of food; the communist special service in the villages that was instructed not to indicate cause of death in registers, and generally maintain secrecy and crush any resistance relating to the famine.<sup>141</sup> These are the themes that emerged from the interviews with survivors of this study and also from the archival material associated with this research.

With such archival information now available, Ukrainian historians such as Shapoval and those throughout the Ukrainian diaspora have further facts and witness testimony to present to the world.<sup>142</sup> This was echoed by the Deputy Foreign Minister Maimeskul at the 2006 Ukrainian World Congress in Kyiv, where the Holodomor and genocide classification was a major agenda item.<sup>143</sup>

SBU, Ukraine's national intelligence agency, formerly known as GPU of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, opened secret state archives on the famine of the Soviet era in August 2006. Official state documents were made available concerning the mass starvations via a website.<sup>144</sup> The head of the state archive, Serhii Bohunov, stated that one hundred and thirty documents had been declassified. Resolutions, directives, instructions, witness statements and criminal files making up five thousand pages of documents were declassified and made available to the public.<sup>145</sup>

SBU head Valentyn Nalyvaichenko stated that there could no longer be 'secrets, cover-ups, or distortions with respect to the political repressions' such as the Holodomor. He invited researchers, historians and committed people to co-operate with such a mandate and noted that the SBU had no doubt from the archive documents that the Holodomor was a pre-planned and pre-conceived genocide.<sup>146</sup> Serbyn recently stated that Soviet documents corroborate the accusation that:

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., pp.7-12.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>143</sup> Agence France Presse AFP, "Ukraine Wants United Nations to Recognize Stalin-Era Famine as 'Genocide'," Williams, E.M., <http://www.dnaindia.com/report.asp?NewsID=1048148>.

<sup>144</sup> [www.ssu.gov.au](http://www.ssu.gov.au)

<sup>145</sup> Deutsche Press Agence DPA, "Ukraine Spy Agency Secret Archives on Soviet-Era Famines Opened up SBU Announces in Kyiv," Williams, E. M., [http://news.monstersandcritics.com/europe/article\\_1191722.php/ukraine\\_spy\\_agency\\_opens\\_secret\\_archives\\_on\\_soviet-era\\_famines](http://news.monstersandcritics.com/europe/article_1191722.php/ukraine_spy_agency_opens_secret_archives_on_soviet-era_famines).

<sup>146</sup> Siundiukov, "In the Merciless Light of Memory."

The genocide was not just against the 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.<sup>147</sup>

Interesting to note is the statement by Moscow's State Archives Director General Sergei Mironenko that one quarter of the Joseph Stalin era archives have not yet been declassified. He notes the difficulty of declassifying documents. He also states that there are many fake Stalin biographies on sale that 'enhance the myth' but none by an expert.<sup>148</sup> Even more interesting to note is that eminent British historian Orlando Figes, professor of history at Birbeck University in London condemned a December 2008 raid of material used in his latest book detailing family life in Stalin's Russia, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*.<sup>149</sup> The archived material was part of a raid by masked men from the Russian general prosecutor's office on the St. Petersburg office of Memorial, the Human rights organization based in Russia. The entire archive of materials including interviews, photographs, names of gulag victims and other documents was confiscated. The materials includes that detailing the Soviet terror from 1917 – 1960s.<sup>150</sup>

The United Kingdom archives have proven the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine to be known to the Foreign Office. The government and civil service at the time chose to remain silent and were aware that the Soviet authorities had suppressed and distorted any information about the Holodomor.<sup>151</sup> The British Government was more interested in developing the Soviet Union as an export market for British manufactured goods and in having Stalin as an ally against Hitler.<sup>152</sup> The British Government is currently pressing to review the English National Curriculum regarding the Stalin era and ensure that the facts were declared in school history programmes.<sup>153</sup>

James Mace said that Ukraine was a post-genocidal society whose story makes the Holodomor, the genocide, exceptional.<sup>154</sup> There has been no justice meted out to those

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<sup>147</sup> Serbyn, *Is There a Smoking Gun For the Holodomor?*

<sup>148</sup> "Quarter of Stalin-Era Documents Remain Classified - State Archives Chief," Interfax Information Services, <http://www.interfax.com/3/452822/news.aspx>.

<sup>149</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*.

<sup>150</sup> Luke Harding, "Historian Condemns Raid on Human Rights Group as Bid to Whitewash Repression of the Soviet Era," <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/dec/07/russian-police-seize-archive-repression>.

<sup>151</sup> Wilkinson, '70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Soviet Induced Famine and Genocide in Ukraine'.

<sup>152</sup> Koshiw, "The 1932-33 Famine in the British Government Archives," pp.62-63.

<sup>153</sup> Parliament UK, "EDM 127 United Kingdom's Official Recognition of Ukraine's Genocide," Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2003 [cited 29 November 2003]), [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmwib/wb031129/edms.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200304/cmwib/wb031129/edms.htm).

<sup>154</sup> Mace, *The Day*.

responsible or formal global acknowledgement of the suffering endured by millions of Ukrainians.<sup>155</sup>

Grabowicz states that ‘the Soviet past still remains an unresolved history’ and whenever attempts are made to raise the issues there seems to be what he calls ‘a programme of simply forgetting, of *not* examining, and *not* writing, *not* rewriting, *not* rethinking the Soviet past’. He believes that this is due to the fact that the old Soviet government hierarchy are still alive and that they do not wish to revisit the legacy that they were so deeply involved in.<sup>156</sup> It is believed by the researcher however that the situation is changing with each new publication and each new detail brought forth by the SBU archives.

Many Diaspora scholars are devoted to rectifying material that has been published for years by unwitting Western historians that have simply followed the Russian and Soviet interpretations of Ukrainian and East Slavic history. This previous historiography has been detrimental in uncovering the truth about the events of 1932-1933 and finding some way of ensuring that the dead and the silenced were given a voice.

Ukrainians themselves are now learning the truth about this tragic period in their history. After the August 2006 Fourth World Congress of Ukrainians held in Kyiv, President Yuschenko announced that the Parliament would be committing to recognition of the Holodomor as genocide against Ukrainians. At the same Congress, Deputy Foreign Minister Mykola Maimeskul announced that Ukraine was hoping to persuade the United Nations to now recognize that the Holodomor was genocide. He stated that there are now more witness testimonies and archival documentation proving the devastating events brought about by Soviet authorities under Stalin.

Ukraine’s Foreign Minister is canvassing dozens of countries to declare this famine genocide.<sup>157</sup> Opposition from Russia, and those nations not wanting to upset Moscow, oppose such a move.

At the 30 August meeting regarding the international coordination of the seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Holodomor, a team of world leaders of Ukrainian communities chaired by the President of Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organizations, Mr. Stefan Romaniw,

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<sup>155</sup> L.Luciuk, *The Holodomor*, (email, 28 December 2003).

<sup>156</sup> Grabowicz quoted in Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering: Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*, p.71.

<sup>157</sup> Nick Wadhams, "Ukraine Seeks UN Resolution That Would Declare 1932-1933 Famine That Killed Millions a Genocide," Williams, E.M.

outlined the necessary developments and directions that Ukraine needed to address. The group was presented with only the fourth copy of recent extracts of the archival documents regarding the Holodomor by the Deputy Head of Ukraine Security Service SBU, Mr. Valentine Nalyvajchenko.<sup>158</sup>

The meeting raised the issue of using more recent research and more factual information that archives would provide. Clearly there are important points of entry appearing to the Ukrainian Government and it appears to be showing strong signs of addressing the different aspects related to this period in its history. The plan to internationalize information resources and commitment to working with officers such as Mr. Nalyvajchenko has seen a huge shift in national support and cooperation on behalf of Ukraine along with the diaspora.

The Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Ministry representative Dotsenko stated at the sixty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2007 that 'the 1932-1933 Famine organized by communist totalitarian model of power entailed deaths of 7-10 million innocent men, women and children, which was 25% of the total Ukrainian population at that time'. Dotsenko noted that such a step would be an important 'contribution in prevention from genocide and other crimes against humanity in the future'.<sup>159</sup> Ukraine has already called on members of UNESCO to support a resolution on paying tribute to the memory of the 1932-1933 famine victims.

Kulchytsky's recent publication *Chomy Vin Nas Nyshchyyv?* [Why Did He Destroy Us?] is being carefully studied in Ukraine. He has agreed that the debate on the Holodomor was instigated by Robert Conquest's 1986 publication *The Harvest of Sorrow* and in discussing Ukraine's understanding and validation of the Holodomor, Kulchytsky states that ignorance surrounding this history is Ukraine's national amnesia about the event. He stated that 'the genocide against the Ukrainian people should not touch on the Russian's national feelings or the Russian Federation's state interests' but his attempts to have such information published in Russia have failed.<sup>160</sup>

As with Ukraine, Australia and other nations have recognized that this event occurred and, the international community of scholars particularly interested in this horrific event in Ukraine's

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<sup>158</sup> Stefan Romaniw, "Archive documents" (email, 30th August 2006).

<sup>159</sup> Ukrainian News Agency, "Ukraine Calls for Un to Mark the 60th Anniversary of Convention on Genocide by Declaring 1932-1933 Death by Starvation as Genocide of the Ukrainian People," E.M. Williams, [www.SigmaBleyzer.com](http://www.SigmaBleyzer.com).

<sup>160</sup> Stanislav Kulchytsky, "Ukraine: Two Faces of Terror and Starvation," E.M. Williams, [www.SigmaBleyzer.com](http://www.SigmaBleyzer.com).

history are increasingly involved in researching, writing, holding conferences and seminars both in Ukraine and overseas.<sup>161</sup> The aim is still the same as that of Carynyk's and Isajiw's, to disclose the evidence and educate both Ukrainians in Ukraine as well as the world about the crimes by the Stalinist regime.<sup>162</sup>

Hoffman believes that we have only now reached full maturity in dealing with genocide crimes such as the Holocaust and that people are only now able to fully analyze and interpret the personal stories. She states that we can view the history as seen through survivor memories with a more broad prospective and comprehension than the victims themselves may be able to.<sup>163</sup> This of course can also influence the way in which we ensure the memory of the events and of the people who survived them including those of the Ukrainian migrants in Western Australia.

The publication of books has seen the emergence of works such as Kulchytsky's 2007 *The Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine as Genocide: Difficulties in Understanding*. This 1,128 page text, compiled by Ukrainian historian Ruslan Pyrih was published in Ukraine as was a reissue of Mace's collection of Holodomor eye-witness accounts published in 1990 (four volumes).<sup>164</sup> Such publications within Ukraine and the diaspora expose the events that resulted in genocide. With the assistance of Valentyn Nalyvaichenko as the Chairperson for the Security Service of Ukraine in making available archival documentation, further knowledge and information raises awareness and resolve with governments around the world in recognizing the Holodomor as genocide.<sup>165</sup>

In the past decades the problem for scholars had been a paucity of publications, especially in English concerning the Holodomor. Now it can be said that it is difficult to keep up with new publications of secret Soviet documents being uncovered from Russian and Ukrainian archives. Much material available to researchers has yet to be published. Nicholas Werth, a French historian specializing in the history of the Soviet Union and Andreas Graziosi have both worked in the archives and Werth is adamant that on the basis of the documentary analysis of archival data 'it seems legitimate from now on to qualify as genocide the totality

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<sup>161</sup> Mace, "The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: The Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived...A New Book from Ukraine.."

<sup>162</sup> Carynyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*; Isajiw, ed. *Famine - Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*.

<sup>163</sup> Eva Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (London: Vintage, Random House, 2004), p196.

<sup>164</sup> Kulchytsky, "Ukraine: Two Faces of Terror and Starvation. "

<sup>165</sup> Zenon Zawada, "Efforts to Raise Awareness of Holodomor Get Boost from Ukrainian Government, " *The Ukrainian Weekly*.

of actions carried out by the Stalinist regime to punish by hunger and terror the Ukrainian peasantry'.<sup>166</sup>

In adhering to two elements of the UN definition of genocide: a) the intent to destroy in whole or part and b) a national or ethnic ... group, Serbyn notes the December directive in 1932 when Soviet and Communist authorities blamed the Ukrainian national revival on difficulties in requisitioning grain and promptly banned the Ukrainian language in schools, administration and mass media in Russia. By a directive from January 1933, Stalin and his foreign minister Molotov closed the borders to stop Ukrainians trying to search for food elsewhere in Russia where it was more available. This order also closed the Kuban region where over two-thirds of the population was Ukrainian.<sup>167</sup>

It is fitting to conclude the discussion on the genocide issue with two recent documents. The first being a simple outline of Lemkin's chapter on the Soviet Genocide in Ukraine, to be published as a monograph in English. Lemkin who coined the term 'genocide' has applied it to the Ukrainian nation and not just to its peasants. It has been circulated by Serbyn since the Ukrainian Diaspora commemorated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Holodomor and at the time of finalizing this thesis, has only been known to a few Lemkin scholars. According to Serbyn, Lemkin speaks of:

- a) The decimation of the Ukrainian national elites'
- b) The destruction of the Orthodox Church,
- c) The starvation of the Ukrainian farming population, and
- d) its replacement with non-Ukrainian population from the RSFSR as integral components of the same genocidal process.<sup>168</sup>

Anton Weiss-Wendt summarises Lemkin's views on Stalinist terror in *The Origins of Genocide: Raphael Lemkin as a Historian of Mass Violence* and notes that Lemkin was only able to speak of Stalinist terror from 1949. He explained that this was probably due to 'the quantity and quality of information finally coming from behind the iron curtain'. Weiss-Wendt contends that the Russian's decision to destroy peoples of Eastern Europe is because 'they were incapable of digesting a great number of people belonging to a higher

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<sup>166</sup> Zenon Zawada, "Efforts to Raise Awareness of Holodomor Get Boost From Ukrainian Government," (No. 51, Vol. LXXV, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 2007 [cited 23 December 2007]); Lubomyr Luciuk assisted by Lisa Grekul, eds., *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Raphael Lemkin, "Raphael Lemkin on the Ukrainian Genocide: Excerpts from 'Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine' (Last Chapter of as yet Unpublished Monograph "History of Genocide"," Roman Serbyn.

civilization'.<sup>169</sup> His paper has been included in the new publication edited by Schaller and Zimmerer.<sup>170</sup>

Two valuable documents have also emerged regarding the debate on Ukraine's genocide. One is the conclusion reached by the National Commission for the Strengthening of Democracy and the Rule of Law which was adopted on May 16, 2008 in Kyiv. This document stated that the Holodomor met the legal requirements of the UN Convention on Genocide of 1948. This Commission was headed by the Ukrainian Minister of Justice, Mykola Onishchuk. The second was the outcome of a presentation made by Judge Bohdan Futey in Washington D.C. in September 2008. He made it very clear that the international trend was now less tolerance for genocidal acts and provided evidence of previous prosecutions such as those related to Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro; Rwanda; Sudan; those having suffered apartheid in South Africa. He also made it quite clear that now there are sufficient documents 'to demonstrate Soviet intent in under the Genocide Convention; that intent was to destroy a protected group in Ukraine'. Futey reiterates that which was stated by Lemkin, that the Holodomor was a case of genocide and a destruction of a culture and nation.<sup>171</sup>

One skeptic of the genocide contention is Hiroaki Kuromiya who began his recent paper in Luciuk's publication by stating that there was no doubt that the Soviet famine of 1932-1933 was man-made, but ended the work with the statement that 'not enough evidence exists, however, to show that Stalin engineered the famine to punish specifically the ethnic Ukrainians'.<sup>172</sup> Donald Rayfield is skeptical for another reason and reminds us that 'international law has, however, been reluctant to convict any nation state, except for Germany and the Serb Republic of Bosnia, on charges of genocide'. Rayfield states that the lack of international recognition of Ukraine's genocide is due to often deliberate ignorance of the facts.<sup>173</sup>

Saunders, Professor of Russian History at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, is convinced that because the Ukrainians were the second largest ethnic group in the Soviet

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<sup>169</sup> Anton Weiss-Wendt, "Hostage of Politics: Raphael Lemkin on "Soviet Genocide", *Journal of Genocide Research* 7, no. 4 (2005): p.552.

<sup>170</sup> Dominik J. Schaller and Jurgen Zimmerer, eds., *The Origins of Genocide: Raphael Lemkin as a Historian of Mass Violence* (Oxford: Routledge,2009).

<sup>171</sup> "Two Important Holodomor Documents: From Ukrainian Minister of Justice Mykola Onishchuk and Judge Bohdan Futey."

<sup>172</sup> Hiroaki Kuromiya, "The Great Famine: The Issue of Intentionality," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp. 115-26.

<sup>173</sup> Donald Rayfield, "The Ukrainian Famine of 1933: Man-Made Catastrophe, Mass Murder, or Genocide," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp.91-92.



Union, they posed the biggest threat to Soviet unity. He notes that on account of the number of Ukrainians 'they were subject to harsher treatment in the early 1930s than that to which most other non-Russian Inhabitants of the country were subjected'.<sup>174</sup> Victims of trauma and genocide who have survived experiences such as the Holodomor and who have attempted to migrate to other countries are known to face difficulties in settling down in their new home. Peters in her discussion of postwar migration to Western Australia from 1945-1964 noted that the 'psychological transformation' faced by migrants is very complex. Socially and culturally the life is very different and is often beset with problems.<sup>175</sup> The Ukrainian migrant refugees were part of this wave of migration and their experiences are part of this study.

### **Migration experiences of victims of trauma**

Angela Burnett and Michael Peel, both medical examiners who wrote about asylum seekers and refugees to Britain define a refugee under the UN Geneva Convention, as 'any person who owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it'.<sup>176</sup> The United Kingdom as a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention provides asylum to people fleeing persecution.

Their paper is useful to gain some insight into the plight of migrants who may have escaped repression or who have lived through trauma and been left as refugees to be repatriated elsewhere. It was quoted by the authors that at the time of publication there were 21 million such refugees in the world. These people had faced 'political repression, deprivation of human rights, and harassment. In camps, refugees may have experienced prolonged squalor, malnutrition, lack of personal protection, and deprivation of education; children may have been deprived of the opportunity to play normally'.<sup>177</sup>

It is said by the above authors that most asylum seekers are generally highly skilled and have previously enjoyed a high standard of living. Many have paid highly both physically (in the journey to reach a place of asylum) and financially to reach a place of asylum. They are often dispersed to areas within the new country that are in outlying regions, with cheaper housing

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<sup>174</sup> David Saunders, "The Starvation of Ukrainians in 1933: By-Product or Genocide?," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p.101.

<sup>175</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.xi.

<sup>176</sup> Angela Burnett and Michael Peel, "Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Britain: What Brings Asylum Seekers to the United Kingdom?," in *BMJ (Online version of the British Medical Journal)* (BMJ (electronic version of the British Medical Journal), 2001). <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/322/7284/485>

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

and provided with a living allowance. These regions however may not have had much experience with refugees. If the refugees have move to the major city (in this case London) to escape racial abuse or be nearer family or community and social networks, they then lose their financial entitlement of support. They are thus added to the number of destitute people in the city. Experiences have been grim for many refugees and the authors note previous research that discusses the resulting difficulty of obtaining services such as health care. The difficulty to register with general practitioners is discussed as well as asylum seekers being forced to live below the poverty line.

Noted in Burnett and Peel's article is the fact that the health workers themselves have cited many difficulties in dealing with refugees. The authors cite 'the language difficulties, pressure of time, lack of understanding of cultural differences, and lack of expertise. Refugees are perceived as having huge needs that are difficult to fulfill and as being very demanding'.<sup>178</sup> The authors outline the fact that refugees are actually reluctant to make any demands of health professionals as their needs were not solely medical. Their health was based upon their experiences of becoming a refugee which often included death, loss of identity and status, sometimes previous torture, poor housing, discrimination and racism and these may not be perceived as coming under the umbrella of health in their perceptions.

There is not a great deal of information on early settlement experiences of refugees from Bosnia, Iraq or Afghanistan in Australia or overseas. This prompted the work of Peter Waxman who explores 'the impact that pre-migration and post-arrival experiences have on the initial economic adjustment in Sydney, Australia of recently arrived refugees'. Waxman notes that although there are over a half a million humanitarian refugees settled in Australia from the postwar period which accounts for about ten percent of the national population growth. There is a scarcity however, of information on their early settlement. The post-arrival experience of refugees in those countries who provided entry status and the impact on the settlement experience was according to the researcher, scarce.<sup>179</sup>

Waxman notes that there was more available literature related to the adjustment and settlement of the Indochinese, especially the Vietnamese in countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia for example. He suggests that in the case of Australia it may have had something to do with the significant impact the early resettlement had on Australia. Those arriving from 1992/93 to 1996/97, male refugees, had a probability of unemployment

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<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

20 points higher than the next unemployed group. Studies quoted by Waxman supported this notion. By focusing on three refugee groups that were seen as racially different to mainstream Australia and where information is lacking would contribute to information on the early settlement experience of such groups of people.<sup>180</sup>

The themes emerged from Waxman's study replicated those already mentioned. The survey of recently arrived refugees in Australia found the impact of public opinion, policies and established ethnic communities affected the new refugees. The gender and levels of schooling and English proficiency, loss of extended family, extent of past torture and trauma endured, support network and location of housing, social infrastructure with child care and education; foreign education [the deterioration with higher qualifications of relative position in Australia], type of assistance provided [sponsored?] ethnicity, similarity of economic and system between receiving country's culture, education or retraining taken, health issue, dependent children, number of wage earners in household, age, expectations, the state of the economy on arrival, length of residence in Australia and racial discrimination are all factors to be considered.

The English language difficulties gave the refugees the greatest problem in assimilating in all facets of the host country, both socially and economically. Waxman made a series of recommendations based on the outcomes of the study and advised policy changes that would see an extension of English Language tutoring past the functional and increase the funding for bridging courses for gaining recognition of overseas qualifications. He also states that there should be more flexibility in recognizing overseas qualifications, skills and experiences. One of his final recommendations was for the federal government to provide low-cost loans over an extended term to allow sponsors to finance the arrival of families.

Authors Schweitzer, Melville, Steel and Lacherez explore the impact of pre-migration trauma, post-migration living difficulties and social support on the mental health of 63 resettled Sudanese refugees accepted as humanitarian entrants to Australia during 2001-2001. According to the authors Australia has accepted approximately 130,000 refugees from African nations. They note that the Department of Immigration, Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs found refugees experience far greater stress and social difficulty than any other migrant group. Their emotional distress, anxiety and depression levels are greater, as with

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

grief related disorders and the simple fact that reflection upon their existence in the world in such a time of their lives was difficult.<sup>181</sup>

Schweitzer, Melville, Steel and Lacherez outline the relationship between trauma, coping tragedies and outcome. All of the predictors or themes mentioned in previous studies are listed by these authors. They categorize that trauma disrupts five broad systems of personal safety, interpersonal attachments, sense of justice, their identity or role and also existential-meaning of life. In the African context the differences with Australian culture seems to challenge the sense of identity and belonging. The Sudanese are considered an extreme group in terms of trauma and hardships suffered which influences and determines their mental wellbeing. It is the effect on mental wellbeing that is the focus of this study. The authors report 'being separated from their families, experiencing violence, witnessing murder of families or friends and being deprived of basic needs as having a detrimental effect on mental wellbeing. Loss of significant loved ones in the migration process and social isolation in exile were also common'. Such experiences would further manifest themselves with 'increased vulnerability that combined with psychological stress result(ing) in poor adjustment'.<sup>182</sup>

Another study by Farida Tilbury from Murdoch University in Western Australia examines whether migration causes depression, thus focusing on the mental wellbeing of migrants. She quotes other research all reflecting similar outcomes to that of the above study. A unique outcome of her research however, as it focused upon depression as a mental distress of the refugee experience, was related to the western term not actually being connected to terminology in African languages [Amharic, Tigrinya, Somali or Sudanese Arabic dialects]. An Ethiopian, one of her respondents, with a psychology degree from Western Australia notes that such terminology meant little to rural and less educated Ethiopians.<sup>183</sup>

Participants in this study also indicate that it is culturally inappropriate to discuss emotions in many African societies. The researcher notes the statement from a Sudanese man who states, 'We are not like Australian people who are able to speak openly about their problems... We always try to hide our problems... Displaying distress or talking about it may be seen as complaining'. A north Sudanese man speaks of community members knowing if there was a problem, then it would bring in the element of 'feeling shameful'. Feelings of isolation and

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<sup>181</sup> Robert Schweitzer et al., "Trauma, Post-Migration Living Difficulties, and Social Support as Predictors of Psychological Adjustment in Resettled Sudanese Refugees," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* 40(2006): p.179.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.: p.184.

<sup>183</sup> Farida Tilbury, "'I Feel I Am a Bird without Wings': Discourses of Sadness and Loss among East Africans in Western Australia," *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 14, no. 4 (2007): pp.437, 41.

simply not belonging and, the notion that Australian culture was ‘a hundred percent parallel from’ theirs.<sup>184</sup>

The loss of traditions, women learning inappropriate ideas and expectations by western health, education and social workers and conversely, the reluctance on the part of men to adapt to a different culture and way of life were all factors in the migration of these African refugees to Western Australia. Many of the same issues can be discovered in the discussion about the Ukrainian refugees in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The fear and silence was used as a tool for coping against such issues impacting on the new life.

A further study of refugees conducted by Tilbury of Murdoch University was presented at the Australian Sociology Association’s Conference in 2006. Her study focuses upon the link between the ‘degrees of ‘visible difference’ and employment outcomes in the Australian context’. The author notes that visible differences could be through accent, name, physical features, religion and culture. The findings indicate both personal and institutional discrimination in the employment market despite the high levels of work relevant skills.<sup>185</sup>

Tilbury states however that the results of this study are not satisfactory and that because of difficulties in using bilingual assistants for example, the samples were skewed to those similar to the interviewees. Data collection varied, interpretation of questions varied and the completion of the qualitative sections varied also. A positive and acceptable part of the qualitative analysis showed that there are clear examples of personal abuse, rejection, stereotyping and other forms of injustice faced by the refugees, especially the African group. These experiences have an impact on their feelings of frustration, alienation and loss of hope. Tilbury states that ex-Yugoslavs rationalize these issues but Middle Eastern people are more cautious in rationalizing them, attributing them to lack of work experience or other similar reasons.

Another interesting outcome of the above research is evidence of a cultural ‘politeness imperative’ where some cultures do not openly criticize. They are accustomed to answering everything positively as they are used to and would never say anything against the government.<sup>186</sup> The issues having evolved out of studies such as those mentioned, provide this a valuable insight as to the general aspects of life for migrant refugees in the postwar

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid.: p. 442.

<sup>185</sup> Florida Tilbury, "Everything Is Excellent": Methodological Issues in Studying Refugee Settlement" (paper presented at the TASA 2006 Conference: Sociology for a Mobile World, University of Western Australia & Murdoch University (refereed papers made available online), 2006).

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

resettlement to a host destination. Many of the issues are outcomes raised by the current research into the migrant experience of Ukrainian postwar refugee migrants to Western Australia. Although the study specifically focuses upon the memories of the Holodomor and events related to it, the refugee experience was very much part of the study of this ethnic group of people.

A particularly interesting case study involving the phenomenon of 'transnational caregiving' [see next paragraph for clarity of the term] of migrants and refugees in Perth, Western Australia was conducted in recent years by Loretta Baldassar of the University of Western Australia. She drew her ideas from a previous study she conducted with Baldock and Wilding that studies 200 life-history interviews and observation with migrants and refugees in Perth and their parents and family in Italy, The Netherlands, Ireland, Singapore, New Zealand and Iran.<sup>187</sup> Baldassar highlights the fact that transnational caregiving is an important phenomenon of the migration process. This phenomenon is also an outcome of the current research of Ukrainian postwar migration in discussing their lives in Western Australia.

In Baldassar's study, the caregiving practices of recent Italian professional migrants and Afghan refugees were compared. The five types of care were outlined to be: moral and emotional, financial assistance, practical support, personal care and accommodation. The last two requiring their presence through visits back home. The most important issue being the exchange of moral and emotional support. The care for those left behind did not end with migration. The care of aged was difficult with cultural issues impacting and the 'good' children [the migrants] being expected to look after their parents saw the development of a sense of guilt for not being there. This aspect appeared to be worse for Afghan refugee families because of the lack of care provisions in Afghanistan and the difficulty for them as new migrants to be able to provide much. The survival guilt was palpable for 'leaving loved ones behind'.<sup>188</sup>

The difference in the situation with most of the Ukrainian refugee migrants in Western Australia is that in many cases they as other refugee groups could not afford to do much for anyone who might still have been left in Ukraine and the feeling of disappointment when what they could do, was not seen as enough. It was felt by family left in Ukraine that

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<sup>187</sup> Baldassar, Baldock, and Wilding, *Families Caring across Borders: Migration, Ageing and Transnational Caregiving*.

<sup>188</sup> Loretta Baldassar, "Recent Australian Immigrant Families and Transnational Caregiving: Italian Professional Migrants and Afghan Refugees Compared" (paper presented at the TASA 2006 Conference: Sociology for a Mobile World, University of Western Australia & Murdoch University (refereed papers made available online), 2006).

migration to Australia meant wealth and, the very fact that someone could travel so far back to Ukraine must have meant that they had become wealthy. The second-hand or inexpensive clothing that was the usual parcel of goods sent back home was deemed not enough. Further discussion on this issue will be found later in the thesis.

The experiences of the migrant who remembered the years of the Holodomor in Ukraine followed by the German occupation and becoming a displaced person or DP from the labour camps of Germany after World War II has seen similar outcomes relating to migration settlement in the receiving country of Western Australia. The United Kingdom at the time admitted 76,987 refugees from Germany's forced labour scheme and deportation as enforced workers during the war and others who had fled the advance of Russian forces. Canada was very much part of this recruitment drive as was Australia.

### **The Ukrainian migrant experiences in the diaspora**

The Ukrainian migrant experience postwar was very much interrelated with forced repatriation and migration of refugees. It was fraught with problems until the International Refugee Organization (IRO) came into effect in 1948. The problems related to Western Allies not being fully cognizant of policies and methods used by the Soviet regime in dealing with the issue of their citizens returning to their homeland. These people were viewed as traitors by Stalin and loss of life was a consequence of repatriation.<sup>189</sup>

Historian Mark Elliot in writing about the Soviet repatriation campaign states that the Soviet regime 'demanded total repatriation because nonreturners posed a threat to the credibility of propaganda that stressed the unqualified wartime devotion of all Soviet citizens'.<sup>190</sup> It would have shown a failure of the communist system of government for citizens not wishing to return to the Soviet Union. The most vulnerable of the refugees were the Ukrainian political refugees who had apposed both the Soviet and German takeover of Ukraine. The policy regarding the DP refugees fortunately shifted from repatriation to that of resettlement with the IRO.<sup>191</sup>

The earliest migration of DPs was to countries adjacent to Austria and Germany whose industries had been devastated and needed rebuilding but whose labour force was not enough

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<sup>189</sup> Wsevolod W Isajiw and Michael Palij, "Refugees and the DP Problem in Postwar Europe," in *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*, ed. Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Yury Boshyk, and Roman Senkus (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, University of Alberta, 1992), p. xvii.ss

<sup>190</sup> Mark Elliot, "The Soviet Repatriation Campaign," in *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*, ed. Wsevolod W Isajiw, Yury Boshyk, and Roman Senkus (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, University of Alberta, 1992).

<sup>191</sup> Isajiw and Palij, "Refugees and the DP Problem in Postwar Europe," p. xvii.

to cope with the work needed after the war casualties. France offered legal protection and Belgium recruited DPs for compulsory work in their coal mines. This latter drive was abandoned eventually and those Ukrainians were assisted to migrate to Canada.<sup>192</sup> The largest migrations were to Britain providing 'European Workers' for three years of manual labour designated by the Ministry of Labour and Natural Service after which the restriction would be lifted. Other migrations were minor but one major effort was to Australia and the Americas from 1947.<sup>193</sup> A significant number were resettled in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Venezuela. The majority of Ukrainian refugees migrated to English speaking countries of North America and Australasia. More than 45,000 migrated to the U.S. with the assistance of the IRO, 25,772 refugees of Ukrainian origin arrived in Canada between 1947 and 1951 and the number was a little lower for Australia with approximately 250 migrated to New Zealand.<sup>194</sup>

Due to the constant effort, publicity and work by prominent Ukrainian historians, scholars and researchers based in Ukraine and throughout the world there is continuous research regarding the history of Ukraine's Holodomor. Many Ukrainians in the Diaspora grew up with stories of this period of time but were not aware of the magnitude of the events until research evidence and witness transcripts began to emerge.

Luciuk, a Canadian Professor of Political Geography at the Royal Military College of Canada, spoke of his own feelings as the son of Ukrainian DP immigrants to Canada and of listening to the stories of his parents about the horror of the Holodomor. His parents' Ukrainian friends came from different regions, political and religious backgrounds, but all recounted similar stories of that period of Ukraine's history. He cannot understand why such stories are omitted from local histories.<sup>195</sup> His publication, *Searching for Place* documents the migration of postwar Ukrainian migrants to Canada and the efforts to resettle them.<sup>196</sup> They were what he calls the 'third wave' of immigrants to Canada.<sup>197</sup>

Luciuk notes the Ukrainian postwar Ukrainian community being different to the pre-World War One group in that there was really a particular country called the Ukrainian Soviet

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<sup>192</sup> Ihor Stebelsky, "Ukrainian Population Migration after World War II," in *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*, ed. Wsevolod W Isajiw, Yury Boshyk, and Roman Senkus (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, University of Alberta, 1992), p. 31.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-36.

<sup>195</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk, "All Genocide Victims Must Be Hallowed," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 7th March 2004.

<sup>196</sup> Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, *Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada, and the Migration of Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), p. x.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid. p. x.



Socialist Republic and these were involuntary migrants from an occupied homeland. These people had involvement in a world war and came from the Displaced Persons (DP) refugee camps of Europe. These DP migrants still retell the stories of their homeland that they pine for but cannot, as Luciuk says, 'get to re-place themselves'.<sup>198</sup>

Luciuk examines the events leading up to the migration of the DPs to Canada. His discussion begins with the British and Canadian Governments finally realizing the DP refugees were not so much a problem in the camps of Europe but more of an opportunity of resettling suitable people who would contribute to a host country willing to accept them. He speaks of those who were too ill, too old and those who stayed on to care for them becoming the forgotten refugees.<sup>199</sup> They were the ones who remained in the camps or somehow found a place in Germany and Austria.

It is well known that the Soviet Union was displeased with such an outcome for their citizens. The Ukrainians in the camps had organized themselves well enough to resist any notion of repatriation back to the Soviet Union as 'Soviet Citizens'. It left these Ukrainian refugees in a difficult and often dangerous place. The DP camps were what Luciuk called 'hotbeds of intrigue, arenas within which competing political movements sought to assert themselves and gain control... They were sociological and psychological cauldrons'.<sup>200</sup> Vasyl Markus, editor of the Encyclopedia of the Ukrainian Diaspora and a professor at Loyola University in Chicago, detailed the complexity of the organizations that emerged as a result of the social conditions of collective life in the DP camps. The lack of employment or semi-employment provided a climate that was receptive to political mobilization. He stated that many years after the DP experience the same political parties were still existent.<sup>201</sup>

The Ukrainians were from different regional, religious, cultural and political backgrounds and did not always get along well with each other and yet they were part of the biggest political emigration in Ukrainian history.<sup>202</sup> Canadian Ukrainian historian Subtelny stated that political emigrations have not received the attention they deserve and yet the experiences make a most valuable contribution to the historical consciousness of a nation.

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p. xxv.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>201</sup> Vasyl Markus, "Political Parties in the D.P. Camps," in *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*, ed. Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Yury Boshyk, and Roman Senkus (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, University of Alberta, 1992).

<sup>202</sup> Isajiw and Palij, "Refugees and the DP Problem in Postwar Europe," p. 15.

During the initial repatriation process to Soviet Ukraine many people returned but it was stated by Subtelny that about 220,000 Ukrainians refused, thus becoming the DPs. The minority was the political refugees but the majority was forced labourers to Germany who did not want to return. The latter were generally poorly educated and single.<sup>203</sup> The Soviets made claim to anyone from Belorussia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine. Ihor Stebelsky from the University of Windsor notes that they used different methods to effect the handover of 'their citizens' including the employment of secret service agents to instigate quarrels amongst the refugees, blackmailing and kidnapping. It led to many people not reporting their nationality or changing their identity.<sup>204</sup>

Luciuk provides some of the most insightful data regarding the DPs and life within these refugee camps that compares with the earlier studies already noted. He notes a significant report developed by an Inter-Allied Psychological Problems Group attached to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration at the time. Luciuk discusses how it was 'not only the physical impact of this forced displacement but the moral and mental consequences as well' that were assessed by this group.<sup>205</sup> It was concluded that all the DPs had experienced the same issues. They had been:

Cut off from family, community, and national ties, connections which normally provide an individual with basic stability, affection, and support all people require. The loss of these ties often left people lonely, homesick, depressed, disbelieving, and cynical. These effects, moreover, were magnified by the tremendous menace to life itself which most of the refugees had faced during a war in which their enemy had waged nothing less than a 'biological war on population trends.'<sup>206</sup>

Luciuk cites the Study Group's judgment stating the fact that the 'moral and psychological disturbance caused by Germany [was] probably greater than the physical devastation'. The consequence of being left 'certain about nothing' and also as Luciuk notes,

Insecure about the duration and nature of the exile, about the fate of family and homeland, about whether basic needs would continue to be met, about whether there would ever again be an opportunity to realize personal ambitions, rebuild a career, or even start leading a normal existence...<sup>207</sup>

was traumatic and disturbing.

The refugees were left to live with groups of people who were in the same situation and some of whom might have been thought of as the enemy. Their sense of reality had disappeared and

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>204</sup> Stebelsky, "Ukrainian Population Migration after World War II," p. 22.

<sup>205</sup> Luciuk, *Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada, and the Migration of Memory*, p. 143.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., pp. 143-44.

the memories of home and a strong desire to return home permeated their emotions. What followed was a rebuilding of a semblance of cultural communities. Many of the refugees were eastern Ukrainians, Ukrainian Orthodox who were survivors of the Holodomor and the ensuing Terror in Ukraine.

Canada's involvement in bringing Ukrainian refugees into the country was not without difficulties faced both by Canadian government groups as well as the existing Ukrainians already settled in Canada. Isajiw and Palij note that camp life for the DPs had left their mark on the Ukrainians and this had in turn influenced their integration with Ukrainians already in settled communities in the United States, Canada and Brazil.<sup>208</sup>

The DPs did not adjust easily into the Ukrainian Canadian way of life set up by their predecessors. Disillusionment and feuding amongst the two migrant groups impacted on the resettlement of this post-war refugee group. This was a product of issues such as the political developments within the DP camps spilling over into the resettlement into the existing Canadian Ukrainian Society.

The Ukrainian DPs had been allowed into Canada to fill semi-skilled positions that Canadians would not fill. It was also felt that they would be a counter to the Ukrainian Canadian Left. Although Luciuk has not specifically outlined how life was like for the DPs and the postwar refugees in terms of living conditions and challenges in Canada, his publication has provided this history with valuable insight into the DP experience of postwar Europe. The situation was far more complicated for Ukrainian DPs migrating to a country with an already settled Ukrainian society than what was encountered in Western Australia.

### **Migration of Ukrainians to Australia**

The eastern seaboard of Australia has seen a few dedicated Australian academics such as Michael Lawriwsky, Marko Pavlyshyn, together with visiting overseas scholars working to raise the profile of Ukrainian migration to Australia over past years. In Western Australia, Nonja Peters the Director of the Migration, Ethnicity, Refugees and Citizenship Research Unit at Curtin University of Technology in Western Australia who published what can be viewed a watershed account of the migration to Australia and in particular Western Australian. Her comprehensive publication of many years of research covered the ethnic

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<sup>208</sup> Isajiw and Palij, "Refugees and the DP Problem in Postwar Europe," p. xxi.

diversity and population growth as a result of Australia's postwar migration policy and the associated outcomes.<sup>209</sup>

As with the Canadians, postwar DP Ukrainians who migrated to Australia faced rival recruiting teams in the different camps. Australia took approximately 182,159. At the same time Australia was also assisting the passage of 140,000 British people 1946-1951. Wendy Webster of the University of Lancaster cites details of British newsreels constantly running messages that Australia wanted British men and women with courage and enterprise. It was such a concerted effort that resulted in a publicized celebration of the millionth postwar migrant to Australia in 1955 being a British migrant.<sup>210</sup>

The newly arrived DPs arrived and conformed to the White Australia Policy of the Australian government of the day. They arrived with the understanding that parents and children may be separated until homes could be found for the 'new Australians' as they were known. As Webster notes however, the title assigned them gave the impression of belonging but as it was a euphemism for non-British migrants, 'it signified a hierarchy of belonging'.<sup>211</sup> The female DPs were handed documentation upon arrival in Australia that registered their occupation as 'domestic' and the men as 'er'. The DP refugees admitted to Britain were not coupled but were single, able-bodied and in good health. The British authorities did not want children nor did they desire mothers. They were all called 'European Volunteer Workers'. These women were mostly from the Baltic States to take up domestic work in Britain. Interestingly the Australians selecting candidates for migration also preferred people from the Baltic States but included men as well. All migrants were thus referred to as 'Balts'. This was a term that was not appreciated by those who were not from that region. Children were excluded initially but by 1949 were included.

Arthur Calwell became Minister for Immigration in Ben Chifley's post-war government. He also became the chief architect of Australia's postwar immigration scheme. Calwell promoting the scheme under the slogan 'populate or perish'. This referred to the government suggesting that Australia's security would be enhanced by increasing its population. This scheme and its slogan developed between the two world wars and the threatened Japanese invasion. The only

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<sup>209</sup> Nonja Peters, *Milk and Honey - but No Gold. Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2001).

<sup>210</sup> Wendy Webster, "Transnational Journeys and Domestic Histories," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): p.657.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

obligation Australia had was to accept them into the workforce with no particular political or cultural obligation ever intended, according to Isajiw.<sup>212</sup>

Peters notes that Australia was in a particularly advantageous situation in terms of bargaining for the refugees. Australia and New Zealand were the only countries that placed a precondition on their migration. For the sum of ten pounds Australia could select the refugees of a particular race, certain standard of health, certain standard of physical development and a stipulation that the refugee would be placed in jobs selected by the Commonwealth for a period of two years. This was in accordance with an agreement with an International Refugee Organization open-ended indenture. Calwell hoped that there would still be 'ten British migrants for every migrant of other origin'.<sup>213</sup>

When Ukrainians began arriving in Australia in the late 1940s and 1950s they faced a society that viewed them with some suspicion. They did not speak English, came from places unknown to most Australians and it was not understood by Australians why they had come to this country.<sup>214</sup> Peters includes details of a report to the government by the Commonwealth Immigration Advisory Council noting a publicity campaign launched to 'condition' the Australian public about the benefits of the new migrants to the country. Australians were to make them welcome and not be 'driven in upon themselves by such epithets as Pommy, Scowegian and Reffo'.<sup>215</sup>

Peters covers accounts of the different migrant groups in terms of the country of origin. It includes the numbers of Ukrainians under the categories of males and females and also their labour market status.<sup>216</sup> Peters provides few specific details regarding the Ukrainian refugees other than the occasional mention alongside another group such as the Polish migrants. She mentions that the unskilled Ukrainian migrants who had been farm labourers 'found a better quality of life in Australia than was possible in their country of origin'.<sup>217</sup> Included was a photograph and caption of one of Western Australia's pioneers with the children's dancing

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<sup>212</sup> W. W. Isajiw, "Future Directions in Research on Ukrainians in the Diaspora," in *Ukrainian Settlement in Australia. Fifth Conference, Melbourne. 16-18 February 1990*, ed. M. Pavlyshyn (Melbourne: Monash University, 1993), p. 10.

<sup>213</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.17.

<sup>214</sup> A. Lachowicz, "Michael Kmit: Reality, Myth and Methodology," in *Ukrainian Settlement in Australia. Fifth Conference, Melbourne. 16-18 February 1990*, ed. M Pavlyshyn (Melbourne: Monash Uni., 1993), p.97.

<sup>215</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.21.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 292-300.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p.186.

group he had formed in Northam (a country town set up as a migrant placement Camp to house these people upon entry to this state).<sup>218</sup>

Peters outlines the migration events and policies of the era and also covers the difficult aspects of job opportunity, language proficiency and impediments to working and living in Australian communities. Peters notes that, as an example:

Many of the advantages associated with pre-existing socio-economic ethnic networks – such as being able to access jobs, housing and schools via kin, the church and ethnic community – were erased by the racism visited upon prewar and postwar Greeks and Italians.<sup>219</sup>

Any discussion regarding life and difficulties for the new postwar migrants to Australia mirrored the discussion already noted by other researchers regarding their first years in this ‘land of honey’ which were spent:

... in sweatshops, or as factory fodder, as labourers on road or chopping wood. There was little ‘milk’ nor honey for them – just sheer hard work. As for Southern European male children, well, the fist ruled the day for them in the schoolyard!<sup>220</sup>

In this postwar era, housing consisted of rooming with another family once there was an opportunity to move out of the camp accommodation after two years. The cost of housing precluded doing anything else as migrant families were required to pay up to 50% of their income as rent for only part of a residence. Relationships were stretched and the problem resulted in frequent moves in pursuit of a reasonable property to rent. Their ignorance of local conditions compounded their plight even further. Most families built their first homes with the help of other families and spent the first years in a tent, a garage or the beginning of a back verandah on a property that they were able to purchase. ‘Privacy became a utopia’.<sup>221</sup> Such memories were vivid for the current researcher.

Migrant residences were generally humble and many interviewees for this study were still in their original homes or had moved to smaller dwellings after the death of a spouse. The women who stayed at home to raise children were said to have experienced the worst of the strangeness, isolation and homesickness. For some it was so bad that it resulted in alcoholism, domestic violence, mental breakdowns or suicide. Peters notes the increase with health care Ministers complaining of the health care costs of migrants requiring hospitalization from 1950

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<sup>218</sup> Ibid., p.273.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid., p.222.

<sup>220</sup> Nikolas Millios, *Letters* (1999) in Peters, *Milk and Honey but no Gold: Postwar Migration in Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.222.

<sup>221</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, pp.236-39.

onwards. Migration, wartime trauma, torture and dislocation were increasing the incidence of of breakdowns with unable to communicate in English suffering in silence.<sup>222</sup>

Another interesting observation not apparent in more modern day research was postwar migrants finding Australia a cultural desert, 'where you could fire a cannon through the streets of Northam and hit no-one'. Any possible entertainment was also not readily available for both men and women. For example, women were not permitted in bars. Again the many issues raised by previous research were reflected in Peters' work. Mixing with Australians required learning many new customs and behaviour codes, coupled with having to learn a very difficult language. Such difficulties impacted and conflicted with that of the Australians' way of life. Migrant childrens' chances of gaining entry into some professional career paths were lessened with difficulties in written and spoken English. A Polish mother was quoted in Peters' publication as saying teachers were unwilling to help 'New Australians'.<sup>223</sup> The Ukrainian migrants as with other postwar migrants could not assimilate with an existing similar ethnic group in Western Australia as they were the first of such a large 'wave' of their kind.

There has only been one 'wave' of Ukrainians arriving in Australia in contrast to the multiple waves from other nationalities. This has seen Ukrainians bind together through common factors such as the organization of cultural life in Australia. James Jupp, the Director of the Centre for Immigration and Multicultural Studies at the Australian National University Canberra, remarked at the 1990 Conference on Ukrainian Settlement in Australia that the Ukrainian community was under threat from 'the withering of the foundation generation and the severing of links with the homeland culture'. The Ukrainians were however, highly organized communities generally around Ukrainian language churches. The Catholic and Orthodox churches were said to have integrated well into Australian mainstream structures and were a powerful factor in cultural maintenance.

The Ukrainian communities were not powerful enough to exert any political influence in Australia and only controlled those within the Ukrainian community. Jupp speaks of the importance of the arrival of future Ukrainian immigrants. There has been trickle over the years but the numbers have not been significant.<sup>224</sup> Small numbers of Ukrainians arrived from

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p.245.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid., p. 267.

<sup>224</sup> James Jupp, "How Can Small Ethnic Groups in Australia Survive into the Future" (paper presented at the Ukrainian Settlement in Australia: Fifth Conference, Melbourne 16-18 February 1990, Monash University, 1993 1990), pp. 25-26.

Yugoslavia 1969-1971 and had settled in Geelong in Victoria. These people assimilated and adjusted well to the Ukrainian community.

At the same Conference noted above was Kateryna Olijnyk Longley, Dean of Humanities at Murdoch University at the time, whose paper raised the notion of the 'Fifth World' or, those Ukrainians she referred to as postwar migrants or refugees who belonged to a specific moment in history. She spoke of these people as having 'lived through dispossession and resettlement through the same political machinations at the same time and in the same places' and yet have a different story to tell.<sup>225</sup> She spoke about the importance of the oral tradition in Ukrainian communities because of the few opportunities to communicate in print and more importantly because of fear of revelation. Even with the changes in Soviet policy and the Independence of Ukraine, the fear lingers on. The suspicion was of all systems albeit their lives were in Australia. It was safer to tell the stories rather than put them in print. She spoke of two main types of stories emanating from Fifth World Ukrainians:

1. Private stories of intense suffering, humiliation, exclusion from all possible worlds, stories so painful that they may be untellable ... except within the security of the immediate family or deeply trusted friends. They have not been transformed into acceptable fictions. To tell them is almost to relive them.
2. Public stories, often of the old world. These are anecdotes or nostalgic tales which have been cast into a known genre – romance or mystery or self-deprecating comedy.<sup>226</sup>

It was the former type of story that Olijnyk Longley proceeded to elaborate, by telling a story herself. The story she told was one shared by her father and it was set in the time of the Holodomor. It was a simple story about the repression and great hunger and was followed by the invasion by Germany and him being taken as prisoner by the German soldiers. Central to the story was a pair of precious boots that were still with this man, her father, when he migrated to Adelaide in South Australia. Such stories are part of the oral tradition amongst the Ukrainian postwar migrant refugee communities in Australia. There has however, been no published record of such stories of the Australian Ukrainian refugee's memories of the 1932-1933 Holodomor or those who remember that event in Ukraine's history. These people are elderly or have since passed away and although there has been a surge of cultural revival in Ukrainian society as well as a return to reinstating and researching historical memory of the Holodomor, the diaspora in Western Australia has not yet sought to publish the memories of those who lived through and remembered the years 1932-1933.

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<sup>225</sup> K. Olijnyk Longley, "The Fifth World" (paper presented at the Ukrainian Settlement in Australia: Fifth Conference, Melbourne 16-18 February 1990, Monash University, 1993 1990), p. 128.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p.129-30.



Ukrainian-Australian activist Peter Kardash compiled *Genocide in Ukraine* containing eyewitness accounts and materials from the released archives of the Soviet Union in 2007. He provides a wealth of material central to the issues relating to the Holodomor. His publication provides witness testimonies that describe events during the period of the famine. The contributors included Levko Lukianenko, Head of the Association of Researchers on the Holodomors in Ukraine. This comprehensive work will be a valuable resource within Australia to educate Australians about this tragic event that Ukrainian refugees had lived through and witnessed.<sup>227</sup> The witness testimonies do not include those of Australian let alone Western Australian Ukrainian witnesses and that is what this study seeks to address.

An unpublished Australian research study exists in the National Archives in Canberra.<sup>228</sup> The research was conducted but never edited, collated or published. This attempt to uncover the testimonies of Australian Holodomor survivors through a project funded by an Australian Research Grant was awarded to Dr. Elizabeth Waters of the History Department of the Australian National University. This project was launched in 1989 following the U.S. Congressional Commission on the Ukraine famine and although twenty seven people were interviewed from Canberra, Sydney, Newcastle and Melbourne with twenty two other interviews from Adelaide and Perth donated by Mr. T. Sudolak of Adelaide, no analysis or report of the findings was made.<sup>229</sup>

In the words of Elizabeth Waters herself when questioned by email why the research was not completed, she responded that 'she was not able to do so'. She said that she had 'left Australia in poor health (to take up a posting in England) and a lot of ends were not tied properly'. According to her email in October 2005, Waters was still hoping to obtain a grant to travel to Australia and complete the work. This has not yet occurred (December, 2008).<sup>230</sup>

Waters' study was entitled *An Oral History Survey of Survivors of the Ukrainian Famine (1932-1933) Presently Living in Australia*. The study used a questionnaire to interview people with forty-nine questions on different aspects of the Holodomor. The responses to the questionnaire were recorded on audiotape but not all were translated. Two listed interviews of Western Australian survivors have unfortunately not been located amongst the archived research collection.

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<sup>227</sup> Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*.

<sup>228</sup> Elizabeth Waters, "An Oral History Survey of Survivors of the Ukrainian Famine (1932-1933) Presently Living in Australia," (Australian National University, 1989).

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Elizabeth Waters, "Holodomor Study" [email] 4<sup>th</sup> October 2005.

Another informal collection of testimonies has recently begun with the use of a questionnaire developed by the Ukrainian World Congress under the umbrella of the Ukraine 3000 organization in Ukraine. The questionnaire was issued by the Congress. It is understood that approximately less than ten interviews have been held in New South Wales by Mrs. Kristina Bailey, the Head of The Ukrainian Women's Association Australia. The Questionnaire is in Ukrainian and is asks 50 questions related to who in their village died and who lived as well as the central questions related to birthdates and names of villages. As yet there are no formal plans for these interviews other than becoming a record for Ukraine and it is unknown whether there will be English translations for use by historians in Australia. It appears that the testimonies will be published as a record of memories [in Ukrainian].

There is no published record of Western Australian testimonies from Ukrainians who lived through or remembered the 1932-1933 famine, the Holodomor. The current project seeks to investigate their memories and begin to integrate Australian scholarship with the global movement to recognize and understand the tragic events of 1932-1933.

There is also no Australian database, documentary, museum, memorial or education course depicting or teaching about the man-made famine/genocide in Ukraine during 1932-1933. What actually occurred during this time? What are the stories? What do the survivors and other refugee migrants in Western Australia remember of this time in their lives? How did these people survive this period? How many Western Australian Ukrainian migrants had lived through this event, and are still alive today? Was it genocide? This thesis attempts to address some of these questions.

At the 30 August meeting regarding the international coordination of the seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Holodomor, a team of members of Ukrainian communities chaired by the President of Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organizations, Mr Stefan Romaniw, outlined the necessary developments and directions that Ukraine needed to address. The group was presented with only the fourth copy of recent extracts of the archival documents regarding the Holodomor by the Deputy Head of Ukraine Security Service SBU, Mr Valentine Nalyvajchenko.<sup>231</sup>

The most recent development (in terms of this thesis) has been the Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Ministry representative Dotsenko stating at the sixty-second session of the United Nations General Assembly in October 2007 that 'the 1932-1933 Famine organized by communist

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<sup>231</sup> Romaniw, "Holodomor Archive" 2007.

totalitarian model of power entailed deaths of 7-10 million innocent men, women and children, which was 25% of the total Ukrainian population that time'. Dotsenko notes that such a step would be an important 'contribution in prevention from genocide and other crimes against humanity in the future'.<sup>232</sup> Ukraine has already called on members of UNESCO to support a resolution on paying tribute to the memory of the 1932-1933 famine victims.

Kulchytsky, a Ukrainian historian, has a new publication *Chomy Vin Nas Nyshchyy?* (Why Did He Destroy Us?) carefully being studied in Ukraine. He notes that the debate on the Holodomor was instigated by Robert Conquest's 1986 publication *The Harvest of Sorrow* and in discussing Ukraine's understanding and validation of the Holodomor, Kulchytsky states the ignorance surrounding this history is Ukraine's national amnesia about the event. He made a point of stating 'the genocide against the Ukrainian people should not touch on Russian's national feelings or the Russian Federation's state interests' but his attempts to have such information published in Russia have failed.<sup>233</sup>

As with Ukraine, Australia and other nations have recognized that this event occurred and have passed resolutions in their parliaments. The international community of scholars particularly interested in this horrific event in Ukraine's history are increasingly involved in researching, writing, holding conferences and seminars both in Ukraine and overseas.<sup>234</sup> Nothing has altered and the aim is still as Carynnyk and Isajiw have worked towards, to disclose the evidence and educate both Ukrainians in Ukraine as well as the world about the crimes by the Stalinist regime.<sup>235</sup>

Hoffman believes that we have only now reached full maturity in dealing with crimes such as the Holocaust and that people are only now able to fully analyze and interpret the personal stories. She states that we can view the history as seen through survivor memories with a more broad prospective and comprehension than the victims themselves may be able to.<sup>236</sup> This of course can also influence the way in which we ensure the memory of the events and of the people who survived them.

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<sup>232</sup> Ukrainian News Agency, "Ukraine Calls for Un to Mark the 60th Anniversary of Convention on Genocide by Declaring 1932-1933 Death by Starvation as Genocide of the Ukrainian People. "

<sup>233</sup> Kulchytsky, "Ukraine: Two Faces of Terror and Starvation."

<sup>234</sup> Mace, "The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932-1933: The Eyewitness Accounts of Those Who Survived...A New Book from Ukraine."

<sup>235</sup> Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*. and Isajiw, ed. *Famine - Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*.

<sup>236</sup> Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, p196.

## Commemoration and memorializing the history

Since 2005 President Yuschenko has initiated different events to commemorate the famine victims. Exhibitions on genocide famines, *Light a Candle* ceremonies, snowball–tree planting ceremonies, services for the dead, and requiem concerts at the Kyiv Opera House have been held. The President has ordered:

That the enactment of concrete, active measure(s) for honoring the famine victims and the support of persons who suffered from the famines in Ukraine and the cultivation of respect for the historic past and for people who lived through tragic pages in the history of the Ukrainian people are priority tasks of the central and local organs of executive power.<sup>237</sup>

There has been an ongoing debate concerning the building of the Holodomor Memorial Complex in Kyiv. The concept plans have finally been endorsed by Kyiv's administrative bodies.<sup>238</sup>

The Ukrainian President has implemented a nation-wide programme of commemorating the victims of the Holodomor. Ivan Vasiunyk, Vice-chair of the President of Ukraine's secretariat, assured participants at the March 2007 World Congress meeting in Toronto that apart from the now lawful fact that the famine was genocide against the Ukrainian nation, Ukraine would be building the memorial museum in Kyiv. As of 2009, there was no museum. At that meeting it was noted that decrees have been signed to assess the legal and political impact of the Holodomor in the history of Ukraine, organizing open access to the archived documents related to the Holodomor, taking care of tombs and also erecting memorable signs at those sites.<sup>239</sup>

With reference to the Holodomor commemoration, in a speech at the 2007 Jubilee Session of the United Nations, the Ukrainian President noted that:

The world community has to reveal the truth about this crime. This is the only way for us to make sure that indifference will never again encourage criminals.<sup>240</sup>

The Ukrainian World Congress International Coordinating Committee on the Holodomor in Ukraine 1932-1933, has resolved to develop exhibitions, research legal issues, develop educational materials and focus on public relations campaigns.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> President Yuschenko, "#1. Ukrainian President to Commemorate Famine Victims."

<sup>238</sup> Anatolij Haidamaka, "Concept and Scoping Plans of Holodomor Memorial Centre in Kyiv Ratified," [5tv.com.ua](http://5tv.com.ua).

<sup>239</sup> Kateryna Yushchenko, "Kateryna Yushchenko's Speech at the Ceremony to Commemorate 1932-1933 Famine Victims," Government of Ukraine, [http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/data/19\\_3660.html](http://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/data/19_3660.html).

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Stefan Romaniw, "Session #1 Ukrainian World Congress International Coordinating Committee 75th Commemoration of the Holodomor in Ukraine 1932-1933 Minutes."

We now witness the publication of books such as Kulchytsky's major 2007 published work *The Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine as Genocide: Difficulties in Understanding*. This 1,128 page text was published in Kyiv Ukraine, as was a reissue of Mace's collection of Holodomor eye-witness accounts published in 1990 [four volumes].<sup>242</sup> *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine* edited by Lubomyr Luciuk with assistance from Lisa Grekul, has been the most recent publication.<sup>243</sup> This work covers most of the issues pertaining to genocide and the resulting controversy and commemoration of the event.

Globally, the Holodomor is now being commemorated under the motto *Ukraine Remembers, the World Acknowledges*. This was launched 24 November 2007 and was used to solemnize the Holodomor anniversary year of 2008. According to Stefan Romaniw, the Chairperson of the International Coordinating Committee of the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, the Ukrainian government (of the day) was committed to raising awareness and understanding of the Holodomor. Vice-Prime Minister for Humanitarian Affairs in Ukraine Ivan Vasiunyk devoted himself to commemorative activities throughout the country in 2008.<sup>244</sup>

Mr. Valentyn Nalyvaichenko as the Chairperson for the Security Service of Ukraine is 'setting the pace', said Romaniw of the archival documentation that has been made available for publishing. This material has been used by the International Holodomor Coordination Committee to raise awareness with governments around the world in recognizing the Holodomor as genocide.<sup>245</sup>

The team of the Ukrainian President's Secretariat, Security Service of Ukraine, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Instytut Pamyati (Institute of Remembrance), Ukraine 3000 and the International Holodomor Coordinating Committee of the Ukraine World Congress worked together on plans for the 2008 global Holodomor commemoration. The plans included and were largely achieved:

Ongoing pressure to ensure the building of the Holodomor Complex in Kyiv (still as yet not in planning);

The calling for international government support for Ukraine's Resolution in classifying the Holodomor as genocide;

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<sup>242</sup> Kulchytsky, "Ukraine: Two Faces of Terror and Starvation."

<sup>243</sup> Luciuk and Grekul, eds., *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*.

<sup>244</sup> Zawada, "Efforts to Raise Awareness of Holodomor Get Boost from Ukrainian Government."

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

Calling on Ukraine through its legal system to set up a Commission/Tribunal to examine the Holodomor issues and take evidence from survivors and give its verdict;

Opening of Holodomor centres around the world;

Drawing media attention to SBU archives;

International Flame Relay.<sup>246</sup>

Stefan Romaniw also state in his final acknowledgement to members of his 2007 committee that part of their work in 2008 would focus on exposing the Russian Federation's 'lack of democratic process and lack in not providing the Holodomor archives being held in Moscow'.<sup>247</sup> He noted that 'the Russian Federation had issued a plan for its international representatives to spread the news and as per usual, disinformation about the 1932-1933 Holod [sic.] in USSR'.<sup>248</sup> He sees this as an indication that the combined efforts of the Ukrainian agencies working on the Holodomor are having an impact.

### **Gaps in the literature**

It soon became clear at the beginning of the literature search that there was a serious a lack of literature with regard to Ukrainian migrants who remembered the Holodomor or who were survivors, in Western Australia. Although there has been a national association for Australian Ukrainians, as well as a local association, material and education concerning this historical era is thin or non existent, especially in Western Australia.

Scholars are aware that not all information pertaining to the Holodomor has been released from the Kremlin archives. Australian Professor Wheatcroft, in Maniak, had previously provided figures found in the State archives in Moscow that in 1933 there were one hundred deaths for every one thousand villagers and, that for June 1933, three hundred of every one thousand villagers of the Kyiv region died.<sup>249</sup> Wheatcroft from the History Department of Melbourne University, Australia, has been prolific in research pertaining to the number of deaths during this period of Soviet Ukraine's history and whose work will be outlined in the discussion related to that issue further in the thesis.

The exact figure of deaths is still unknown and the reconstruction of the number of deaths is currently ongoing, stated Kopytko in 2005. He was then Programme Director for the Ukraine 3000 International Fund in Kyiv. Ukraine 3000 is an organization instigated by President

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<sup>246</sup> Stefan Romaniw, "International Holodomor Committee Ukrainian World Congress and Partners: Many Thanks for Your Energy and Efforts in 2007 - Christmas Greetings and Best Wishes for 2008."

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Maniak, *Testimonies from Kyiv. To Return to People Their History, and to History - the Truth.*

Yushchenko to investigate aspects of the Holodomor.<sup>250</sup> Serbyn states that there is no longer a challenge to the fact that the Holodomor actually occurred but the issues still in dispute are related to the human loss and the issue of genocide.<sup>251</sup>

It is only with the release of further archival material that we might establish further details. The effect this event had on the total Ukrainian psyche, the country's economy, culture and life is still unknown. It is still a difficult situation in a country currently engaged in establishing itself as a new democratic state, separate from Russia. As Oxana Pachlowska of the University of Rome La Sapienza states:

The Holodomor destroyed not only a century-long supply of the country's demographic and economic resources but also the Ukrainian rural cosmos in its cultural, linguistic, and philosophical continuity and, most importantly, its thousand-year-long ethos of Ukraine's relationship with the earth.<sup>252</sup>

The post-genocidal society that Mace referred to is still attempting to rid itself of its demons.<sup>253</sup> Pachlowska states that the country is still besieged by the same forces that were at work in the 1930s and that they are still trying to prevent Ukraine from aligning itself closer with Western Europe. She quotes a statement made after voting for the 2006 Ukrainian Law on the Holodomor when one of the leaders from the Party of Regions in an isolated Kharkiv region was heard in an interview with Radio Liberty, to promise that MPs voting for the Law would not be disciplined. He stated, 'for now this will have no consequences'.<sup>254</sup> The behaviour, the vote in support of such legislation, was ignored in this instance, but the threat was clear that it may be different if there were future similar transgressions.

Pachlowska states that, the Kharkiv region lost two million (one third) of its peasants during the Holodomor. As the original capital of Ukraine, Kharkiv gained the name of 'capital of despair' by historians. During three months of 1933 it lost six hundred thousand people.<sup>255</sup>

Kulchytsky makes a useful comparison between the Holodomor, the Holocaust and Armenian genocide. He states that the biggest difference between them is that in the case of the Ukrainian Holodomor, it was going to be difficult to convince the grandchildren of those who starved to death, as well as the international community, that people died because of their

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<sup>250</sup> Oleksiy Kopytko, June 2005.

<sup>251</sup> Roman Serbyn, "The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 as Genocide in Light of the UN Convention of 1948," Williams, E.M, <http://www.bleyzerfoundation.com>.

<sup>252</sup> Oxana Pachlowska, "James Mace and His Mission," *The Day Weekly Digest*, (No. 6, February 20 2007) [www.day.kiev.ua/177634/](http://www.day.kiev.ua/177634/).

<sup>253</sup> Mace, "I was Chosen by Your Dead Legacy of the Famine: Ukraine as a Postgenocidal Society."

<sup>254</sup> Pachlowska, "James Mace and His Mission."

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

'national affiliation'. He is a firm upholder of the arguments that the Holodomor was genocide directed against Ukrainians as Ukrainians and, that the evidence meets the criteria set by the United Nations Convention on Genocide.<sup>256</sup>

Despite the efforts of Diaspora Ukrainians, there have been no moves afoot to raise the consciousness of Western Australians. This study has specifically focused upon the Ukrainian migrant refugees and what is known about the history of the Holodomor in Western Australia. The annual commemoration in November, organized by the state Ukrainian organization Hromada, is attended primarily by Ukrainians. Although the West Australian Minister for Multicultural Affairs and local media has been repeatedly invited to attend Holodomor commemoration services in the past, no interest has been shown.

Serbyn notes that one explanation for this could be Ukrainians are economically weak, have little political clout, and their access to media is limited.<sup>257</sup> He was referring to the Canadian media and the Ukrainian community. It could apply to the Ukrainian population which is particularly small in Western Australia. This would have an outcome on such decisions by politicians. The current census indicates that there are 623 people from Ukraine in Western Australia. Not all of these people are in fact known to any parish or group of Ukrainians. The most recent arrivals to the whole of Australia only numbered 143 in 2006.<sup>258</sup> There are approximately 40 active members of the current Association of Ukrainians in Western Australia at the time of this publication.

The situation is different elsewhere in the Diaspora. There has been a plethora of published material in the Diaspora. Clearly the lack of knowledge and understanding of Ukraine's history has had an impact on content in local newspapers and has therefore become a method of disseminating information that would to raise the profile of this event in history. The Ukrainian World Congress is working on the preparation of education kits, media packs, visual materials and events to support education of nations to understand this event in Ukraine's history. Some of this material is now available and has since been sourced for access within Western Australia by the researcher.

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<sup>256</sup> Roman Serbyn, "The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 as Genocide in the Light of the UN Convention of 1948: The State of the Question," *The Ukrainian Quarterly* LXII, no. #2 Summer (2006), <http://www.archives.gov.ua/Section/Famine/Serby-2006.php>.

<sup>257</sup> Serbyn, "Alleged War Criminals, the Canadian Media, and the Ukrainian Community," Mike Reshitnyk, <http://www.ukemond.com/luciuk/serbyn.htm>.

<sup>258</sup> "Commonwealth of Australia: Bureau of Statistics: 2006 Census of Population and Housing: ," Commonwealth of Australia, <http://www.abs.gov.au/austats/abs@.nsf/3101.0>.



The lack of Western Australian academics willing to take up the research challenge must account for the current situation for there is no such shortage in Britain, Italy, France, Canada and the United States for example, where work on this theme has been continuing for some years. Since 2003 we have seen the development of different conferences and publications dedicated to uncovering material about Soviet Ukraine's Holodomor.

The literature and this study have confirmed the need for further research into the experience of the survivors of the Holodomor in Ukraine. The world, and especially people in Western Australia, has yet to fully understand the complete story of the events of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine.

There has been a greater focus on the historical gathering of information, testimonials and memoirs rather than any deeper study of the participants in that history. Little evidence is available of specific studies related to the effects of the Holodomor on the Ukrainian people who survived the trauma and, especially those Ukrainian postwar refugees who are now living in Western Australia. Of them there has been no testimonial evidence at all until this study.

Eliach and Gurewitsch state that although the State records of a period of time are of primary importance, they are produced with specific and ideological goals which can only be filled in by oral history.

The result of silence is forgetting. To be silent is to consign to oblivion a cataclysmic event and an entire generation.<sup>259</sup>

These words were referring to the Holocaust but can apply to any such event in history, especially the Holodomor. Aubrey Hersh echoes the words of other historians and reminds us that through memory we develop an understanding of who we are and what we are here for. She instructs us to 'live with one eye on the past'.<sup>260</sup> Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks states that 'history is the story of a past that is dead' but 'memory is the story of a future'.<sup>261</sup>

In his discussion of memory, Foucault states residual memories can withstand anything that official historical narrative challenges them with. He calls them 'counter-memories'.<sup>262</sup> It is these memories, denied in official histories but safeguarded privately, that began to dismantle

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<sup>259</sup> Y. Eliach and B. Gurewitsch, *Holocaust Oral History Manual* (New York: The Museum of Jewish Heritage, 1991), p.10.

<sup>260</sup> Aubrey Hersh, "The Secret of Jewish Survival," in *60 Days for 6 Million: Remember the Past to Build the Future* (London: Tribe; Young United Synagogue, 2005), 73.

<sup>261</sup> Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks, "60 Days for 6 Million: Remember the Past to Build the Future," (London: Tribe; Young United Synagogue, 2005), p.4.

<sup>262</sup> Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p.xxi.

the cultural authority in Soviet Ukraine in the final years of Soviet rule. Catherine Wanner states, that the Chernobyl tragedy resulting in the typical denial and cover-up, saw the final downfall of the Soviet state. Both Chernobyl and the Holodomor became symbols of Soviet victimization under that regime and were used by opposition leaders to push for Ukrainian Independence in 1991. Years of cover up and frustration triggered by this accident was to find a voice in a less censored media for a public wanting a more honest depiction of its suffering.<sup>263</sup>

The release and translation of the latest declassified documents from the archives of the Security Service of Ukraine of material relating to the Holodomor will be important in making public those documents outlining the crimes of Stalin, within Ukraine as well as the world. Siundiukov notes that the period of the 1920s and 1930s 'is a pivotal era of Soviet history, and the attitude to this period depends to a large extent on its interpretation and assessment'.<sup>264</sup>

### **The Western Australian Ukrainian refugees' memories**

The memories that surfaced as the outcome of the interviews have replicated those interviews from the books of testimonies accessed as part of the literature review of the history of the time. The survivors from Western Australia are a world apart from their counterparts in Ukraine, United States or Canada where most of the published testimonies have emanated from. The stories of this particular study do not begin and end with the Holodomor however, but continue with the ensuing life journey that was to bring them to Western Australia. The stories have remained almost untainted by the isolation of this community. There have been no studies, seminars nor conferences in Western Australia. There has been no school of Ukrainian study at any university in this state and the annual commemorative service in November attracts only a small number of people.

The survivor's life journey was a phenomenon quite unique for it outlined quite clearly that the Holodomor, although horrendous, was not the only major trauma that the Western Australian refugees were forced to endure in their lives. It was part of a string of traumatic events that befell these people from a very early age. The will and mental strength to deal with what life had presented them with, was a testament to their human endurance and courage in the face of such adversity. It was truly humbling.

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>264</sup> Siundiukov, "In the Merciless Light of Memory."

There is a constant push for this research work to be continued. The call is for the work to be coordinated effectively and single databank and complete list of all famine victims.<sup>265</sup> Maksudov believes that monuments will be erected not only in Ukraine but in the regions of Ukrainian populations in Russia that were effected as well as central Moscow. At least we can now say that restoring this history is no longer silenced and the history is now under investigation. Maksudov believes the words describing this event in history will reflect the same universal understanding of the Holocaust.<sup>266</sup> It will improve the world's understanding of the challenges facing Ukraine today, trying to shake off over seventy years of what has been noted as 'Soviet communist creed and cultivation'.<sup>267</sup>

As was concluded in Grinchenko's research, the memories belong in the psyche of the survivors. They are almost survival strategies of nearly 75 years of what she called 'memory prohibition' by the Soviet regime. The issue of the Holodomor as with the forced labour survivors, was not previously considered important enough in their scientific, historical or sociopolitical discourse.<sup>268</sup>

The most difficult part of this research was bringing it to a conclusion. The Holodomor was undoubtedly a major event in Ukraine's history that touched people lives in profound ways with far reaching consequences. There was no guarantee that the research would uncover many people willing to be interviewed let alone the richness of data that they shared. The Holodomor had impacted upon the lives of ordinary people. Their silences, their pain and sense of loss had been kept under cover for so long that many stories are now lost to history.

Was the grief and horror so unbelievable that historians neglected to dig out the details until distance provided some strength to confront it or, was it only because the archival data was not available to confirm the event? Were the testimonies not enough to discount the Soviet history of the time? Did the migrants in Western Australia themselves need the distance of over seventy years to speak about events? Although people interviewed for this study found the experience painful to speak about, others wanted their story to be recorded. Many, nonetheless, sought the preservation of their anonymity.

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<sup>265</sup> Sergei Maksudov, "Genocide Remembered: Holodomor: Up Close and Personal," Moscow News, <http://mnweekly.rian.ru/cis/20070517/55248790.html>; Maksym Bedenok, "Justice Ministry of Ukraine Creates Interagency Group to Identify Victims of the Great Famine of 1932-1933," Holodomor Working Group.

<sup>266</sup> Maksudov, "Genocide Remembered: Holodomor: Up Close and Personal."

<sup>267</sup> "What Is the Ukraine Famine Disaster of 1932-1933?" in *SEMP biot*, [http://www.semp.us/biots/biot\\_160.html](http://www.semp.us/biots/biot_160.html).

<sup>268</sup> Gelinada Grinchenko, "Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich: Remembering and Forgetting as the Strategies of Survival," in *Annual Conference of the Oral History Society* (King's College, London: 2005), p.7.

The Western Australian migrants' memories of the Holodomor were the main discussion points of the interviews for this study and the refugee migrants provided their own personal perspective and view of that period of Ukraine's history. The experience of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 had specific implications for these people that transcend the experience itself. Such acute hunger created social difficulties that have never been psychologically resolved by some survivors.<sup>269</sup> The Soviet Union went on to maintain a silence about this event and ensured that the survivors also kept their memories silent by their policies and tactics at the time. Such thinking would create great inner turmoil for the rest of their lives.

The atrocities that the Ukrainian people experienced are unimaginable to most Western Australians. They were too horrific to be true to a young child, with reference to this researcher, born of Ukrainian migrants. The stories were told almost furtively and many times adults would discourage people from discussing 'those matters' in front of others or the children. The most that was mentioned was the total lack of food. This was often at mealtimes when children did not finish their meals or simply did not wish to eat what was placed before them. Little did they know of the terror that Stalin had inflicted upon their parents? These children might not have retorted that they 'hated varenyky [small Ukrainian dumplings] with onion' when chided by migrant mothers for leaving good food on their plates uneaten, had they understood the historical context of their parent's lives.

## **Conclusion**

It should be evident that this research has focused on a unique event in world history that has not been adequately covered, especially in terms of survivors and their memories. Although there has been some research uncovering testimonies and irrefutable historical evidence overseas, there is a paucity of research in Western Australia, alongside a lack of resources and publications to assist in raising awareness of this period of history.

There are survivors within the Ukrainian community in Western Australia whose plight should be recognized and their history acknowledged. The human condition in this situation is not one that is comprehensively understood nor do we know how to assist these people in easing the trauma of their memories, especially in their senior years.

The Ukrainian post-war migrant refugee group was originally brought into Western Australia as a means of expanding the labour force and the population has survived with memories

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<sup>269</sup> Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, p.155.

about events that most Australians still have very little understanding of.<sup>270</sup> Or as one Holodomor survivor now resident in Western Australia explains:

It's difficult to talk to Australians about that (the Holodomor). They are different people. They're good and have everything but it [the Holodomor] seems untrue to them. Maybe now it's changed. They haven't seen much grief, they don't have that feeling. You show them a film or something else and they laugh. They didn't have war in their lifetime. They think that the Depression (in Australia in the 30s) was a disaster and it wasn't. ... How people lay dying on the ground, how they were collected...<sup>271</sup>

It typifies the general lack of understanding that the migrants and the survivors amongst them perceive Australians and other Westerners to have, of the history of the Holodomor and of the fate of the Ukrainians. The following thesis seeks to begin to fill that void of ignorance.

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<sup>270</sup> Isajiw, "Future Directions in Research on Ukrainians in the Diaspora," p.10.

<sup>271</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2005).

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Famine of 1932-1933**

#### **within the context of Ukraine's history**

This chapter outlines the political disorder and destruction of lives during the period of dekulakization, religious persecution, mass terror and collectivization, brought about by the Soviet leadership. A discussion of events surrounding the 1932-1933 Holodomor was included with an outline of the starvation that followed, the activists' brigades, the death by starvation and the discussion and debate of estimates of deaths as a result of the famine. Stalin's directives and the political deceptions surrounding this period followed by the caps for the exiled and the 'code of silence' have been included to provide a comprehensive picture of life in Soviet Ukraine.

#### **Ukraine after 1917**

The 1917 Russian Revolution, with the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, had huge implications for Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> The revolutionary era of March 1917 to October 1920 saw constant attempts by Ukrainians to create an independent Ukrainian state. Although the Ukrainian National Republic was proclaimed in Kyiv on 22 January 1918, this era saw much political upheaval and a continued effort by armed pro-Bolshevik elements fighting for Soviet control over the Ukrainian independent Nationalist forces.<sup>2</sup> Magocsi's historical account of this period provides some indication of the turmoil within Ukraine that was a vital backdrop to the terror that Stalin was to unleash upon the Ukrainian people in the early 1930s.

Magocsi noted that from March 1917 until April 1918 work on establishing the Central Rada in Kyiv began. The Central Rada was a council set up by Ukrainian nationalist leaders. The Rada passed resolutions calling for Ukrainian autonomy within Russia and for there to be more representation of Ukrainian affairs. In a document to the Central Russian Government from June 1917, the Rada requested:

That the Russian government, by a special act, publicly declare that it does not oppose the national will of Ukraine, the right of our people to autonomy.

That the Central Russian Government accredit our Commissar on Ukrainian Affairs for all matters concerning Ukraine.

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<sup>1</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p.469.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, "Struggle for Independence - 1917-1920," University of Alberta, <http://www.encyclopediaofukraine.com/history.asp>.

That local power in Ukraine be united under one representative from the Central Russian Government, that is, by a Commissar in Ukraine chosen by us.

That a definite portion of funds collected from our people, for the Central Treasury be turned over to us, the representatives of this people, for its own national-cultural needs.<sup>3</sup>

According to Magocsi the Russian Provisional Government rejected all of those demands and the Rada was accused by the Russian press of betraying the revolution.<sup>4</sup> The Provisional Government that toppled the Tsar, was overthrown by the Bolsheviks on 6 November 1917, and within two days the Central Rada had condemned the coup in Petrograd and voiced its 'intention to resist any similar attempts' in Ukraine. An ultimatum was received from Petrograd's Bolshevik government on December 17 insisting that the Central Rada suspend its activity or it would be considered to be in open rebellion against the Central Soviet government. According to Magocsi, 'The Ukrainian entities in Kiev [spelling as in text] were described by the Bolsheviks as the enemies of the people'. After a meeting in Kyiv on 22 January 1918 the Rada proclaimed the existence of an Independent Ukrainian National Republic, which was subsequently overthrown by pro-Bolshevik elements on 29 January. Kyiv was taken over ten days later by the Ukrainian Bolshevik Antonov-Ovseenko and his Red Army. The Bolsheviks ruled Kyiv by February 9 but, after peace negotiations with Germany and Austria-Hungary, the Soviet government accepted the provisions of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk. This signing meant that both Soviet Russia and the Central powers recognized Ukraine as a sovereign state. This event was occurring as the Bolsheviks were driving the Central Rada out of Kyiv on 9 February 1918. The Central Rada needed the aid of German and Austrian troops to force out the Bolsheviks, whose occupation was to last only twenty days.<sup>5</sup>

The events during this period are noted by Magocsi as being complex. Such turmoil was to continue until October 1920 when the Soviet government finally established its rule throughout eastern Ukraine. Magocsi states that it is difficult to provide a chronology of events as none of the authorities which claimed Ukraine 'ever exercised actual sovereignty'. He noted that historically the Russians believed that Ukraine was their 'Little Russia', a distinct part of their homeland. Their belief was that the peasant masses were not Ukrainians

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<sup>3</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p.473.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.477.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 479-82.

but were culturally Russian and it was therefore incomprehensible that they form an independent Ukrainian state.<sup>6</sup>

To complicate matters further, western Ukraine through the same years was undergoing its own political turmoil with Poland leading ultimately to the creation of an independent West Ukrainian National Republic. Important to note is that internationally, both east and west Ukraine were largely unknown entities. This was to have repercussions during events surrounding the famine of 1932-1933. Unlike Poland, which had official representation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, neither Ukrainian republic had any successful effective international representation.

Magocsi believes that although plagued by war and political intrigue, the era post – World War One was successful in that the Ukrainians began their struggle for the idea of independence. They certainly developed what he calls ‘a firm sense of national purpose’.<sup>7</sup>

Following the success of the Bolshevik revolution in November 1918, no less than fourteen foreign and domestically constituted armies set out to overthrow the new Soviet regime. The resulting ‘civil war’ was devastating for Ukraine. During this time the revolutionary leader of the Soviet state, Vladimir Lenin, claimed that his party represented the very poor, the peasants, but to destroy any growth of Ukrainian nationalism he needed to weaken these two forces. He levied taxes, house searches and conscriptions upon them and also, as outlined by Merridale, instituted crippling grain requisitions during the Civil War that was to last until 1923.<sup>8</sup> Grain requisitioning was a tactic used again with great effect, some years later, at the beginning of the famine of 1932-1933.

The political disorder of these years brought about much destruction in the lives of the Ukrainian people however the concept of private ownership was one that they defended ‘in numerous uprisings’.<sup>9</sup> Clearly this would be a common outcome for any society facing the confiscation of private property. During this period, crises of every kind seemed to disrupt Ukrainian life. Agriculture was destroyed by war banditry and factories were no longer functioning. The black market became the only means of survival for the urban population. The overused railways, badly neglected from World War One, were under more pressure from

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp.514-20.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*, pp.128-48.

<sup>9</sup> Mykola Haliy, *Organized Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, ed. Mykola Shlemkevych, vol. 1 # 4 (Chicago: Ukrainian Research and Information Institute, 1963), p.7.



the various armies of the civil war, as well as the huge movement of population displaced by war and revolution.<sup>10</sup>

All sides in the civil war used terror. The Bolsheviks viewed religion as a tool of the old order. They increasingly viewed anyone who openly opposed, criticized or questioned them as counter-revolutionary. Historians such as Merridale view this period as one that brutalized and traumatized people, 'coarsened public life' and 'promoted a culture of callous violence and disregard for life'.<sup>11</sup> With an exhausted social and economic system, a famine occurred in Ukraine during the early 1920s that threatened the embryonic Soviet government's ability to rule. It also depleted any localized spirit of resistance. The Ukrainian population was now generally hostile to the new communist regime and Lenin was forced to adopt a policy of ideological retreat represented in the New Economic Policy (NEP).<sup>12</sup>

The NEP, although not confined specifically to Soviet Ukraine, was instituted theoretically to give people limited opportunities to engage in trade and manufacturing for profit. Private capital was allowed to set up small businesses and peasants were permitted to farm their land as land owners. The control of travel abroad was relaxed and businessmen and intellectuals were permitted to travel.<sup>13</sup>

Peter Mizelle's dissertation notes that the traditional view of the NEP, with its approach to market reform, was that it was a period of great benefit for the Ukrainian peasantry.<sup>14</sup> However, subsequent research found that relations continued to be difficult between the peasants and the government, as evidenced by revolts and violence. The 1920s famine, thought to be a naturally occurring one, is said to have been the catalyst that checked any rebellion by the peasants and stabilized the countryside. Hunger became the preoccupation that curtailed unrest and allowed a gradual transition to the centralized control of the Bolsheviks. Moscow was gradually able to re-establish its authority.<sup>15</sup>

According to Mizelle the Bolsheviks failed to acknowledge the 1921-1922 famine conditions early and any foreign relief campaign that was eventually allowed was limited. The regime distrusted the capitalist world and greatly feared any foreign charity that might precipitate

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<sup>10</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.141.

<sup>12</sup> P. C. Mizelle, "Battle with Famine": Soviet Relief and the Tatar Republic, 1921-1922," University of Virginia, [http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/preview\\_all/30444916](http://www.lib.umi.com/dissertations/preview_all/30444916).

<sup>13</sup> Donald Rayfield, *Stalin and His Hangmen: An Authoritative Portrait of a Tyrant and Those Who Served Him* (London: Penguin, 2004), p.103.

<sup>14</sup> Mizelle, "Battle with Famine": Soviet Relief and the Tatar Republic, 1921-1922."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

some form of intervention from invading foreigners.<sup>16</sup> This Soviet response was to be repeated a decade later with far more purposeful outcomes. The difference was that during 1918 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had actually been invaded by fourteen and domestic foreign armies and their attitude to foreign charity was probably justified.

The Soviet leader, Lenin, died in 1924, opening up a period of intense political in-fighting within the Soviet regime. By 1927, the Georgian Bolshevik activist Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, known by his alias of 'Stalin', began to assert his power. Analysts such as Davies note, that the era from 1929 was the era of the 'Stalinization' of the USSR.<sup>17</sup> Economically this was a difficult period for Stalin when government grain quotas were not reaching expected levels. This led to the requisitioning of grain and revoking of the NEP. Thus 'the military jargon, the Utopian expectations, the brutal coercion of the peasantry and the lack of economic preparation' became key features of this period.<sup>18</sup> By 1928 Stalin was firmly in power in Moscow and a new period of dictatorship had begun. Stalin's ascent to power was to have particularly disastrous implications for Ukraine.

### **Collectivization**

As part of the first Five Year Plan launched in 1928, Stalin announced the collectivization of agriculture in 1929.<sup>19</sup> Collectivization meant 'the effective abolition of private property in land, and the concentration of the remaining peasants in collective farms [kolhosp: Ukrainian term] under Party control'.<sup>20</sup> A collective farm was a large estate of land belonging to the State that was cultivated by its members. In joining the collective farm peasants surrendered their own land, implements, animals and cattle. The hours of work were not defined, their wages were not fixed, but the distribution of foodstuffs after state quotas were met was based on the number of days people worked. There was no food rationing.<sup>21</sup>

By 1930 a more concerted effort was made to take over the villages and collectivize the farms. Communist workers were sent to villages to take over and manage the collective farms and control the seed requisitioning. They were joined by members of the komsomol, the Communist youth organization, to assist in the collectivization process. Activists such as Kravchenko remembers being told that the 'authorities needed an injection of Bolshevik

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Norman Davies, *Europe a History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.959.

<sup>18</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.145.

<sup>19</sup> R. Beard, "Chronology of Russian History: The Soviet Period, 1917-1991," Bucknell University, <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/chrono3.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.4.

<sup>21</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p.555.

iron... beat down the kulak agent whenever he raises his head... and act like Bolsheviks worthy of Comrade Stalin'.<sup>22</sup>

Ukrainian writer and witness Pigido-Pravoberezhny's publication provides the clearest understanding of what it was to work on a collective farm.<sup>23</sup> For their work, which was defined by an arbitrary 'unit of work', in Ukrainian, a trudoden, based on days of work completed, people might receive a small monetary amount after the harvest and the different state payments were made. They may be paid some grain and some straw after threshing. Payment for a work-day might be 20-80 kopeks (the smallest currency - 100 kopecks equaled a ruble). These workers received no dairy, poultry, oil, flax or honey, for example, which were considered luxuries and were handed over to the state.

Pigido-Pravoberezhny describes how any payment received as a collective farm worker did not include anything for small children or old parents who traditionally lived with their families, and who could not work. The staple, bread, was three rubles a kilogram and could equal four days work on the collective farm. He calculates that the state made from 2,900 percent to 10,000 percent gross profit from their workers. Pigido-Pravoberezhny outlines the Soviet statistics of the average pay for Soviet citizens and officials which was calculated as 300 to 350 rubles per month. A pair of boots, the main footwear of the peasants, was 300 to 7,000 rubles a pair and sugar was three and a half rubles per kilogram.<sup>24</sup>

Most items were prohibitive for collective farm workers. The worker was permitted a small farmhouse plot for personal use. Until serious requisitioning, they could keep a cow but that became impossible after some time. Anything that was to have come from the land of this plot was also requisitioned and required to be delivered to the state, whether or not there were vegetables grown or animals kept.<sup>25</sup>

From any income a peasant might receive, they were required to make 'voluntary' contributions to various funds such as street building funds, the Five Year Plan loan fund, dues to the Aviation Society, the Motor Highway Society, the Society for Atheists and so on.<sup>26</sup> Somehow the children also needed to be provided for, especially those of school age.

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<sup>22</sup> Victor Kravchenko, *I Chose Freedom* (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1946), pp.91-92.

<sup>23</sup> Pigido-Pravoberezhny, *The Stalin Famine. Ukraine in the Year 1933*, pp.68-71.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.69.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.70.

The misery of Ukrainians peasants was palpable.<sup>27</sup> These were the people who loved their land and held a long affinity with it. Their resistance to the collective farm system was thus easily understood.

Stalin, on the other hand, believed that collectivization would enable industrialization, which would result in rapid militarization and secure the Soviet state. The collectives were a means of taking back land that had been given to the peasants by the Bolsheviks during the 1917 Revolution. It was Stalin's way of taking control from independent farmers whose position enabled them to live outside the economic system set up by the Soviet government.

Benjamin Valentino, in exploring the themes of mass killings and genocide, believes that Stalin saw the long term survival of the Soviet regime being based on an immediate solution to the collection of grain and an understanding that the peasantry would resist collectivization. He notes the majority of Soviet Ukrainians opposed and resisted collectivization and, that this is also the period of time that the majority of victims died. Stalin, he states, decided that any programme for overcoming the resistance of the peasants would have to be quick and involve considerable coercion. Leszek Kolakowski in Valentino, states that it was 'probably the most massive warlike operation ever conducted by a state against its own citizens'.<sup>28</sup>

In their memoirs of the 1932-1933 famine, Valentyn Moroz and Pavlo Makohon wrote that to create disunity the people were divided by the Soviet authorities into four groups: the 'bidniaks' [the poor farmers], the 'seredniaks' [farmers of average standing], the 'kulaks' [seen to be more wealthy and the more resistant farmers] and the 'pidkulaks' [the poor who supported the kulaks – probably worked for them].<sup>29</sup> By dividing the people thus they claim, the authorities were hoping to split Ukrainians along class lines.

The removal of kulaks had everything to do with 'the removal of potential opposition to the collectivization of the village'. They were 'peasant individualists, the strongest leaders and supporters of the old rural way of life'.<sup>30</sup> In his discussion of the campaign against kulaks, Orlando Figes noted that when kulaks suddenly disappeared from the village, peasants reacted with passive resignation born of fear. In some villages they actually selected kulaks from their

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp.68-71.

<sup>28</sup> Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killings and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp.107,10.

<sup>29</sup> Valentyn Moroz and Pavlo Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine," *Anabasis Magazine*, <http://mwukr.problem.org/witness.htm>.

<sup>30</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, p. 87.

own number or drew lots. Isolated farmers, widows and old people were selected to satisfy the demands of the activists who would visit the villages in search of kulaks.<sup>31</sup>

Resistance to collectivization meant severe punishment, including deportation to distant Arctic labour camps such as Kolyma. This was known as the coldest place on earth, where prisoners bitterly joked that there 'were 12 months of winter and all the rest was summer'.<sup>32</sup> It took months to actually get to the camp and it was said that Kolyma was the most difficult of any Soviet punishment camp.

### **Dekulakization**

Dekulakization and collectivization were not separate events but occurred concurrently and came about because of the same policies. Conquest notes that the kulaks' fate was unique and should be treated separately. The 30 January 1930 Politburo resolution 'On Measures for the Elimination of kulak Households in Districts of Comprehensive Collectivization', led to their destruction as a social class.<sup>33</sup>

Stalin believed that the NEP should be disbanded and that it was necessary to also liquidate the 'kulaks', the so-called wealthier peasants, as a class to do so.<sup>34</sup> He announced the liquidation of kulaks as a class on 27 December 1929. Those targeted were in Soviet Ukraine as well as in agricultural areas of the Don, lower Volga and Kuban, where there were sizable communities of Ukrainians. Magocsi noted that the Bolsheviks had branded the kulaks 'enemies of the people'.<sup>35</sup> Stalin concluded that kulaks were 'not human beings'.<sup>36</sup> This was echoed by Vasily Grossman, who was at the time a member of a Party activist committee. He admitted that they 'really believed the destruction of the kulaks would bring about a happy life'.<sup>37</sup> He remarked that he had fallen under Stalin's spell and believed that everything evil sprang from the kulaks:

The kulak child was loathsome, the young 'kulak' girl was lower than a louse. They looked on the so-called 'kulaks' as cattle, swine, loathsome, repulsive. They had no souls; they stank; they all had venereal diseases; they were enemies of the people and exploited the labour of others.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p. 334.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.117.

<sup>34</sup> J. DeMersseman, "Stalinism's Victims: How Many Died? A Summary of Stalin's Victims," ArtUkraine, <http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/stvictims.htm>.

<sup>35</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p. 557.

<sup>36</sup> Stalin quoted in Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.129.

<sup>37</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, p.143.

<sup>38</sup> M. J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations. Reflecting 5000 Years of World History* (London: Cassell, 2004), p.737.

Dekulakization led to 'the killing of, or deportation to the Arctic with their families, of millions of peasants, in principle the better-off, in practice the most influential and the most recalcitrant to the Party's plans'.<sup>39</sup> The authorities believed that kulaks could be determined by a property of 'twelve acres, a cow, a horse, ten sheep, a hog and about twenty chickens, on a farm which could support four people'.<sup>40</sup> Such a kurkul would be required to fulfill a quota of six hundred and nineteen bushels of wheat. If not met the kurkul would be arrested and all property removed, with the family sent out on the street or be deported to Siberia.<sup>41</sup>

Stalin began a propaganda campaign to convince people that dekulakization was 'an essential element in forming and developing collective farms' and liquidating the kulaks was necessary because the kurkul was 'an accursed enemy of the collective farm movement'.<sup>42</sup> The addendum to the Minutes of the Soviet Politburo meeting number 93, dated 6 December 1932, outlined clearly the severity of the penalties, for not cooperating and giving up the grain obligation to the authorities. The kulaks and 'counterrevolutionary elements' were held responsible and villages were placed on the black list for so called 'disruption of the grain collection plan'. The villages were listed in the Addendum.<sup>43</sup>

Stalin sent Party bosses Vyacheslav Molotov (Chairman of Council of People's Commissars and People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs), Lazar Kaganovych (a member of the Soviet Politburo and the First Secretary of the Moscow Obkom or region, of the Ukrainian Communist Party) and NKVD secret police chief Genrikh Yagoda, to force the issue. Punishment was the confiscation of all food and livestock. If there was resistance, people were herded into cattle wagons and in some cases unloaded at Vologda, one of the main transit points to the Soviet prisons. Reid's history of Ukraine recorded that many Ukrainians who survived that journey subsequently died near the station. Those who were still on their feet were marched to their final destination or simply abandoned in the wilderness.<sup>44</sup> They were transported to the wilderness and expected to build their own camp but the freezing conditions took their toll.

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<sup>39</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p4.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.135.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135-36.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.114.

<sup>43</sup> V. Chubar and S. Kosior, "Addendum to the Minutes of Politburo [Meeting] No. 93: Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine on Blacklisting Villages That Maliciously Sabotage the Collection of Grain." Copies held at the Library of Congress and available online.

<sup>44</sup> A. Reid, *Borderland. A Journey through the History of Ukraine* (Great Britain: Westview Press, 1997), pp.127-28.

Others faced execution. Margolis notes that Kaganovych set a quota of 10,000 executions a week that saw eighty percent of the Ukrainian intellectuals meeting their death in this way.<sup>45</sup>

The entire process of dekulakization saw peasants of every economic situation being caught in the operation.<sup>46</sup> In discussing this issue of eliminating kulaks Stalin was on record as having said on 27 December 1929, that, 'When the head is off one does not mourn for the hair'.<sup>47</sup> The mass deportations of the early 1930s 'were an initiative of Stalin' that he sometimes forced through against OGPU opposition. This is noted by Khlevnyuk in Ellman.<sup>48</sup> Ellman's paper quotes data indicating that from 1929 – 1933, the years of collectivization and famine, saw an excess in the number of convictions by the Soviet courts compared to the years before and after thus linking the actions to Stalin's policies of repression during that time. Ellman argues that it was clear that Stalin had 'pursued a multi-pronged policy of state terror against the population of the USSR, in particular against the peasantry'. Stalin had used four different methods to achieve his aims; 'judicial repression; charges, arrests, investigations and sentences by the OGPU; deportations and the sending of special plenipotentiaries to Ukraine, North Caucasus, and the Lower-Volga to obtain grain by force' regardless of the famine conditions. Ellman states that a 'deliberate starvation' strategy would have been a typical tactic as in 'siege warfare' where to starve the enemy into submission was commonly used.<sup>49</sup>

Ellman's response to Davies and Wheatcroft's argument that there was a lack of evidence that Stalin's intention was to organize starvation was, that now there was ample documentary evidence to support Ellman's statement that the August 7 1932 decree indicates torture was used to extract grain. People were stopped from leaving oblasts [provinces] that were seriously affected by lack of food, deportations and mass deaths were planned and prison camps were set up for those facing deportation and repression.<sup>50</sup>

Ellman notes that Stalin's violence against the peasants during 1932-1933 was well documented and that there were still archives that had not been declassified which would provide further documentary evidence. He further indicates that archival evidence points to Stalin's role during that era and states that Stalin was a tyrant in the 1930s. Ellman accuses

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<sup>45</sup> Eric Margolis, "Seven Million Died in the "Forgotten Holocaust", in *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times*, ed. Lubomyr Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2004), p.189.

<sup>46</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.119.118-119.

<sup>47</sup> Cohen and Major, *History in Quotations. Reflecting 5000 Years of World History*, p.737.; Joseph Stalin, *Works* 12(1955): p.179.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Ellman, "Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Revisited," *Europe - Asia Studies* 59, no. 4 (2007).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.677.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

Davies and Wheatcroft of identifying themselves with the authorities rather than the people whom the famine had affected so acutely. These analysts made what Alexander Motyl, at Rutgers University states, a mistake in treating the Holodomor 'as if it were merely an instance of agricultural policy gone awry... bad farming policy'. Motyl went further to state that such an attitude would be tantamount to treating the Holocaust 'as nothing more than the consequence of bad demographic policy'.<sup>51</sup> Ellman refers to their publication *Years of Hunger* where it was proposed that the peasants stole the grain.<sup>52</sup> This is contrary to archival data and testimonies of survivors.

Martin Amis discusses the fact that people who were still outside the collective farms faced their own specific quotas of grain and produce that was imposed by the authorities. Any grain reserves found on farms were collected and people faced death for withholding food. Stalin's government decrees continued the requisitioning of food until March 1933.<sup>53</sup>

With collectivization, the peasants who submitted were required to produce quantities of grain that, once the state claimed the first and greater share, left little or nothing for the peasants. While food was being removed or worse still withheld from the Ukrainians, there were sales abroad.<sup>54</sup>

The work on the collective farms was calculated by a simple method of approach to labour in a communal economy. If a person drove a tractor he or she might earn two labour days (trudoden) for one day worked. An unskilled worker was required to work two days to earn one trudoden. No work meant no pay. Trudoden payments were usually in grain and not enough to feed one person. Farm managers were activists, sent there to control the peasants. Their knowledge of farming did not match that of the Ukrainian farmer whose land was his life. Ignorance of farming and the subsequent disorder did not encourage the peasants to work for their pitiful trudoden payments.<sup>55</sup>

Ukrainian historians agree with regard to the collectivization of agriculture in Ukraine. They determine that it became both an economic and military categories of discussion. Vasyl Plyushch, saw it as a tool of Russian domination and a Russian way of life that was 'forcibly

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<sup>51</sup> Motyl, "Looking at the *Holodomor* through the Lens of the Holocaust," p.173.

<sup>52</sup> R. W. Davies and S G Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), pp.158-61.

<sup>53</sup> M. Amis, *Koba the Dread. Laughter and the Twenty Million* (New York: Vintage International, 2002), p. 139.

<sup>54</sup> K. Gerner and K. Karlsson, "Genocide; a Background Paper" (paper presented at the International Conference on Genocide Prevention in Stockholm, Threats and Responsibility, Stockholm, Sweden, 2004).

<sup>55</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933.*



imposed upon oppressed peoples in order to rule over them'. Plyushch specifically saw it as a 'national oppression' by the 'imposition of a hostile ideology of life upon a subjugated nation'. Thus he saw it clearly as domination of the people of Ukraine.<sup>56</sup> It was important that this domination was victorious otherwise it would reflect as a failure of the communist system.<sup>57</sup> Pigido-Pravoberezhny agreed with this perspective and was resolute with his notion that the famine, the Holodomor, was planned in advance.<sup>58</sup>

Evidence of such planning uncovered by authors such as Bilinsky, suggests that Stalin hated and feared Ukrainian nationalism and the desire for independence. Over the years the Russian Empire, for fear of the threat of Ukrainian separatism, had used repressive policies to eliminate any possibility of a modern national movement emerging and this period also saw education and any publication of documents in the Ukrainian language restricted until independence in 1991.<sup>59</sup>

Despite the severe grain quotas, restrictions and hunger imposed upon the peasants during the Holodomor years, there was little overt resistance to the terror. Those who did resist were easily overpowered and imprisoned, sent to Gulags in Siberia or severely punished severely.<sup>60</sup>

Stalin attempted to complete the task of annihilating the Ukrainian kulaks in secrecy and with a complete press blackout. Thus began the mass exile, deprivation and, forced labour or execution of kurkul families. Grossman remembers that:

The fathers were already imprisoned, and then, at the beginning of 1930, they began to round up families too... They would threaten people with guns, as if they were under a spell, calling small children 'kulak bastards,' screaming 'Bloodsuckers!' And those 'bloodsuckers' were so terrified that they hardly had any blood of their own left in their veins. They were as white as clean paper.<sup>61</sup>

Stalin demonstrated that resistance to collectivization would have dire consequences.<sup>62</sup>

Oksana Grabowicz attempted to evaluate the psychological consequences and impact of collectivization. She believed that 'de-emphasizing the individual and shifting all importance to the collective was the first stage to personality restructuring'. The devaluation of human

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<sup>56</sup> Prof. Vasyl Plyushch, *Genocide of the Ukrainian People. The Artificial Famine in the Years 1932-1933* (Munich: Ukrainian Institute for Bildungspolitik Munich, 1973), p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>58</sup> Pigido-Pravoberezhny, *The Stalin Famine. Ukraine in the Year 1933*, p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> Mace, "The Day."

<sup>60</sup> Y. Bilinsky, "Was the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 Genocide?," *Journal of Genocide Research* 1, no. 2 (1999).

<sup>61</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, pp141-42.

<sup>62</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p. 25.

life, emotional autism, suppressed pain, a chronic state of fear, lack of trust with the development of informer networks, suppressed anger and a lack of basic security led to ‘a generation that was emotionally paralysed (sic) and paranoid’.<sup>63</sup>

### **Mass terror**

Stalin hoped that mass terror could force the country into submission. As early as 1929, distinguished Ukrainian academics and writers were arrested and deported to penal camps where they were often tried for spurious misdemeanors and executed.<sup>64</sup> Stalin realized that Ukrainian nationhood was, in the words of Conquest, ‘contained in the intelligentsia who articulated it’ as well as in the peasant masses who sustained it.<sup>65</sup> The culture and patriotism of Ukraine had also been sustained by kobzars or blind bards. Conquest described how they wandered the villages with their songs and poetry reminding the people of their free and heroic past. During the mid 1930s, they were invited to the First All-Ukrainian Congress of Lirniki and Banduristy (folk singers, minstrels) where they were arrested and, in most cases shot. This act of Stalin’s ended a long-held tradition and effectively silenced yet another group maintaining the Ukrainian traditions.<sup>66</sup>

Under Stalin, any cultural, academic or scientific organization that could be identified as distinctly Ukrainian was purged and seen as representing a potential bastion of counter-revolutionary, separatist ideas. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church was also a target.

### **Religious persecution**

In the early twenties, Ukrainian Orthodox Church property was seized and confiscated. It is believed that by 1923, twenty-eight bishops and thousands of priests had been killed.<sup>67</sup> With this new campaign the church was attacked again with a major assault beginning in late 1929. Priests were deported with the first wave of kulaks. Their crime was that they acquired income unassociated with work.<sup>68</sup>

Peter Kardash outlines details of the destruction faced by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, later proclaimed autocephalic. He notes the exile and execution of the priests and stated that

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<sup>63</sup> Oksana Grabowicz, "Soviet Collapse and Ukrainian Independence: The Cultural and Psychological Factors" (paper presented at the Proceedings of the First Conference of the Ukrainian Studies Association of Australia, Monash University, 24-26 January 1992), p.141.

<sup>64</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, pp.217-219.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p.219.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p.266. Volkov Solomon, ed. *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* (New York: Faber & Faber, 1979), pp.214-15. Although noted by a few different authors there is no mention of where this occurred.

<sup>67</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.201.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. Chapter 10.; Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.223.

‘the church suffered greatly at the hands of the communist regime’. The priests, together with ‘the church’s faithful, died in the Solovky Islands’ and other concentration camps, where they had been exiled.<sup>69</sup>

Peasants who attempted to save their churches from desecration were arrested and deported. Crosses and bells were removed; icons and other objects of religious worship were burned as a matter of course.<sup>70</sup> Rings and vestments were stolen. Although the Soviet Constitution Article 18 technically permitted religious worship, in reality it was suppressed.<sup>71</sup> Although religious life was banned, people became more religious than ever with faith and prayer having to be performed in secret without priests.<sup>72</sup>

Irreplaceable cultural monuments were thus lost. The destruction flowed into the cemeteries which were often desecrated. By 1934, 75 to 80 percent of Ukrainian churches had been destroyed and the traditional core of Ukrainian spiritual life had been shattered.<sup>73</sup>

With the ascendancy of Stalin to the position of unquestioned dictator of the Soviet Union, the situation in Soviet Ukraine worsened.<sup>74</sup> During this period Ukrainians were the largest single non-Russian national group within the Soviet Union, making up two-fifths of all non-Russian citizenry.

Ihor Kopytko, Chairperson of the Dnipropetrovs’k Association of Researchers of the Manmade Famine and Genocide in Ukraine, remembers the Holodomor and its effect on him:

The manmade famine left an indelible imprint on my mind, although I was a six year old child at the time. We lived on the outskirts of Dnipropetrovs’k, and every day we saw cartloads of corpses being carried to the mass burial ground near Sevastopol Park. At that time, there was a low lying vale there next to the railway station. By all accounts, the bodies brought there were those of the people who had fled the countryside to the city in search of at least some food. I remember mother say in a shaky voice, looking at the carts full of dead bodies, that these were our bread-winners. But, in fact, people avoided speaking on this subject at the time and later. For example, I do not remember any of my colleagues at Dnipropetrovs’k University’s Department of History ever starting a conversation about the famine in all the years of Soviet power although they came from the countryside and must have witnessed those events, judging by their age. I can recall just one instance when an acquaintance of mine was unwary enough to mention aloud the 1933 tragedy. He was soon summoned

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<sup>69</sup> Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*, pp.51-63.

<sup>70</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.226. Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.206.

<sup>71</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.203.

<sup>72</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*, p.221.

<sup>73</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, pp.208-12.

<sup>74</sup> Kuper, "The Genocidal State: An Overview," pp. 19-52.

to the kGB for a heart-to-heart. Later, during Gorbachev's perestroika, I worked in the archives, discovering one vivid picture after another.<sup>75</sup>

From 1985 onwards, perestroika allowed more freedom to discuss Soviet history. Alexis Berelowitch, a sociologist specializing in contemporary Russian society and a teacher at Paris IV University notes, that, once people, especially the intelligentsia, were allowed to speak more freely they began to reflect on the past and try to make sense of it. There was a sense of shock and shared responsibility accorded the crimes of the era but this feeling, of what Berelowitch calls 'national humiliation', weakened the desire to delve into 'the darkest years'. He states, that historians are still devoting most of their efforts to publishing official archives rather than 'remembering for society as a whole ... and reconciling [Russian people] with their own history'.<sup>76</sup>

Collected testimonies have been attempting to address what society was facing. For example, in terms of collectivization, the testimonies have outlined the fact that 'what collectivization was to the countryside, the purges were to the towns'.<sup>77</sup> According to the memoirs of Z. Fesenko-kaovalska, cited by Valentyn Moroz in Pavlo Makohon's publication, people in the city of Hadyach 'died in the streets just as those in the surrounding villages'.<sup>78</sup> Moroz notes that the traditional Ukrainian towns were also targeted whereas those filled with Russian 'Russified, imperialistic elements' were seemingly spared.<sup>79</sup>

### **The Soviet penal system**

Statistics available for Gulag prisoners indicate that from 1930-1933, two million kulaks were exiled to Siberia, Kazakhstan and other remote regions. In 1930, 179,000 Ukrainians were in prison camps; 212,000 were deported to prison camps in 1932 and during 1932-1933, Stalin set up the White Sea Canal camp to construct a canal to connect inland waterways with the White Sea.<sup>80</sup> It was discovered that many 'criminals' within the Gulags were actually there for minor crimes such as taking small quantities of wheat or bread for their family during the

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<sup>75</sup> Stefan Lemieszewski, "Holodomor 1932-1933 Ukrainian Genocide - Readers Remember - the Day - 25 Nov 2003," *The Day*, <http://usenet.com/newsgroups/soc.culture.baltics/msg04620.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Alexis Berelowitch, "Russia: An Unfinished Job," UNESCO Courier.

<sup>77</sup> Reid, *Borderland. A Journey through the History of Ukraine*, p.120.

<sup>78</sup> Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine."

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> David Hosford, Pamela Kachurin, and Thomas Lamont, "Gulag: Soviet Prison Camps and Their Legacy: A Project of the National Park Service and the National Centre for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, Harvard University," Davis Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~nrc/Gulag.pdf>.; Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*.

Holodomor.<sup>81</sup> Steven and Agnes Vardy of Duquesne University stated that the Gulag camps were set up to not just to weed out the 'enemies of the state' but to also use the subsequent unpaid prison labour for the 'rapid industrialization and modernization of the Soviet state'.<sup>82</sup>

There were horror stories of women being raped in the Gulags during the Soviet repressions. Many former guards wrote to ex-prisoners during the period of glasnost in the late 1980s requesting that they be portrayed as kind and decent if ever questioned. Mikhail Iusipenko was a former Deputy Commandant in a camp near Akmolinsk, who allegedly raped a large number of female Gulag inmates. He was one who wrote to several hundred former prisoners, together with the children of those who had died, to perpetuate his own myth. He was never tried for his crimes.<sup>83</sup>

It is especially important to note that children of parents who were imprisoned in Gulags were ostracized for fear of being recognized as a sympathizer of an 'enemy of the state'. These children were sent to orphanages or raised by other family members in other cities. They became displaced. Some accompanied their parents and lived in special barracks. If born there, once they turned two years old they were transferred to orphanages and often never reunited with their parents or family.<sup>84</sup>

The opposition to compulsory collectivization was the beginning of cruel measures to bring the Ukrainian people to their knees. The result was the Holodomor of 1932-1933.

The story of the memories of the Holodomor for Western Australian migrant survivors is a story of mass death, loss of family, trauma, bitterness, grief and human survival. Although eastern Ukraine saw the worst of the Holodomor, neighbouring Russian provinces with large populations of Ukrainians, such as Volgograd's Don region, and Rostov, the Kuban region (now part of Krasnodar), were targeted as well.<sup>85</sup> South east Ukraine and eastward to the Volga had large pockets of Ukrainians and subsequently acute famine. Two-thirds of these

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<sup>81</sup> Hosford, Kachurin, and Lamont, "Gulag: Soviet Prison Camps and Their Legacy: A Project of the National Park Service and the National Centre for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, Harvard University," In, DavisCentre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, <http://fas.harvard.edu/~nrc/Gulag.pdf> (accessed 21 February, 2007).

<sup>82</sup> Steven Bela Vardy and Agnes Huszar Vardy, "Cannibalism in Stalin's Russia and Mao's China," *East European Quarterly* XLI, no. 2 (2007): p.223.

<sup>83</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, pp. 631-32.

<sup>84</sup> Hosford, Kachurin, and Lamont, "Gulag: Soviet Prison Camps and Their Legacy: A Project of the National Park Service and the National Centre for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies, Harvard University."

<sup>85</sup> Carynyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, p.4.

provinces were said to be Ukrainian by population. Andrew Gregorovich notes as did Conquest, that just over the north-eastern border in Russia, food was plentiful.<sup>86</sup> Kononenko in Makohon writes:

No, the famine was not a reaction against those who attempted to undermine Moscow's aims – it was the aim.<sup>87</sup>

### **The beginning of the Holodomor of 1932-1933**

When it was quite clear that the Ukrainian peasantry opposed the compulsory collectivization, a conference was called in July 1932, by the Third All-Ukrainian Party with Molotov and Kaganovych in attendance. Its purpose was to discuss why the peasants did not want to join the collective farms. This was seen by Stalin as a major crisis. Ukraine was a highly valued source of produce and war materials for the entire Soviet Union.<sup>88</sup>

The outcomes of the conference saw Moscow develop a plan that would bring destroy their hopes of retaining individual ownership of land. The plan, in effect, was to remove all food reserves from Ukrainian peasants. David Hamalian, an American historian calls this famine, as others before him, one of the worst in human history. He states how complex and clouded the causes are but noted that collectivization was the most important cause of the famine 'because it involves conscious decisions and hence motive and intent'.<sup>89</sup> He notes that dekulakization was also the outcome of decision making by Stalin and the regime. Conquest argues that the famine for Stalin was an acceptable outcome of those two policies and therefore the inevitable reaction to it by him and the regime led to such dire circumstances as death by starvation for the Ukrainian people.<sup>90</sup>

Researchers, Davies, Wheatcroft and Ellman agree that Stalin was less concerned with the lives of the peasants than with industrialization. 'Divide all those hospitalized into sick and improving, and considerably increase the good of the latter so that they can be released as

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<sup>86</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.280-81. Gregorovich, "Genocide in Ukraine 1933."

<sup>87</sup> Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine."

<sup>88</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.24.

<sup>89</sup> Hamalian, "The Soviet Famine of 1933: Unresolved Historiography", p.6.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7.

quickly as possible'.<sup>91</sup> They also agree that Stalin believed that 'the famine was the peasants' own fault'.<sup>92</sup>

Ellman writes about the notion at the time that those who were starving were idlers and therefore, in Stalin's eyes, deserved to die. It seemed to be very much a part of the reaction to the famine by Stalin's regime.<sup>93</sup> Ellman notes Stalin's 11 January 1933 speech where he said that the kulaks had been beaten but not yet by the killings and deportations but, the 'class struggle' had not been completed. Although by then two and a half million peasants had been involved in the repression, Stalin stated that more would be necessary.<sup>94</sup>

The result, according to Conquest, is that Stalin 'regarded the weapon of famine as acceptable, and used it against the kulak-nationalist enemy'.<sup>95</sup> He maintains that Stalin and the regime would have known that the policies of 1932 would result in famine and that there was no order issued to alleviate the outcome. Conquest sums up the situation with the following statements:

1. The cause of the famine was the setting of highly excessive grain requisition targets by Stalin and his associates;
2. Ukrainian party leaders made it clear at the start to Stalin and his associates that these targets were highly excessive;
3. The targets were nevertheless enforced until starvation began;
4. Ukrainian leaders pointed this out to Stalin and his associates and the truth was also made known to him and them by others; and
5. The requisitions nevertheless continued.<sup>96</sup>

Hamalian agrees and argues that Stalin's interest was not to feed the starving. Food exports at the time should have been ceased, foreign aid should have been accepted and food should have been imported. None of this was permitted at the time.

The famine began in April after the harvest of early 1932, when as much grain as possible was secured by the State in warehouses. Any allowance of grain, or that which could be obtained from collective farms, simply did not meet the needs of the people and they began to

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<sup>91</sup> R. W. Davies and S. T. Wheatcroft, *The Industrialization of Soviet Russia Vol. 5: The Years of Hunger, Soviet Agriculture, 1932-1933* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.220.

<sup>92</sup> R. W. Davies and S. G. Wheatcroft, "Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 - a Reply to Ellman," *Europe - Asia Studies* 58, no. 4 (2006): p.628; Ellman, "Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Revisited," p.664.

<sup>93</sup> Ellman, "Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-1933 Revisited," p.665.

<sup>94</sup> Davies and Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger*, pp.203-04.

<sup>95</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.326.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p.329.

ration carefully what supplies they could get.<sup>97</sup> April, May and June 1932, were the worst months as people had little option but to resort to eating green vegetation. That action saw an epidemic of dysentery break out. Little care was given to livestock during this blight and they too died through neglect by starving people or being killed for food. There is evidence that by March 1933, an estimated 76.2 percent of horses had died in one year.<sup>98</sup>

With the peasants resorting to removing food products from the collective farms as a result of the confiscation of all foodstuffs, the government passed a decree to protect what seen as government property. Anyone caught stealing would be considered to be an enemy of the people. Theft was punished and confiscation of all family property or, in some cases, no less than ten years in a penal camp with the same confiscation of property.<sup>99</sup> Stalin was prompted to write in a letter in August of 1932 that 'we may lose Ukraine' as a result of his tough measures and maximum quotas instilled as punishment for peasant resistance.<sup>100</sup>

Archival documents of relief organizations such as those in Geneva, indicate that Germany, together with, the Jewish Aid for Russia Organization were fully informed of the growing problem in Ukraine and attempted to provide relief but, had been turned back by the Soviet authorities after being assured that no such problem existed. Roman Serbyn notes that 'some foreign aid did get through to the German and Jewish Communities'.<sup>101</sup>

### **Torgsin stores**

Part of the August decree saw the added measure whereby peasants in the villages could only purchase necessities from the official Torgsin store, once they had a specific quota of surrendered crops and produce provided to the authorities. The Torgsin or state stores were set up to sell food and goods to Soviet people and foreigners at inflated prices. People could exchange foreign currency, especially American dollars, gold, silver and diamonds, and the stores became an important economic tool to finance Stalin's industrialization as well as a valuable source of food for people who had something valuable to exchange during the Holodomor.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.515.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p.521.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>100</sup> Overy, *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia*, p.42.

<sup>101</sup> Roman Serbyn, "The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 as Genocide in Light of the UN Convention of 1948 (Re-Published with Permission from the Ukrainian Quarterly, Vol.Lxii, No. 2)," Williams, E.M.

<sup>102</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p. 83.



If behind in their stated quota, then the peasant was deprived from purchasing basic items such as kerosene, salt or sugar. If their work on the collective farms fell behind they were branded as speculators, with a sentence of five to ten years confinement in a Soviet prison camp.<sup>103</sup> Money could be sent through the Torgsin stores to private individuals, but anyone receiving money in this way was promptly arrested for being in contact with enemies of the state.

### **Activists' brigades**

To ensure that the new decrees were upheld, Stalin's government enlisted the help of special brigades of Communist Party activists that went from village to village usually with long sharp-pointed steel probes called a 'stabbet'. These were used by poking into floors, cellars, barns and areas around the houses to check for any hiding places. The stabbets were very sharp at the tip but held a small sack that could collect grain if any was located.<sup>104</sup>

People who survived this era described the extreme requisitioning of everything. There were bizarre cases where even faecal matter was examined to ensure that the peasants were not secretly hiding and eating, grain or foodstuffs.<sup>105</sup> Pidhainy and his editorial team concluded that the authorities knew that the outcome of the requisitioning was probable death by starvation and states that towards the end of 1932, the situation appeared like a war against the Ukrainians.<sup>106</sup> Stephen Oleskiw's testimonies at the end of his publication outlined similar memories.<sup>107</sup>

### **Starvation**

Pidhainy describes the physical signs of starvation. He notes that, starvation depleted the energy levels of the body by withholding fats and sugars. The body withered and the skin takes on a dust-grey tinge and folded into many creases. The eyes become large, bulging and immobile. Common is a swelling of skin tissues especially of the hands and feet, with eruptions and festering sores developing. Motivation and fatigue occur, and starvation diarrhea begins. Any exertion induces heart failure with accompanying general weakness. The body eventually lapses into a semi-conscious sleep that might last a week until the heart stops beating. Famine survivors describe the same swellings of arms or legs especially, from which

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., p.33.

<sup>104</sup> Moroz and Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine."

<sup>105</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.37.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p.44.

<sup>107</sup> Oleskiw, *The Agony of a Nation. The Great Man-Made Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933. Foreward by Malcolm Muggeridge*, pp.61-79.

when burst, would ooze a transparent liquid with a dreadful smell. Blisters appear all over the body, urine cannot not be contained, and scurvy and boils are common.<sup>108</sup>

### Deaths by famine

There is still no definite calculation of the number of deaths from famine during 1932-1933. In fact, this is one area of controversy between historians such as Davies and Wheatcroft, Conquest, Mace, Maksudov, Ellman, Tauger and Vardy and Vardy for example.

Vasyl Hryshko states in a 1935 study, at the peak of the famine in March 1933, Ukrainians were dying at a rate of 17 per minute, 1,000 per hour and 25,000 per day. He said that the greatest deaths occurred in 1933.<sup>109</sup> The past president of Ukraine, President Yushchenko, used these figures to represent the numbers of death by famine.<sup>110</sup> According to Conquest, the estimated deaths, including those from dekulakization, reached 14.5 million.<sup>111</sup> A crude comparison of the 1926 and 1939 population figures for USSR, Russia, Belorussia and Ukraine in the following table, reveal the magnitude of population losses in Ukraine.<sup>112</sup>

Country	1926 Population	1939 Population	% Change
USSR	147,027,900	170,557,100	+15.7%
Russia	77,781,100	99,591,500	+28.0%
Belorussia	4,738,900	5,275,400	+11.3%
Ukraine	31,195,000	28,111,000	-9.9%

*Table 3: Population losses in Ukraine 1926-1933.*

The debate on estimates of repression deaths and those specifically because of the famine itself, is an ongoing one. Estimates based on the evidence of witnesses is difficult to verify and the accounts available from archival data are not finite either since historians face an accounting system that was at best chaotic and the figures lent themselves to manipulation, according to historian John keep in 'Recent Writings on Stalin's Gulag'.<sup>113</sup> Keep also stated

<sup>108</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.68.

<sup>109</sup> "Seven Million Ukrainians Were Starved to Death in the Breadbasket of Europe," Freefind.com, [www.faminegenocide.com/index.html](http://www.faminegenocide.com/index.html); Andrew Gregorovich, "Black Famine in Ukraine 1932-33. A Struggle for Existence.," InfoUkes Inc., <http://209.82.14.226/history/famine/gregorovich/>. Yushchenko, "Ukrainian Genocide of 1932-1933: 75th Anniversary."

<sup>110</sup> Yushchenko, "Ukrainian Genocide of 1932-1933: 75th Anniversary."

<sup>111</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p301.

<sup>112</sup> J. Mace, "The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine," in *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, ed. Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), p.10.

<sup>113</sup> J. Keep, "Recent Writings on Stalin's Gulag: An Overview," *Crime, History and Societies* 1, no. 2 (1997): p.110.

that scholars of this field should not leap to conclusions but be 'humble about the extent of current knowledge but ambitious in setting future goals'.<sup>114</sup> This publication adheres to such a premise.

Historians such as Conquest used first hand and often unofficial sources to generate estimates of death resulting from starvation. This was the only method by which numbers could be calculated at the time before glasnost. Conquest argues that collectivization, dekulakization and the famine were manmade and politically motivated. He estimates that deaths from dekulakization were about 'seven million plus' and deaths due to the famine were also about 'seven million plus'.<sup>115</sup>

Carla Thorson from the Center for European and Eurasian Studies notes Mark Tauger's challenge of Conquest's estimates in both 1991 and 2001. Tauger argues that the famine was the outcome of a poor harvest and that this poor harvest resulted from other more complex issues related to natural disasters.<sup>116</sup> Yet as Shapoval included in his chapter of a book edited by Luciuk, 'the communists themselves admitted during Gorbachev's perestroika era that weather was not the cause of the 1932-1933 famine'.<sup>117</sup>

Wheatcroft's argument points to something in between and that estimates of deaths were 'grossly exaggerated'.<sup>118</sup> Davies and Wheatcroft in their debate with Ellman, confirm that Stalin's policies were ruthless but argue that there is no evidence to suggest that he had set up a specific policy to starve the peasants during the famine.<sup>119</sup> Tauger and Wheatcroft believe that the weather was the contributing factor in the reduced yields, harvests and ensuing famine. During the drought of 1931 that affected 'southern Russia, from the left bank of the Volga through the southern Urals to the steppe zone of Western Siberia', only a small area of Ukraine along the Donets River was affected.<sup>120</sup>

Stebelsky outlines the steps by Wheatcroft and Tauger to make adjustments to the targeted grain production made by the state planning agency Gosplan, as part of the Statistical

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.301.

<sup>116</sup> Carla Thorson, "The Soviet Famine of 1932-1933: Politically Motivated or Ecological Disaster?," The Regents of the University of California, [www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=3838](http://www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=3838).

<sup>117</sup> Shapoval, "The Struggle for History: Recognizing the *Holodomor*," p.85.

<sup>118</sup> Thorson, "The Soviet Famine of 1932-1933: Politically Motivated or Ecological Disaster? ."

<sup>119</sup> R. W. Davies and S G Wheatcroft, "Debate: Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-1933: A Reply to Ellman," *Europe - Asia Studies* 58, no. 4 (2006): p.625.

<sup>120</sup> Ihor Stebelsky, "Did Weather Play a Part in the Great Famine of 1932-1933?," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), pp.5-7.

Economics Sector. Reports from Ukraine in July 1933 reported very good harvests with excellent harvests from North Caucasus. Stebelsky states that grain amounts made available to the peasantry were grossly over inflated. The 'official' yield figures were ideal ones. He determines that 'the main cause of food shortages and famine was collectivization and grain requisition' rather than Wheatcroft's argument that the 1929 drought was to blame. Stebelsky also notes that the data compiled by the OGPU (later known as the KGB) serves as the only source of reliable information about this period with the June 1932 report drawing attention to the famine and that it was a result of the grain procurement programme.<sup>121</sup>

Tauger, in reply to Davies and Wheatcroft criticizing his estimates on the Soviet grain harvests of 1932-1933, defends his estimates as being derived from reports from collective farms with their measured final harvest figures. He concludes that claims by Conquest and the late James Mace that the famine was manmade could not be upheld as the harvest did produce a small yield and, his estimates had been proven from data from collective farms.<sup>122</sup> Their arguments seem to be based on specific calculations that each were challenging. They also ignored data such as that related to the confiscation of foodstuffs and closure of borders to Ukrainians attempting to search for food for their families. Stebelsky provides evidence that disputes the arguments of Tauger, Davies and Wheatcroft and notes that 'recent declassified letters and diaries of Soviet leaders appear to confirm this'.<sup>123</sup> Debates such as that of Tauger's and other Western researchers seem to follow what Shapoval called 'old school Sovietologists'.<sup>124</sup>

The debate and estimation of deaths continues, not just in relation to Soviet Ukraine. Others also considered death tolls across the Soviet Union during the Stalinist period. Vardy and Vardy in June 2007, quote the figures of six to seven million peasants dying as a result of 'the artificial famine' created by Stalin.<sup>125</sup> Some other significant estimates had evolved from people in prominent positions at the time, however, which must be noted in this debate. Winston Churchill published the figure of 10 million, derived from a conversation with Stalin in August 1942. In this conversation about the stresses of war, Stalin referred to

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., pp.8-11.

<sup>122</sup> Mark B Tauger, "Debate: Arguing from Errors: On Certain Issues in Robert Davies' and Stephen Wheatcroft's Analysis of the 1932 Soviet Grain Harvest and the Great Famine of 1932-1933," *Europe - Asia Studies* 58, no. 6 (2006): pp. 973-74.

<sup>123</sup> Stebelsky, "Did Weather Play a Part in the Great Famine of 1932-1933?," p.15.

<sup>124</sup> Shapoval, "The Struggle for History: Recognizing the *Holodomor*," p.85.

<sup>125</sup> Vardy and Vardy, "Cannibalism in Stalin's Russia and Mao's China," p.224.

collectivization and stated 'ten millions, it was fearful'.<sup>126</sup> William Strang, a diplomat with the British Embassy in Moscow, writes of a conversation with the Soviet apologist and famine denier Walter Duranty, who said he believed 'as many as 10 million may have died directly or indirectly from the lack of food' in the USSR during 1933.<sup>127</sup>

Cheryl Madden, writing in the *Canadian American Slavic Studies* in 2003, notes the details of Dr. W. Horsley Gantt who, as a visiting scientist during 1933, was permitted to work outside Moscow and Leningrad. Gantt wrote in *The British Medical Journal* that he had received information from doctors in the regions of estimates of famine deaths at ten million. Privately from Soviet authorities at the time, he was informed of a maximal figure of fifteen million.<sup>128</sup>

James Mace, who became the Executive Director of the US Congressional Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, set the number at over eight million. He also notes that a figure of 10 million seemed to have 'circulated with the Soviet elite'. He stated that there was however no certainty of this.<sup>129</sup> The Commission, with Professor Jacob Sundberg of Sweden as President concluded in its 1990 report, that the victims in Ukraine were at least 4.5 million with another three million outside Ukraine.<sup>130</sup> This Commission was a tribunal set up by the World Congress of Free Ukrainians, jurists and legal scholars from around the world and was constituted in 1988. of the Commission of Inquiry.

The collapse of the Soviet Union has seen the release of data that can be used as one of the three sources for studying this issue. Ellman stated that although unofficial sources can provide a qualitative picture with subjective impressions of those involved we must remember that such estimates are frequently unreliable. He does however state that Conquest's method has to its advantage the concept of 'instilling a healthy skepticism as to the meaning of the categories' in the archival documents and also 'the completeness of the figures in these documents'.<sup>131</sup>

As Ellman notes, Conquest is not a demographer but his aim was to provide some estimate of the deaths due to starvation and to provide a qualitative perspective of the Soviet horrors to

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<sup>126</sup> Winston Churchill and Editors of "Life", *The Second World War (Vol 1)* (New York: Time Incorporated, 1959), pp.271-72.

<sup>127</sup> Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, p.313.

<sup>128</sup> Cheryl Madden, "The Holodomor," *Canadian American Slavic Studies* Fall(2003): p.26.

<sup>129</sup> James E. Mace, "The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine," in *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, ed. Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986), p.11.

<sup>130</sup> *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine. Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine*, p.2.

<sup>131</sup> Ellman, "Soviet Repression Statistics: Some Comments," pp.1155-57.

the general public when the issue of the famine of 1932-1933 was largely unknown.<sup>132</sup> The wealth of eye-witness testimony and demographic evidence that was available in 1983 left Sergei Maksudov in no doubt that it was a manmade disaster caused by forced requisitioning of grain. He critically examined census data and related aspects such as mortality, by territories that suffered mass starvation according to eye-witness accounts.<sup>133</sup>

Jacques Vallin, France Mesle, Sergei Adamets and Serhiy Pyrozhkov, all demographers, 'reconstituted the multiple factors responsible for the huge demographic fluctuations which struck Soviet Ukraine and estimated the annual changes in Ukrainian mortality rates by sex and age during the years 1926-1950'. They believe they had utilized all available data including the estimation of birth numbers that would have occurred without the crisis. They conclude that 'population losses strictly due to the Holodomor to be 4.6 million'. These scholars also note that they consider that the most astonishing aspect of this event is that the famine was a result of deliberate human policies not climatic drought.<sup>134</sup>

The passage of time makes the endeavour to generate accurate statistics of deaths resulting from the famine of 1932-1933 quite problematic. The issue, however, takes on greater significance when evaluating the current debate of genocide resulting from the Soviet policies during those years. It is difficult to determine fully the number of victims in any such crime against humanity because there would have undoubtedly been attempts to cover up and purge the records relating to that period in Soviet Ukraine. As Donald Rayfield stated, there is no denial amongst historians that 'a man-made catastrophe taking the lives of millions of Ukrainian peasants occurred'.<sup>135</sup> It is clear that the outcome of the destructive policies leveled against the Soviet Ukrainian people has left them and the Soviet Ukrainian nation with scars that have not yet been fully addressed internationally, although much work has been accomplished.

Wheatcroft has repeatedly reminds historians that, as with historical data, the estimates will need to be re-evaluated with the advent of new data.<sup>136</sup> Keep reiterates the same and states, that 'the numbers of victims remains provisional pending further investigation'. Keep makes a profound comment when he states that historians should not 'be mesmerized by statistics',

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.: p. 1157.

<sup>133</sup> S. Maksudov, "The Geography of the Soviet Famine of 1933," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 8, no. 2 (1983).

<sup>134</sup> Jacques Vallin et al., "The Great Famine: Population Losses in Ukraine," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008).

<sup>135</sup> Rayfield, "The Ukrainian Famine of 1933: Man-Made Catastrophe, Mass Murder, or Genocide," p. 89.

<sup>136</sup> Ellman, "Soviet Repression Statistics: Some Comments."

which he adds is a legitimate approach to focus upon. On the issue of Gulags, he notes that focusing on statistics limits the vision and distracts attention from the phenomena as a whole in order to set it into an international context.<sup>137</sup> That is true for the famine of 1932-1933. There is no argument that the magnitude of the estimates by different scholars illustrates the scale of the Holodomor.

Critical attention should focus on the integration of the vast accumulation of material and the knowledge and understanding in order to place the knowledge in perspective. As Keep states, people, scholars, should be 'governed by humanistic values and respect for judicial norms, one from which moral considerations cannot be entirely excluded'.<sup>138</sup> It should be an integration of converging information from all sources that provides historians with a reasonably clear picture of the famine years of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine. The children of those years are the final witnesses and their numbers are dwindling fast at the time of writing this thesis.

### **The children of the Holodomor**

I witnessed the discovery of a slaughterhouse of children in Poltava. It was a small building in the centre of the city. Right next to it was: railroad cooperative store No.1, a railroad first-aid station, a pharmacy and a building for the homeless. A band of criminals lured small children, killed them, salted the meat in barrels and sold it. Refuse was dumped in an open sewer, whose banks were overgrown with high weeds, and they floated away.<sup>139</sup>

The above eyewitness account also speaks of mothers who had come looking for their children at this slaughterhouse. Similar establishments were discovered in Likhivtsi of the Dnipropetrovs'k region, Pashkiwsko of the Sever region and in other areas.<sup>140</sup>

With the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, their children were abandoned when the parents were arrested, shot or deported for their offences. The social stigma of being kulaks meant that education and jobs were denied them and they were always in fear of an arrest at any moment with sentencing under the rule of being a member of a traitor to the fatherland.

Families suffered great hardships and some took their own lives into rather than suffer the fate Stalin had determined for them. Families in Shyroka Balka of Dnipropetrovs'k were known to

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<sup>137</sup> John Keep, "Wheatcroft and Stalin's Victims: Comments," *Europe - Asia Studies* 51, no. 6 (1999): p.1089.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*: p.1091.

<sup>139</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.73.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

have died in groups, of carbon monoxide poisoning. In a starved state they would make a fire in the oven, block off the chimney and seal off the doors and windows.<sup>141</sup>

Catriona Kelly described the suffering of children during the policies of collectivization as ‘an appalling waste of human life’.<sup>142</sup> Young children often needed to take on the role of providers for their families who were either too weak, unable to work, or unable to bring home enough grain to feed their families. Survivor Maria Fesenko remembers going to the railway yards foraging for any spilled grain or salt with many other children.<sup>143</sup> Conquest devoted a chapter to the effects of the Holodomor on children at the time.<sup>144</sup> He notes that fifteen to twenty percent of people dying on the trains deporting kulaks to Gulags in Siberia were children.<sup>145</sup> Others died in exile.

Children were denied, not just whatever food was being shared, but also the love, affection and care usually afforded young children. There was little energy available in a state of acute hunger to extend the normal duty of care to families by parents or other family members. Grossman quoted by Conquest and Davies, describes the appearance of starving children as having:

Heads like heavy balls on thin little necks, like storks... And the children’s faces were aged, tormented, just as if they were seventy years old... these were Soviet children and those who were putting them to death were Soviet people.<sup>146</sup>

Peasant families reacted in different ways to the starvation:

In one hut there would be something like war. Everyone would keep close watch over everyone else. People would take crumbs from one another. The wife turned against her husband and the husband against his wife. The mother hated the children. And in some other hut love would be inviolable to the very last. I knew one woman with four children. She would tell them fairy stories and legends so that they would forget their hunger. Her own tongue could hardly move, but she would take them into her arms even though she hardly had the strength to lift her arms when they were empty. Love lived on within her...<sup>147</sup>

Starvation was also responsible for many repercussions that focused upon the children. In some cases the last survivors of a family might be children too young to have developed any life skills. Many perished on the roadside with no-one left to enquire about their whereabouts.

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p.72-73.

<sup>142</sup> Catriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p.19.

<sup>143</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.565.

<sup>144</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, pp283-98.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., p.285.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., p.286. and Davies, *Europe a History*, p.965.

<sup>147</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, pp.164-65.



Children were abandoned by parents in the hope that they might be cared for and given a chance by someone better off than themselves. This was often the way of the villagers, of peasants, who would take their children into the towns and simply leave them on the street. Many children survived by joining gangs. Such groups became problematic for the authorities. Some survived by being placed in orphanages, being taken in by a benefactor courageous enough to take such a child in, or by finding some form of work.<sup>148</sup> Ukraine was left with thousands of orphans during this period. Mykhailo Osadchy, a member of the Commissariat of People's Education, whose testimony appears in Pidhainy's publication, recounts a visit to a children's shelter in Ulyniwka:

I saw a horrible sight. The floor of the 'shelter' was covered with straw, and on it lay the skeletons of about 200 children ranging in age from three to twelve years. The interior of the shelter was in semi-darkness, with light coming in through a few small windows close to the ceiling. The skeletons, dressed only in dirty shirts, lay in rows on the dirty straw. When I entered the skeletons moved and raised their heads. Stretching out their feeble hands they wailed, 'Give us some bread, uncle.'<sup>149</sup>

This was at the Stalin Child Shelter.

With orphanages becoming overcrowded, many children were transferred to a walled area 'under the stars' where they starved and died. Trucks would collect the bodies and transport them to large burial pits. With too few people still strong enough to bury the dead in individual graves, these unknown orphan children were relegated to mass graves. Mass graves became the common method used to deal with an increasingly difficult situation for the authorities.<sup>150</sup>

By 1935 it was finally deemed necessary to place the responsibility of caring for homeless children on to 'the village soviets and the collective farms'. By this stage there was a generation of children with little in the way of an understanding of any beauty of the human condition. Nutrition was poor for the most crucial growth years of their lives and many children also grew up with most distorted perspective of life and human relations.<sup>151</sup>

### **Spiritual destruction of Ukrainian children**

Conquest states that one of the saddest ironies of the situation surrounding the children is that they were often indoctrinated and brutalized through NKVD schools into becoming the worst

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<sup>148</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.551.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., p.74.

<sup>151</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.289.

of the future Chekists (member of the NKVD, the state security organization). It was, he says, a spiritual destruction as well as a physical destruction.<sup>152</sup>

Children between the ages of ten and fifteen joined the Pioneers, an organization for young people. There is a well known story of Pavlik Morozov, who informed on his father for sheltering kulaks. This fourteen year old boy was killed by a group of people that included his uncle, after the father had been tried and sentenced. The boy was hailed as a Soviet martyr with a museum and a statue erected in his honour.<sup>153</sup> Such situations were responsible for there being little discussion of events in a household for fear of being misrepresented and reported by the children.<sup>154</sup>

The memories and outcomes of young children experiencing the trauma of Stalin's policies and ensuing famine, reflect those of Holocaust victims who were also young victims of a traumatic past.

Conclusions have been reached that around three million of the deaths from hunger during the Holodomor, were young children.<sup>155</sup> The figures have not accounted for those newborns that died during the famine without their births being recorded. The children who managed to escape death in whatever way they could, with lives deeply scarred as a result of the years of the Holodomor, have not been accounted for. These survivor children are the focus of this Western Australian story.

### **Closure of Ukrainian borders - Internal passports**

Nicholas Werth uncovered evidence pointing to Stalin having imposed measures that became in effect 'a death sentence' for Ukrainian peasants.<sup>156</sup> He notes that the already critical famine situation for the peasants was made worse by the cutting of all contact between the rural areas and the rest of the Soviet Union. To ensure that peasants could not gain access to grain from elsewhere, Stalin drafted and issued a directive on 22 January 1933 for troops to be stationed on the Russia–Soviet Ukraine border as well as the Soviet Belarus-Soviet Ukrainian border to ensure that people could not leave nor enter Soviet Ukraine. A circular was sent on the same day instructing that special patrols be set up to stop what Stalin referred to as the 'runaways'.

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.293.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p.295.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p.295.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.297.

<sup>156</sup> Nicolas Werth, "Case Study: The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 - Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence," [http://www.massviolence.org/The-1932-1933-Great-Famine-in-Ukraine?id\\_mot=44&](http://www.massviolence.org/The-1932-1933-Great-Famine-in-Ukraine?id_mot=44&).

The sale of train tickets to peasants was stopped by forbidding the provision of travel certificates usually issued by rural soviets and collective farm directors.<sup>157</sup>

A system of internal passports was set up by the Soviet authorities for all Soviet citizens over sixteen years of age. It was to ensure that starving peasants did not leave their villages, and to trap kulaks who had escaped the authorities by leaving their villages. The system also trapped any escapee from the Gulags and stopped the starving peasants from moving to the cities to look for work and thus feed their families. This had the added effect of terrorizing the wandering peasants who had evaded any form of persecution until this time.<sup>158</sup>

The border controls closed off the northern Caucasus and the Kuban regions where two-thirds of the population were ethnically Ukrainian. Food was available in Russia and if people succeeded in evading these border controls, contraband food was confiscated upon their return, adding to the death toll.<sup>159</sup> It is significant to note that while such restrictions were in place and with the 1932 harvest being confiscated, the entire harvest was simply stacked at the railway stations and left to rot while being guarded from theft.<sup>160</sup>

Serbyn notes that historians have known about such information for two decades. He also states that all serious scholars in Ukraine, Russia and the West have accepted that Stalin and his Soviet regime willfully starved Ukrainians to death.<sup>161</sup>

### **Political deceptions**

During this period Stalin banned all mention of the word 'famine' and if used, people could be sentenced to prison. People were not to mention it nor was it able to be used in the press.<sup>162</sup> Deception was practiced on a large scale to reassure the West that no famine was actually occurring. The western democracies, however, were aware of the famine through reports by diplomatic dispatches and reporters such as Malcolm Muggeridge and Gareth Jones.<sup>163</sup>

The British Embassy in Moscow reported that 'conditions in the Kuban and Ukraine were appalling'. The Red Cross was unable to respond unless Soviet Russia consented and the U.S.

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.457.

<sup>159</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p237. Also discussed in DeMersseman, "Stalinism's Victims: How Many Died? A Summary of Stalin's Victims."

<sup>160</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.236.

<sup>161</sup> Serbyn, "The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 as Genocide in Light of the Un Convention of 1948."

<sup>162</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.312.

<sup>163</sup> G. Jones, "Newspaper Articles Relating to Gareth Jones' Trip to the Soviet Union (1930-1933),"

[http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/soviet\\_articles/soviet\\_articles.htm](http://www.colley.co.uk/garethjones/soviet_articles/soviet_articles.htm).

administration was unwilling to become involved. The US was working at establishing diplomatic relations at this time and not wishing to disrupt a potential association.<sup>164</sup>

The British Foreign Office records contain material which now indicate that Ukraine's unprecedented famine was known in Moscow and elsewhere, and that nothing was set in motion to assist its people. In preparing a 1934 government response to a parliamentary question, the diplomat Lauren Collier recorded:

The truth of the matter is, of course, that we have a certain amount of information about certain conditions... and there is no obligation on us to make it public. We do not want to make it public, however, because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced.<sup>165</sup>

British documents collected to outline the behaviour of Soviet officials, provide evidence of the famine of 1932-1933 and that it affected mostly the Soviet Ukrainians who lived in the most fertile black soil regions of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic known as the 'bread basket of Europe'.<sup>166</sup> Carynnyk, Luciuk and Kordan uncovered documents that clearly outlined the existence of the famine. Through many urgent messages from different people in Ukraine, the Foreign Office of Britain had knowledge of what was occurring within the Soviet Ukrainian Republic during the period of the famine, and it appears that they 'ignored or suppressed these messages' at the time. The messages in question were from Consular officials, relief workers, trade workers and newspaper correspondents who were in the region.<sup>167</sup>

The Foreign Office documents have left little doubt that the Soviet Ukrainian regions had been targeted with the Soviet authorities requisitioning unattainable amounts of grain for export and forcing the people to starve.<sup>168</sup> The British archives, by virtue of Britain being the first European power to have established diplomatic relations with Moscow, had a wealth of material from dispatches and correspondence about Soviet citizens. Their reports on events in the Soviet Union revealed the causes and consequences of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 albeit through the eyes of Englishmen.<sup>169</sup>

The reports of impending famine had been arriving through various means since May 1928 by way of Paul Scheffer, the Moscow correspondent of a Berlin newspaper. Collier had already

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<sup>164</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.311.

<sup>165</sup> N. Kovtanyuk, L. Mazur, and F. Kurlak, "Holodomor 1932-1933: Genocide Denied: 70th Anniversary," ed. L. Pekarska (London: The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, 2003), p.37.

<sup>166</sup> Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, p.xv.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p.xiv.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., p.xix.

anticipated a 'catastrophe' and he stated that 'The days of famine are already sounding their approach'.<sup>170</sup> Stories of specific aspects of grain requisitioning, begging peasants, people trying to flee the famine and a constant barrage of unsolicited letters from Soviet citizens to the British Foreign Office were noted in Carynnyk, Luciuk and Kordan's publication.<sup>171</sup>

On the other hand, in order to deceive the world, Stalin also had 'model collectives' set up to show any foreigners. Visitors would witness well housed and well-fed people and animals. One example was the 'October Revolution' collective farm in Brovary, near Kyiv and another was the 'Red Star' in Kharkiv. Days before any visits by dignitaries, people would be enlisted in cleaning and decorating houses. All acts such as queues and begging were prohibited and shops were filled with food.<sup>172</sup>

The true story was a catastrophe yet Britain had kept its silence about the famine in a country of which little they had little knowledge or understanding of. The propaganda that was to cite the famine as a Bolshevik exercise, was to leave a long-term legacy for Ukraine in achieving independence and then finally, Britain simply did not wish to disrupt trade with the Soviet Union. The Soviet government had succeeded in concealing the truth and the Ukrainians were left to the mercy of the regime. Acute hunger and starvation led to sometimes horrific outcomes.

## **Cannibalism**

Given the extreme conditions of the Holodomor, it is not surprising the people succumbed to extreme measures. Miron Dolot, a survivor himself, recounted how some people reacted to starvation by going mad or losing all trace of compassion, honour and morality.<sup>173</sup> Conquest records a case where... 'Mother says we should eat her if she dies', a boy was told by his younger brother.<sup>174</sup> Corpses were cut up and eaten, and there were stories of children being trapped and strangers being ambushed and lured into homes for the specific purpose of being killed and eaten. There was sufficient concern by the United State Political Administration to transfer suspected cannibals to the security police who detained some or deported others to a life in the White Sea Canal Gulags where some were allegedly still being held in the late 1980s.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.315.

<sup>173</sup> M. Dolot, *Execution by Hunger. The Hidden Holocaust* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), p.98.

<sup>174</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.258.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p.257.

A communication sent by Rozanov who was head of the Kyiv GPU, to Balitskyi reads:

Every passing day strengthens people's belief that it is acceptable to eat human flesh. This idea is particularly widespread among the starving and children.<sup>176</sup>

Starvation was an outcome and yet families and children were left in the hands of officials. In many cases families were murdered in order that others obtained whatever foodstuffs they happened to have. Starvation produced psychological dysfunction with people denouncing one another for hoarding. Civil society broke down.<sup>177</sup> The famine, with such extreme outcomes, 'was not a natural phenomenon but a politically engineered cataclysm', according to Carynnyk, Luciuk and Kordan.<sup>178</sup> Interviewees in this study remember the cannibalism and their memories will be included in the chapter outlining their memories of the Holodomor.

### **Russian language replaces Ukrainian**

To further weaken the tendencies in Ukraine, the Soviet government replaced the Ukrainian language with Russian as the official language of instruction in all schools by early 1933. In some eastern regions, especially in the Kuban region, the schools were turned into Russian schools.<sup>179</sup> As a result of the deaths, Russian settlers were also brought in to repopulate villages that had been starved out. This provides some explanation of the predominance today of a Russian population in those regions where the famine had been at its worst during the time of grain confiscation and dekulakization.<sup>180</sup>

### **The official end of grain collection**

The grain collection officially ended in March 1933. However, by then starvation and death had become chronic:

When the snow melted true starvation began. People had swollen faces and legs and stomachs. They could not contain their urine... And now they ate anything at all. They caught mice, rats, sparrows, ants, earthworms. They ground up bones into flour, and did the same with leather and shoe soles; they cut up old skins and furs to make noodles of a kind, and they cooked glue. And when the grass came up, they began to dig up the roots and eat the leaves and the buds; they used everything there was: dandelions, and burdock, and bluebells, and willowroot, and sedums and nettles...<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Werth, "Case Study: The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 - Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence."

<sup>177</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.257.

<sup>178</sup> Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, p.xlix.

<sup>179</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.279.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, p.263.

<sup>181</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, p.157.

The number of deaths began to taper off by May of that year. The worst of the famine was over by November, 1933.<sup>182</sup>

Although it was mainly the Soviet Ukrainians who faced the worst of Stalin's wrath, their plight was taken up by many Soviet Ukrainian officials who, without any intelligentsia, priests and bishops left, refused to become agents of Stalin in the extermination of their own people. This resulted in a huge purge of the local Party and State apparatus lasting from 1933 until 1938.<sup>183</sup>

### **Mass graves**

Physical evidence of the mass killings provided some of the first tangible evidence of the atrocities committed by the Soviet regime under Stalin. During the 1970s mass graves were uncovered during earthworks on the ninth kilometer of the Dnipropetrovs'k - Zaporizhzhia highway. This has been identified as the site of burial for people killed by Stalin's regime during the Holodomor of 1932-1933.<sup>184</sup>

Archaeologists and amateur historians have also been uncovering mass graves since the late 1980s. 'The secret police often concealed them by planting trees over them'.<sup>185</sup> These have been discovered in various places around Ukraine since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Burial sites of famine victims or victims of repressions were usually discovered by private groups or organizations such as Memorial.<sup>186</sup>

Yuschenko was said to declare at a site of victims of Stalin's Soviet repression that 'The most awful thing is that it's impossible to answer the question why they were killed'.<sup>187</sup>

Boris Yeltsin during his term of office as Russian President attempted to answer such questions by opening some of the Soviet archives. He ordered secret documents about Stalin to be handed over to a commission set up to investigate crimes of the Soviet era. Many documents, however, are still Russian state secrets.<sup>188</sup> Nanci Adler, in her research, states that

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<sup>182</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.262.

<sup>183</sup> B. Krawchenko, "Collectivization and the Famine," Ukrainian Canadian Committee, <http://www.ukar.org/famine06.htm>.

<sup>184</sup> V. Ryzhkov, "Dnipropetrovsk to Commemorate Holodomor Victims," ArtUkraine Information service.

<sup>185</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*, p.9.

<sup>186</sup> P. Baker, "Big Stalin Killing Field Apparently Uncovered," Williams, E. M., <http://www.artukraine.com/events/kilfield.htm>.

<sup>187</sup> Associated Press, "Ukrainians Gather at Mass Grave," Williams, E.M.

<sup>188</sup> E. Margolis, "There's Method in Yeltsin's Madness. Cabinet Chaos Masked a Decision to Open the Files on Stalin's Reign of Terror," Sun Media Corporation, <http://ukar.org/truth01.html>.

one of the images from Russia's past continually haunts its present, the 'tens of thousands of victims interred in the vast spread of mass graves created by Stalin's NKVD'.<sup>189</sup>

Human rights campaigners have viewed some archival documents of the former KGB but are said to be reluctant to divulge any information. In some cases:

We cannot show them to the families... because if they could read about the killing, they would also know what happened to the prisoners before they were shot. Let them think their parents were only killed.<sup>190</sup>

After Stalin's death in 1953, Russians began to mention the Soviet Ukrainian famine.<sup>191</sup> Mace noted that it was the Soviet elite who finally discussed the famine and circulated the figure of ten million resulting victims of the Soviet Ukrainian famine during the 1930s. He went on to state that the Soviet census was not distributed nor disclosed in 1937 and those involved with collecting the figures were 'repressed' for disclosing the figures.<sup>192</sup>

The term 'famine' was used in reference to this event in a Soviet publication for the first time in 1986. The publication was the second volume of *Istoria Sovetskogo Krest'ianstva* [sic.]. It was only after 1988 that publications regarding the famine (not yet classified as the Holodomor at that stage) began to appear in the Soviet Republic of Ukraine's official magazines and newspapers and started to be discussed in wider circles.<sup>193</sup>

### **The code of silence**

The code of silence has been used many times historically as a method of protecting against the disorder of life and violence to which people had been subjected to.<sup>194</sup> The Soviet cult of informing on one's neighbour and fearing being informed upon oneself during this era has left people with distaste for such betrayal that it is difficult to speak out against any wrongdoing. As Mace wrote, this 'situational morality ... evolved out of the morally bankrupt system of Communism'.<sup>195</sup> Official silence ensured that it was impossible to speak of the Famine.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Nanci Adler, "The Future of the Soviet Past Remains Unpredictable: The Resurrection of Stalinist Symbols Amidst the Exhumation of Mass Graves," *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no. 8 (2005): pp1093-119.

<sup>190</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*, p.4.

<sup>191</sup> L. Lord, "A Reign of Rural Terror, a World Away," U.S. News and World Report, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=3&did=000000350427521&SrchMode=1&sid=2>.

<sup>192</sup> Mace, "The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Soviet Ukraine," p.11.

<sup>193</sup> Pavlyshyn, "Famine Bibliography," p.192.

<sup>194</sup> Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence. Voices from the Partition of India*, 308 ed. (London: Hurst & Company, 2000).

<sup>195</sup> Larysa Ivshyna, ed. *Day and Eternity of James Mace* (Kyiv: Ukrainian Press Group, 2005), p.277.

<sup>196</sup> Hiroaki Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.169.



The measures Stalin used to ensure that the famine was not spoken about have permeated the psyche of the Ukrainian survivors and ensured that this event was not openly discussed for decades. It was edited from public memory. In the case of the Western Australian migrant refugees it seems the tyranny of distance has kept the silence longer than anywhere else.

There are two additional and important issues raised by Merridale in relation to this silence. She states that, with respect to the events surrounding the famine of 1932-1933, many people believed in their own guilt and that many witnesses inside the former Soviet Union also believed, and still believe, in the culpability of the condemned, whether starved or survivors from the camps.<sup>197</sup> This includes those who have received their rehabilitation documents [a State apology]. Many of the deaths were young children paying for the crimes of parents and grandparents. It is those still living of that generation who are the subject of this thesis.

The Holodomor was a catastrophe experienced by a generation of Ukrainians. Stalin's assault was not only directed at the Ukrainian people but also against their memory. As with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, they endured the cruelty and terror to which they were subjected, and were left without adequate words to tell their tale.<sup>198</sup>

An Austrian engineer who witnessed the events of the Holodomor stated that the Ukrainians who refused to surrender their nationality and their attachment to their land revealed what he called 'a silent heroism'.<sup>199</sup>

Letters from villages sent to different government departments during the famine years form part of a collection of resources, that expressed the degree of human suffering at the time.<sup>200</sup> Volodymyr Maniak attributes the primary research burden today as being the collection of stories of the survivors of the Holodomor:

The memory of the people is an underappreciated source of knowledge. From one remembrance to the next, the history of a generation unfolds. From the history of generations we have the memory of a nation.<sup>201</sup>

The nation's memory was silenced during the years after the Holodomor. Reid states that those remembering the event did not share their memories with their children or grandchildren

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<sup>197</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*, p.244.

<sup>198</sup> Peter Hayes, ed. *Lessons and Legacies III. Memory, Memorialization, and Denial*. (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1999), p.11.

<sup>199</sup> Ammende, *Human Life in Russia*, p.124.

<sup>200</sup> Maniak, *Testimonies from Kyiv. To Return to People Their History, and to History - the Truth.*, pp.117-32.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p.134.

for fear of 'compromising their careers, even their lives'.<sup>202</sup> Maniak also states that the old people who remember do not like confiding in strangers and are dying fast.<sup>203</sup> The Australian public knows little of their struggle for survival since the years of 1932-1933.

The history of Soviet Ukraine has been a turbulent one. The effects of Stalin's authoritarian regime have left a profound legacy. Soviet writers such as Berger, believe that the outcome of this era has left long-term effects.<sup>204</sup> The collectivization policy coupled with dekulakization, the Holodomor and the Great Terror that was to follow, have left their mark on a nation suffering what Conquest terms a 'blow dealt to the consciousness of the population'.<sup>205</sup> The lives of the Ukrainian migrants of Western Australia is unknown for there is no publication outlining the history of the time, the human condition in facing famine, genocide, and of surviving such trauma. 'Who has been the victim or even just the witness of... such conflict... has often bore its imprint for the rest of her or his life'.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Reid, *Borderland. A Journey through the History of Ukraine*, pp.113-14.

<sup>203</sup> Maniak, *Testimonies from Kyiv. To Return to People Their History, and to History - the Truth.*, pp/117-34.

<sup>204</sup> Joseph Berger, *Shipwreck of a Generation: The Memoirs of Joseph Berger* (London: Harvill, 1971), p.266.

<sup>205</sup> R. Conquest, *The Great Terror. A Reassessment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.488.

<sup>206</sup> Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War. Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917-1933*, p.76.

## Chapter 3

### Before the storm:

#### Remembering Ukraine before the famine

The continued fight by pro-Bolshevik elements to take control of Ukraine and their desire to turn Ukraine into a Soviet state dominated the years from 1917 onwards. The death of Lenin and the assertion of Stalin's power were followed by the requisitioning of grain and the coercion of the Ukrainian peasantry. The announcement to liquidate the 'wealthier peasants' on 27 December 1927 and dekulakization, followed by the decision in 1929 to collectivize agriculture, were key features of period before the famine.

This chapter outlines the memories of the Ukrainian families who were separated, dispossessed or driven out of their homes through dekulakization. Those who were forced to Siberia shared harrowing stories along with those who managed to escape such punishment. Activists' searches, collectivization, the communist regime and religious persecution were the focus of the discussion surrounding the memories of the Western Australian Ukrainian migrant refugees regarding the period leading up to the Holodomor. This phase was being seen as directly related to the Holodomor with the repressions to further weaken any resistance to the policies of the regime. The stories are tragic narratives. The stories of what life was like for them, their families and friends as they were driven out of their homes and faced Stalin's policies of repression need to be noted.

#### Memories of Dekulakization

Grossman, a Soviet writer and Communist Party activist at the time, describes a typical scene of kulaks being evicted from their homes. He describes how the Ukrainians were driven out on foot, trying to carry whatever they could on their backs. The scene he describes was one of winter with the mud so deep it was pulling people's boots off. The kulaks kept looking back at their homes where the stoves were still burning and smoke was coming out of their chimneys, their dinner still on the table. The women were sobbing and terrified of screaming for fear of even worse repercussions.<sup>1</sup> Others faced brutal evictions without warning. The lines of the dispossessed stretched in all directions from all the villages.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, p.145.

<sup>2</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.137. Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*, p.181.

A survivor now living in Chicago, Anna Pylypiuk, was celebrating her eighth birthday when the black raven, the name given to the vehicle used to remove prisoners, arrived one dark autumn night in 1929 and took her father away. She remembers crying so much that the 'lips of her family members became dry and their bodies froze'.<sup>3</sup>

Western Australian migrants such as Ella and Mykola shared similar memories of the arrival of the Soviet authorities:

And sometime after ten they came, a whole group of them. Immediately they bound my father. This is how they tied his hands...and sat him down, and told us to get dressed... It was freezing outside, and snowing. 'Get dressed and march out from the house.' I was never to return. And whoever opened the door to people like us, the same will happen to that person. And what happened? We got dressed and left absolutely everything as it was. My sister wasn't able to walk from birth. Mother carried her on her shoulders, and took grandmother, pulling her to the neighbours' house. They were relatives of grandmother. Mother knocked on the door. They didn't open up, they weren't letting anyone in. She said, 'they're not letting anyone in.'

And so I stood in the street, in the freezing temperatures, I had dressed warmly, and waited for mother in the freezing weather. What were we going to do now? The snow – it was so bright like – like in the daytime in the snow. There were no roads anywhere, everything was closed, here and there might be a trace of a road. Road or no road, you knew more or less where to go, and mother said to go to father's sister's place, twelve kilometers away.<sup>4</sup>

Bohdan was sent to Siberia in 1928. His father died there after three years, in 1932. The family was 'dekulakized' and their household was 'crushed'. Bohdan escaped with his mother and sister after his father's death. It took them thirty-four months to get back home. They traveled mostly on foot and sometimes stowed away on trains. They lived in fear for their lives.<sup>5</sup>

Bohdan and what was left of his family arrived back to discover the ravages of the famine. Their house had become part of a collective farm and had been turned into a granary. He had to work on the collective farm in order to survive. His mother was not accepted when they returned because they had been 'dekulakized'. They were sent five regions away from their own village and kept there for a week, until it had been confirmed that the father was not with them and had died. The family was finally left alone and was not sent back to Siberia.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Anna Pylypiuk, "Anna Pylypiuk, Chicago: [in] for the Record: Eyewitness Testimony before the Commission on Famine," <http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/1986/508618.shtml>.

<sup>4</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella", " in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004); Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola".

<sup>5</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan", " in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Bohdan also recalls eating horses' hooves in Siberia. He speaks of his mother having to carry his six-year-old sister in her arms when they were forced to Siberia. This man told his story without any emotion and almost willed the interviewer not to pity his history.<sup>7</sup> Although not a witness to the Holodomor he was a witness to the preceding repressions.

Parts of family farms were given to young Ukrainian couples when they married. It was a traditional gift to newlyweds. Property was important to the Ukrainian psyche and when faced with giving up their farm to the Soviet authorities, Tonia's father was not prepared to do so. He told them 'You come and get it yourself if you want it'. He had already hidden his precious horses so, after this altercation, he brought them out of hiding, attached them to a cart, and the family left with the children covered by blankets in the cart. Something that had haunted this migrant for many years was a sound of horses 'clopping' in water. She remembers splashing and people talking somewhere. She remembers the blanket covering them and a child crying.<sup>8</sup>

Volodya tells of his family being classified as kulaks as a result of his father being a skilled boot maker in the winter and working in the fields during summer. They also owned cows and horses. The father had feared his house being burned down by the communists during this time. This was one way they asserted their power over the dissenting kulaks. The family somehow managed to escape being deported but faced the loss of their farm once collectivization began. Volodya was thirteen at the time and still needed to go to school, but described how people preferred to go thirty kilometers one way to work in factories in the cities than work on the collective farms. The collective farms were an abomination to these hard-working peasants who simply wanted independence and land that they could call their own.<sup>9</sup>

Volodya traversed great distances to work in a factory in a nearby city rather than work on a collective farm. This was followed by time in the army in a town on the Dnieper River. He indicated that he was grateful to be in the Red Army at that time as kharkiv, the city where he was from, faced severe famine and was one of the worst hit cities during the Holodomor.<sup>10</sup>

Volodya also speaks of an aunt whose son was a member of the Communist Party. He describes how they were afraid of him because of his Party connections. Members of families

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

feared each other during this time. Although the sister had been informed that they would be dekulakized, the aunt's son arrived and settled the matter. They were left alone. Others were not so lucky.

Near the sea of Azove where the landscape included a river and then a large hill called the kossa Hill lived Stefka with her family. They lived opposite the river. The railway ended at this place. She remembers that during 1929 or 1930 they began transporting kulaks from many different regions and taking them to the top of the hill where they lived in barracks.<sup>11</sup>

The kulaks began digging into that hill – not excavating, but digging, as she put it, 'like mosquitoes'. They were digging the foundations of factories. They built two or three iron and steel factories on that hillside. They were built by the hard labour of dekulakized Ukrainians whose families knew nothing of where they were.<sup>12</sup> These factories still exist, she said, for she had been back to her homeland since that time.

Lesia remembers her father agreeing to evacuate but her mother refusing. They were finally 'dekulakized'. The mother took the family to the father's parents who lived near the kirovgrad Oblast. The father was conscripted into the army. Apart from her own trauma and the responsibility for the care and sustenance of her children, Lesia's mother was very worried because she had to leave behind her 'dekulakized' brother. The brother's wife had died and he had been left with eight children. They were living in a cow shed and sleeping on straw. This was of great concern to the mother, wondering how her brother would cope as they had been deprived of everything. She left them foraging for food in the frozen earth hoping to uncover food that might have been secretly hidden by other people.<sup>13</sup>

People were classed as public enemies as part of the dekulakization process. Marko's mother and father were deprived of everything after this action. They had no rights because of their status. Marko's mother was illiterate but the father had some education.<sup>14</sup> Djenia gave a succinct account of the kind of treatment meted out to Ukrainian families:

We had a big house, but everything was taken away from us. Everything, including the garden. We had a two-hectare garden with cherries. It was such a garden! My mother said they had better not take away everything, just leave the house and the garden, but they deprived us of everything. Some communists made it their home, and we couldn't go back there. Once we went there with friends and were almost arrested by militia. We couldn't pick cherries in our own garden...

<sup>11</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."

<sup>14</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

In those times one couldn't emigrate anywhere, because the Soviets caught those people and exiled them in Siberia. Whoever was caught was exiled. People went through that very hard. A friend's parents had neither horses nor cows, nothing, but the father was thrown out of the house ...

The Russians did such harm to us. Robbed us, took away our horses, the cow, which I liked very much. I tell you, it was such a tragedy, God forbid this happening to any nation, our nation suffered the most...

They dispossessed us, but didn't send us away to another administrative oblast or region where there were mines (as happened with many – the mines were feared). Who could work and was young had still some life, and those who were old had to die. In the villages people suffered a lot...<sup>15</sup>

Larissa was 'dekulakized' with her family. They were sent to Siberia for approximately two and a half years. Her family and others were then collected by the army and taken to 'Persia' as it was then known, where they lived in tents. The husband of this migrant had been taken into the army together with her brother.<sup>16</sup>

Irka remembers that the 'dekulakization' process began in her region from about 1932 when she was six years old. Her father came from a family of six sons and all of them were 'dekulakized.' Some ran away – as she said, 'the lucky ones'. Others were sent to Siberia. Irka's father ran away but the mother had five children who were thrown out of their home with her. Their home was destroyed. The family went to live with the grandmother. There was no other mention of the father and it was assumed that he perished somewhere. It was unknown family history, a legacy of Stalin's policies at the time.<sup>17</sup>

These migrants' stories were often told in a matter-of-fact manner leaving the interviewer with a feeling that no sympathy was required, simply an ear to listen to the story. It was understood by the interviewer that they were well past the need for sympathy, that there was numbness, that they had developed because nothing could bring back what they had lost.

When Halena spoke, one needed to read between the lines to appreciate how life was for her as a young child during dekulakization:

They turned us out of our house, and mother went to stay with my father's sister, and I went to school, so I wasn't yet driven away. I stayed at my aunt's and at my grandfather's. I finished school, seven forms, in our village. Mother had to work, so she worked on a collective farm for six months, and then the head of the collective said, go to work at a cooperative. Mother worked in a shop, not a private shop, like here. So she worked there, and then the war began. She died right before the war. So she didn't know good times. People ask me why I never went back to visit, but I didn't

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<sup>15</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>16</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

and don't want to go home. My husband went, but he is from Volyn, and they didn't starve there. He maybe heard about the starvation, I don't know. So that's how it was.<sup>18</sup>

Halena was later taken to Nazi Germany as forced labour, became a displaced person after the war, and migrated to Western Australia in 1948. The memories of home were so bad she never desired to return. She had not spoken much to her husband of her experiences and it left one wondering if 'dekulakization' had left her with a feeling of shame that this had happened to her family. They felt they were bad people at the time for having horses, farm animals and property.

Survivor guilt was an outcome for survivors of the Holocaust. Holocaust survivor Primo Levi spoke at length of not having any sense of proportion between the privilege of surviving and understanding 'misdeeds' that could not be revoked and were unproven, with horrific consequences.<sup>19</sup> The interviewer believed strongly that this feeling of survivor guilt was very much manifest within the hearts and minds of some of the Ukrainian migrants who remembered this time.

After Stalin's death in 1953, Josep's grandfather was pardoned and sent home from Siberia. He was told that he need not have been sent. He was not part of any dissident group but had lost twenty years to forced labour in Siberia. His family believed they had lost him forever. His wife was subsequently part of the migration to Western Australia and his son grew up without a father. This man was left with nothing and subsequently returned to his old village and died there. According to Josep's account and understanding, he did not remember that there was compensation, free medical, or pension support. He was a poor, broken man who had lost everything because of the false presumption that he was an 'enemy of the people'.<sup>20</sup>

The Ukrainian migrants remembered the treatment of kulaks by the Soviet regime whether the memory was about their own fate or that of a friend or neighbour. The fear that their turn might come if they were not Party members would have been tangible, even though to become a Party member was a privileged position not available to all. It came to pass however, that even Communist Party members faced the wrath of Stalin's terror. The common feeling throughout the discussion of dekulakization was the fear that dispossession engendered.

<sup>18</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), pp.70-87.

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."



Katerina was still fearful and found it very difficult to speak about this time in her childhood. She fully remembers the events of the night that the militia came to take away her father. The children were terrified and clutching at the mother's skirt and crying with fear. She said that unspeakable things happened and of how her mother was ridiculed by the village council the next day when she attempted to pay the tax they had levied on their family. She notes how difficult such memories were for children who did not understand what was happening.<sup>21</sup> Others remembered similar stories of property being confiscated and people disappearing.<sup>22</sup>

People spoke of losing all rights. Migrants such as Zoya, stated that people were deprived of their rights such as the right to vote at village councils.<sup>23</sup> Communist activists or the militia were permitted to come a second time to confiscate and arrest in case they had missed something or someone the first time. The first round began in 1929 and the second round occurred in 1930.<sup>24</sup>

Zoya often reflected on what a nightmarish time it was and upon her return many years later, found a very unkempt village with potholes in the road, houses gone and no people she had known living in what was left of her village. Ukrainian villages were traditionally known for their whitewashed houses, neat and tidy gardens, good roads, animals and community. She speaks of how abominable it was, what the communists had done to her village. After the banishment of the family and the father being sent to prison, a notice had been put on the door of the house stating that the family was 'under political observation and political persecution/enemies of the system'.<sup>25</sup>

Mykola's family lived on the street in 1933. They had rescued a chicken that had been maimed by a horse stepping on its leg. The hen lived with them for some years laying precious eggs that sustained them until it was stolen in 1935 by an old lady who slaughtered it.<sup>26</sup> Their tragedy was one of those simple stories that linger in one's psyche after a human trauma.

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<sup>21</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004); Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."; Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004); Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004); Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>23</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

Theodora provided one of the most comprehensive overview of dekulakization, dispossession and exile to Siberia. People were driven to the village council where there were those who said that they should be taken to Siberia so that ‘mosquitoes would eat out their eyes.’ (When they got there, there were many mosquitoes). They were taken to a station and unloaded for a day into a church. This was then followed by standing upright in a train for an entire day in a place called Vologda before being taken by that enclosed train with forty people squeezed into the carriage.<sup>27</sup>

Theodora’s husband, father and son were also brought to the station at Murene. She had already been transported there. Her husband neither recognized her nor his mother and his sisters. Theodora had been taken by force, with the father and son thirty kilometers from her at the time. ‘Don’t cry,’ said her husband, ‘it will be even better for us that I didn’t recognize that it was you’.<sup>28</sup>

They were led into a huge hall, and the people were just standing there. They were put to one side, and they did not know why. A militiaman took them into another room where the NKVD was waiting. In that room stood a table, covered with red, at which the NKVD officials sat and asked them what they knew.<sup>29</sup>

Her father had told Theodora not to disclose anything about the family. There were land holdings in different regions and her father-in-law had also bought a great deal of land. She only knew how much forest they had bought – one hundred ‘dessiatin’ [a measure of land], a lake with fish, a mill, and that they had built three houses. The latter was their khutyr – their farm. She went on to describe the history of how the family had come to own the land and what had happened to it since the years of the revolution. There had been murders by the Bolsheviks, people exiled and much destruction since then.

Theodora was interrogated by the NkVD, the secret police, as to why her husband, father and son had been imprisoned. During this time, the three men had been forced out into the Siberian forest with nothing to eat. Others had also been arrested and imprisoned but some had been moved on to the ‘concentration camp’ [her term] at Archangelsk in Siberia.

Much transpired in between these developments. Theodora’s will to survive helped her escape, and she began to make her way back towards Ukraine with other people, including

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<sup>27</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

some of her own family. Her husband's sister, her aunt with an eighteen month old baby named Vera tied to her bosom or back ran through the forest for ten days. Sympathetic Russians devised a route to take them to a village. They found that village and stayed there for three days to gather their strength and rest.

Theodora provided the interviewer with a complete story was at times confronting and almost unbelievable if not for the names of places, descriptions of events along the way together with an understanding of the history that confirmed the truth of such a journey. This person was eventually captured and again interrogated by the NKVD who said that she would be put on trial. They asked her why she was running back. She replied that it was where she had come from and that there was no-one for her anywhere else - her husband was in jail and son and father lost to her - she was alone and also because there was nothing to eat where she had been.

The officer said to her, 'We'll send you where you were,' and she cried. Then the officer looked and said, 'We'll send you where there's work and where there will be food'. Theodora told him nothing more. He asked her about a particular town. She knew where it was and she had relatives there. And at once she became scared, and thought that he would 'tear her into pieces'. The officer said that he was from Ukraine, and then asked her where she would like to go, and she said, 'To Ukraine'. He told her that she could not go there and said that she would be sent to another place, but he did not say where.

Theodora said that she was taken by the Murmansk railroad. Food was brought to her by the military, and she slept a lot because she was very weak. She saw that she was going to the Appatyt station, because there was nowhere further to go. The Lapps, who kept reindeer, had been moved somewhere to the mountains where they began a town and erected a factory. There were engineers at this place, one from America and another from Germany. They had built a big factory. Her husband had sent word that she should 'get to Ukraine', but all the time she lived there she could not run away on her own. The railway was laid through the camp, by those who were in the concentration camps. The prisoners were brought there and had built a road twenty kilometers away from the Appatyt station. They had also built a big town and a lake. Theodora could not remember the name of that city or town. She could not remember whether it was Kandalash or Minorsk. She lived there until she decided to run away.

With the help of another lady, Theodora escaped by truck. This lady risked her own life by covering and sitting on top of her. She eventually found her way to Moscow and was taken in by a poor Russian family who treated her very well. Theodora eventually caught a train to Jalovaisk in the Donbas region. Her own father was already working in the Jalovaisk government collective farm. She arrived at the time when they had to live in dormitories. 'Oh God, how poor we were', she said. A brother arrived from Makijivka where he worked at the blast furnaces. He took Theodora back to Makijivka where she worked until transported as forced labour to Germany in 1943.<sup>30</sup>

Another Ukrainian migrant, Orysia, speaks of being confused about the whole dispossession process at the time as a little girl. This survivor states the authorities were not interested in little children, only their parents, who could be terrified into submission by the loss of family and home. She remembered having to leave her beautiful home and then being left on the snow with her mother screaming for her. The rest of her childhood was spent being led from house to house hoping that someone would take her in, the kurkul's daughter.<sup>31</sup>

Janina also remembers dekulakization during 1933. Her father was to have been transported to Siberia. This family was saved by the local officials who reminded everyone that it was this family that had fed their whole village. They had worked for Janina's family on their fifty to sixty hectares of land. They reminded the officials that the wife had always given them what they had earned and then some more food to take home. She would ask how many children they had, and would give them butter, and cheese, and other things. Consequently the family was not deported to Siberia, instead they stayed in Ukraine and starved like everyone else.<sup>32</sup>

Poltava was a region hard hit during the period of dekulakization. 'People were disposed by the communists for being rich' states Valya. She said people were sent to Siberia to work. This survivor speaks of life for inmates of the camps in Siberia. It is believed strongly by the researcher that this person must have had a family member who was transported there. She speaks with much understanding of accommodation, work and illness within the camps. Mentioned was made of tuberculosis, rheumatism and how people perished in the severe conditions.<sup>33</sup> As Ella says of the dispossessed in Siberia, 'they suffered greatly'.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."

<sup>32</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>33</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>34</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

## Activists – Twenty-five thousanders

In speaking of dekulakization, the migrants also spoke of the Communist activists visiting their homes with their special probes or spears searching for foodstuffs. Sixteen of the respondents discussed specifically the role of the activists during the dekulakization and the Holodomor.<sup>35</sup>

At the November 1929 meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, it was decided to set up a brigade of 25,000 industrial workers, half of whom were under thirty years of age, to recruit and 'convince' people to join the collective farms. Seventy percent of these people were members of the Communist Party and used brutal methods to ensure their own promised salary.<sup>36</sup>

Every single day a brigade consisting of several sturdy men headed by a Chekist came to our house... He ordered his men to pierce all the walls, ceilings and floor with ramrods. He frightened his helpers by saying that they would be arrested if they didn't find any grain.<sup>37</sup>

Remembering that these interviewees were children during such house searches, it must have been a terrifying ordeal for them and worse for parents in attempting to shield their families from terror. If people did not appear to be starving, they were under suspicion. The brigades made searches every couple of weeks.<sup>38</sup>

Hanka speaks of being bribed with lollies or chocolates to tell the activists where her father had hidden any food. People had taken to hiding food by digging holes in the earth and hiding whatever they could. This survivor described the action of the steel probes being thrust into the ground repeatedly in (old village houses had floors of dirt or clay) and around their house

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<sup>35</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."; Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth2004); Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."; Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth2005).

<sup>36</sup> Sundberg, "International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine. The Final Report 1990," p.32-33.

<sup>37</sup> Pylypiuk, "Anna Pylypiuk, Chicago: [in] for the Record: Eyewitness Testimony before the Commission on Famine."

<sup>38</sup> Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies* (New haven and London: Yale University Press in cooperation with the Montreal Institute for Genocide Studies, 1990), p.293.

and also of watching these men do the same in the pigsty. She was threatened with 'show me where your father hid it all, or we will take you in a minute.'<sup>39</sup>

Luba recounted her memory of the activists who would arrive in a four-wheeled wagon, drawn by two horses. The family had no time to hide anything and lost all food including the chaff. The chaff was mentioned specifically since it was so low on the food chain and it was with disbelief that even the chaff had been taken away for it was something only fed to the pigs.<sup>40</sup>

Valya recounted how she was helping her mother pound corn for cereal and how they were reported by their neighbours who heard the noise of the pounding. The activists were called and the house was searched. This young child actually sat on the pounded corn to hide it. It could have resulted in dire circumstances for the family and especially the child. Starvation brought out the worst in neighbourly relations.<sup>41</sup>

Valya also noted that searches often occurred when the parents were not home:

I understood that it was necessary to be cautious. It was necessary to know who, what and why. Why someone came [the activists were the ones searching for foodstuffs etc] looking for something ... Because I'll tell you, that someone could earn his living and preserve himself (from starvation)... Other people didn't have the means and died. Hunger was a nasty thing.<sup>42</sup>

Josep relates a similar tale with grain being confiscated, as well as the tools that ground the wheat. The tools were deemed equally as valuable to remove as any grain. This survivor actually notes that it was the komsomols who took part in searching and probing the homes:

The first shock was when a group of komsomols [young communist league] would comb the grounds with steel prods in case people had buried potatoes, wheat, grain or things like that. I asked my mother 'What are they doing?' Mother replied that 'In case we have hidden things from the government.' That was the first memory that I have. The second memory was when they were also going from house to house looking for zhorna. Do you know what zhorna is? It is two stones that they use to grind the wheat...<sup>43</sup>

Petro also relates a visit from komsomols while the parents were not home. The father of this Ukrainian migrant immediately packed up the family and moved to another village, out of fear for the safety and survival of his family.<sup>44</sup> Although the komsomol organization was

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<sup>39</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>40</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."

<sup>41</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>44</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

made up of children and teenagers, they were nonetheless still to be feared. Children were uprooted, lives disrupted, and the constant threat of family disruption pervaded every waking moment of the Ukrainians in these times.

Katerina recounts how as children they had faced the local Party activists:

It was awful, it's hard to express ... We were kids. We remember how we were walking around Mother and holding her skirt and crying. And Mother said, 'Everything has been taken away.' Father had heard what was going on, and he buried sacks of wheat and sacks of flour. He dug out a pit and buried the sacks there. And people came, those who knew, they were our people, with such long iron bars, dug them out and took everything away. That's what happened.<sup>45</sup>

Olena's recounting of the night that the activists came to their home deserves repeating:

Mother told me to look after the children and not to open the door if someone knocked or something. 'Don't open the door.' They [parents] went. Mother told me not to open the door.

Bang! And a window was broken. 'Open up' They spoke in Russian: 'Open the door'.

We were afraid. The children ran up behind the oven [behind it had a ledge where they often slept] The activists had thrown in some sweets, biscuits. I actually understood at that time. I opened the door. Three men with guns came in.

All the best things, documents, were in the locked chest. They tore off the lock and took everything.

I told my father [when they returned]. He guessed by the opened door. And he knew, 'What bastards, they sent me to go somewhere else but came here themselves.'

Mother started to cry. Father punched the door with his fist and said, 'Be quiet, stop, we are going to Siberia. Let them take it and let them live with the consequences.' Mother stopped crying.

[The activists] were going from house to house.

They came back to my father. He asked, 'Why have you broken the window? Could you not wait for me? You could have come here and just spoken to me. So, you came when my wife and I were out.'

We hid up on the chimney that night, when they came back. I was older and heard what they were talking about. Father did not swear, but he said, 'I joined you, thinking to sign [papers to join the Communist Party] everything as you wanted. I will not eat the earth. I have six children.'

Everything was taken: horses, cattle, everything was taken from people. They left us a cow and a pig, she didn't have piglets. A horse was taken away. Everything for an economy was taken away and father signed. What could he do?

If he hadn't signed like our neighbour ... [there was just a shaking of the head].<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

<sup>46</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

Many parents with large families signed whatever document was necessary and often against their will, when faced with such threatening behaviour against their defenseless families.

Mila spoke of the 'Red Broom' [an expression to describe the Communist activists] and the searching for foodstuffs and family valuables.<sup>47</sup>

We're grieving, crying, father is sitting swollen [from hunger], with mother. The neighbours (Polish) say nothing, and when they [the activists] left, they [the parents] embraced us and said, Children, don't cry, we'll survive somehow. And I'll never forget how I said, 'Father, how will we live if they've taken everything away from us?' 'God's spirit will help us, don't cry, children.'<sup>48</sup>

The above quote from Janina reflects the memories of most of the interviewees – a resignation that nothing could be done and that they had to leave their lives in the hands of God.

### Collectivization

Orlando Figes states that collectivization was the great turning point in Soviet history:

A life based on the family farm, the ancient peasant commune, the independent village and its church and rural market, all of which were seen by the Bolsheviks as obstacles to socialist industrialization.<sup>49</sup>

Sheila Fitzpatrick notes that collectivization was more than the departure from village life to enter a collective farm. The departures were either forced deportation or leaving the village for fear of dekulakization. Fitzpatrick believes that this began the hatred of the concept of collective farms with the subsequent loss of ownership and independence.<sup>50</sup>

In describing the start of the collective farm movement, interviewees recalled how everything from their homes was taken to the collective farms, including the precious family cow. Households were also required to donate an amount to the state of any produce that they grew or acquired. Hanka remembers that their clothes and bath were also taken. The family began to cry and said 'what are we going to cover ourselves with? We don't even have anything with which to get dressed'. She also remembers the Communists' search for hidden foodstuffs.<sup>51</sup>

People in a weakened state were made to work on the collective farms. If a person did not complete a task, because of hunger, they were not given anything to eat.<sup>52</sup> If a person worked

<sup>47</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>48</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>49</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, p. 81.

<sup>50</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.80.

<sup>51</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>52</sup> Ibid; Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."



then they might get some bread. If a person was not part of the collective farm, but lived on communal land, they were still required to provide a donation to the state, of milk or eggs, for example.<sup>53</sup> Such donations were essentially a tithe to the Soviet state.

Volodya's father, who was made a foreman on their collective farm, told his family when collectivization began that they should run away. In 1930, they had everything taken away because they were considered to be wealthy kulaks. When they were driven out of Kharkiv they went onto a collective farm.<sup>54</sup> The considered futility of this development left disillusionment, confusion and anger at losing one's worth and work. Marko's father faced exactly the same predicament, and was made to graze cattle and cows from the collective farm on the nearby steppes.<sup>55</sup>

Djenia spoke of rumours that wheat was being dumped at sea in order that people would get hungry and then join the collective farm. People were dying but many still refused to join a collective farm.<sup>56</sup> This survivor spoke of the collective that took over their property. She remembered the beautiful white horses her parents had owned and how these horses were whipped and ridden to death by people who did not understand animal husbandry. The parents had no rights to say anything about the mistreatment and the father paced to and fro in anguish. He remained silent or 'they would have beaten him or killed him'.<sup>57</sup>

Irka also speaks of people not wanting to join the collective farm. She remembers that if people refused to go to the collective farm then they did not receive any food rations. She remembers grain being put into storage, burnt or left to rot at the beginning of the Holodomor.<sup>58</sup>

Marika tells a tale of having only the house left for the family to stay in. This person's father refused to work on the collective farm. The mother dutifully did, because she had no other choice with children to feed.<sup>59</sup> According to Evhan, he remembered that even pre-school aged children were made to work on the collective farms at times.<sup>60</sup> Marika's father said that he would die before he would work on the collective farm. He subsequently went to work for a doctor and essentially lived on the premises with the doctor. He was lucky they did not

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<sup>53</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>54</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>56</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>59</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>60</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."

transport him off to a penal colony for such insubordination. This person remembers her mother saying: 'Where the devil did the Russians come from?'. The family was told that if they did not go to the collective farm then they had 'no right to venture out and urinate outside' because it was no longer their land.<sup>61</sup>

Josep states that the famine and other conditions produced in Soviet Ukraine under Stalin were unforgettable, affecting him physically, mentally and spiritually:

When I think about it, I just think about the scary, inhuman and devilish regime, the Soviet system. Stalin and his henchmen wanted to set up a new order. To send everyone to the collective farms – saying that the collective farms would evenly distribute wealth and not have wealthy people like non-communist countries where everyone can become wealthy. They did it so that people from ten to one hundred were on the land. He wanted to turn them upside down to the other side so that they worked and lived like peasants. At the collective farms they had to give up their homes and so on but that will never work. To suddenly disrupt people. You can't. People didn't want it. Some didn't want the collective farms... Everyone wanted privacy and freedom.<sup>62</sup>

Taras's father had stated that he would not fight the Communists because they would take everything away anyway.<sup>63</sup> Zirka believes that collective farms were set up to destroy the Ukrainian people.<sup>64</sup>

The Soviet system pitted Ukrainians against Ukrainians in a time of extreme suffering. Andrei Podolski and Peter Coleman's research outlining memories in the former Soviet Union quotes a statement from an elected head of a collective farm who had said in the study that:

It was an awful time for me... I had almost gone mad. Everybody came to me and cried. Children were dying for there was nothing to feed them with and their fathers had perished. What could I do? There was no firewood or bread, all the houses needed repair. There were no men to do this.<sup>65</sup>

According to Ivan, once the many villages and town had emptied of Ukrainians either from dekulakization, collectivization, or the ensuing starvation:

Stalin sent in the Russians. Now what is to be done? Today we have Russians there.<sup>66</sup>

Fedir Moroziuk writes of survivors accounts and archival data that note Russians taking over places belonging to those having died of starvation. Fedir Moroziuk who was a Member of

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<sup>61</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>62</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>63</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #39 "Taras"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2005).

<sup>64</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>65</sup> Andrei I. Podolskij and Peter G. Coleman, "War and Trauma across Three Generations: The Intergenerational Transmission of War Memories in the Former Soviet Union," in *Annual Conference of the Oral History Society* (King's College London: Podolskij and Coleman, 2005). Electronically sent document

<sup>66</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #2 "Ivan"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

the Ukrainian Association of Holodomor Researchers, Kherson Oblast, part of the Odessa Oblast in 1932-1933, details the resettlement by households of Russia's Gorky and Belarus to the Odessa Oblast. The resettlements were detailed in a collection of documents and materials in Kyiv. He notes a 'secret report by the All-Union Committee for Resettlement under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of December 29, 1933'. Report number 38 was sent to the head of GULAG Berman regarding the resettlement.<sup>67</sup>

People came from somewhere else to inhabit the houses said Olena:

They came and took over the houses and settled in our Ukraine.<sup>68</sup>

Theodora remembers the family going back to their home during the German occupation of Ukraine in 1941. Their family had been dispossessed and now the house in their village was empty. According to her there were a few poor people who had survived the Holodomor, but the rest of the village were now Russians.<sup>69</sup> The family moved back in.

### **Trudoden payments**

People on the collective farms were often paid in kind, by a 'trudoden' payment. This was a daily payment given on the proviso that if a person worked and there was yield, then they ate.<sup>70</sup> Workers were supplied with amounts of bread or grain that could not support their own, let alone a family's food requirements. They were also forced to pay in kind for the use of equipment or to grind their grain. A unit of work was fixed arbitrarily and payment was around four rubles – if there was payment at all. For the worker's young children and old parents who were part of the household and unable to work, there was nothing. To buy bread for the family cost the worker three rubles a kilogram and equaled four days work on the farm.<sup>71</sup>

Collective farm workers laboured hard in the fields and might have been given 3.2 ounces of bread and a cup of sorrel soup. By contrast, the average pay of a Soviet citizen, including officials and specialists together with lowly paid factory and office workers, was 300-350 rubles. Necessary items such as shoes cost 250-450 rubles and boots between 300-700 rubles.<sup>72</sup> It was no surprise that very quickly these commodities were unaffordable for the

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<sup>67</sup> Fedir Moroziuk, "Consequences of Famine Genocide," *Action Ukraine Report - AUR*, no. 816 (2007), <http://www.golodomor.org.ua/pub.php?sp=2>.

<sup>68</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>69</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."

<sup>70</sup> Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War. Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917-1933*, p.68.

<sup>71</sup> Pigido-Pravoberezhny, *The Stalin Famine. Ukraine in the Year 1933*, p.68-69.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.69.

family, and, children often shared one pair of shoes and went to school on the day that they could have the shoes. These were often their parents' shoes.<sup>73</sup>

The small plot of land that might have been left with the house of the farmer was required to yield produce that was calculated by the state. This was alongside dues and subscriptions for such organizations as 'The Society of Atheists' for example.<sup>74</sup> Graziosi calls this period 'the war against the peasantry' because it was also the period when peasants could not go elsewhere in search of work or food because of the introduction of the passport system in the spring of 1932.<sup>75</sup>

Survivors raised the issue of the trudoden payment because it was part of the collective farming system of pay for work done. Payment by grain would only occur when there was a harvest and grain was available. No money exchanged hands.<sup>76</sup>

The system tried to make many different payments by trudoden. When they began to do that with postman Yurko, he stopped doing that work and went to Kyiv and worked at the railway station.<sup>77</sup> For one hundred days of work a person would receive twenty kilograms of grain. 'That did not stretch for a family', said Josep.<sup>78</sup>

## Communism and Communists

My mother died with the communist famine – it was terrible, terrible, more terrible than fascism. It has always, always, always accompanied me, all my life. I curse Communists.<sup>79</sup>

Survivors spoke in very derisive terms of Communism and believed that all the ills of Ukraine, both in the past and today, could be blamed on Communism. In fact, they believed that the reason that Ukraine had not been able to embrace democracy for so many years was a direct result of people who were in power during the Soviet era still wielding power today and making the lives of Ukrainians a misery.

Survivors were scathing of the role of Communist Party activists during the Holodomor:

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp.68-69.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.70.

<sup>75</sup> Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War. Bolsheviks and Peasants, 1917-1933*, p.44.

<sup>76</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>77</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"," in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth2004).

<sup>78</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>79</sup> Dr. Gelinada Grinchenko, "Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich: Remembering and Forgetting as the Strategies of Survival" (paper presented at the Using the War: Changing Memories of World War Two. Annual Conference of the Oral History Society with King's College, London, Kharkiv, Ukraine, 1st - 3rd July 2005), p.5.

The communists just wanted us to give them everything. They took away everything from the people and made the collective farms. They called them collective farms. My dad worked on a collective farm. He was very poorly, swollen because there wasn't anything to eat.<sup>80</sup>

Survivors such as Nina state that if they were teachers or highly educated then 'they were all sent to Siberia'.<sup>81</sup> Darka believes that Stalin was worse than Hitler and remembers heresay of wheat being dumped in the sea rather than distributing it to the people.<sup>82</sup>

Stefka was at pains to say that her parents were not Communists. She remembers the Germans invading Ukraine and coming to Donetsk. She remembers the motorbikes and jeeps and no fighting nor resistance. This happened as her mother was finally found and returned to the family from dekulakization and imprisonment. Her worst memory, however, was the night when her parents were arrested by the Communists for keeping religious icons. Her father had been expecting the knock on the door because he was not a Communist. This interviewee believed that the Communists arrested her father because he was educated and a threat to Stalin and the growth of Ukrainian nationalism. She spoke of people like her father being sentenced to five or ten years in Siberia. Stefka said that *Tut Boh ta I voroh* (God is here and also the enemy) in Ukraine during the Holodomor. She was orphaned with the subsequent death of her very sick mother.<sup>83</sup>

Stories were told of militia men or policemen, 'a great Communist', kicking dying people lying on the ground and accusing them of being drunk. This was during the time of whole villages dying from starvation. Fania stated that Communists ruined an orderly and law abiding community. She spoke of what a mess it was with people losing faith in others and becoming suspicious of their own during the communist reign and the Holodomor. She spoke of the brutality of the time and how it ruined Ukrainians and affected the country over generations.

The Communists were blamed for the Holodomor and the Ukrainian migrant refugees hoped that other nations would not suffer as Ukraine did at their hands.<sup>84</sup> Djenia speaks of the fear of arrests and death for opposing the Communists being paramount during the Holodomor.<sup>85</sup> As

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<sup>80</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>81</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

<sup>82</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>83</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>84</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>85</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

one interviewee said, 'It was easier to be Communist'.<sup>86</sup> Josep however, questioned what sort of regime the Soviet Union was when everyone was required to give up everything and fill the government quotas for so many things. It was recorded if one went against the Soviet rules and even though young boys quickly signed up to join the komsomols – the communist youth, many such as Josep would not. This man saw the repercussions of Ukrainians displaying dissident behaviour. People were shot or sent to Siberia for wearing what he stated were traditional 'wealthy, embroidered shirts' or 'playing the bandura', a Ukrainian musical instrument.<sup>87</sup>

Katerina speaks of a memory that still haunts her. She remembers two young neighbours of twenty and eighteen years of age who were simply taken away one night.

Those boys were taken away, but where to, what and how, nobody knew. Something unspeakable was going on.<sup>88</sup>

The power, the Soviet system, was responsible for such activities, and according to Petro, if it were not for the Communists, none of the suffering would have happened.<sup>89</sup> People such as Zoya's father, who was a teacher and would have like to have become a school administrator, might have had a chance if the Communist regime had not taken over. According to her, only Party members were appointed to such positions. Zoya noted candidly that 'whatever profession you would have liked to make a career of, unless you were a Communist, it would have been hard to achieve. That's how it was'.<sup>90</sup>

Mykola was curt in discussing the scavenging of his home after they were evicted. Nothing was left. He speaks of the Communists noting on his records in Ukraine that he was unreliable politically. He remembers a letter he had written to his cousin that said something the local Communists did not like. His cousin was imprisoned and lost his job. He stated that the cousin had been 'given hell' in prison as a result of his letter.<sup>91</sup>

This interviewee believes that even today details concerning Ukrainians continue to be recorded. He was followed from the time that he had left home and was taken into the army and feels that this has continued until the present day. He states that they have never found

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<sup>86</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>87</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>88</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

<sup>89</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>90</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

that he has ever done anything against Communism. During the war against Germany he served in the Red Army and was taken prisoner.

According to Luba, the Communists visited all the houses checking on those who had not joined the Party. Her mother cried and did not want to at the time but was reminded that children were dying of hunger everywhere. This family lived on a farm beyond the village and had not yet seen the extent to which things had changed. One event on one fateful night convinced Luba's mother to change her mind. This event has been related in full in the section under Activists. The story outlined the night that activists arrived with guns at her home during which time Luba's parents were instructed to go elsewhere. The men arrived with guns and broke a window. They took all their best things, family documents and horses and cattle that were their livelihood. They thus forced her father to join the Communist Party. He had six children to feed.<sup>92</sup>

What could we do? ... Once you signed up everything was given back to you, chickens, geese, everything. Those who would not sign were transported out and everything was taken.<sup>93</sup>

Olena speaks about those who did not join the Communist Party being transported to Siberia and let out in to the forests. This she had heard from conversations with men who would visit her father. This happened to a family friend who had been sent to Siberia. He returned in 1940 with frostbitten legs and died after they amputated the legs. He had walked the long way back after escaping Siberia. He had only bound his feet with rags to keep them from getting frostbite.<sup>94</sup>

Olena states that people who joined the Communist Party survived the Holodomor years, while the rest died from starvation.<sup>95</sup> 'There were communists who lived well', said Zirka. Even those who had relatives who had joined up, were very afraid of each other. Children were vulnerable in that they might say something that could be construed as being against communism and leave the family in a difficult situation as a result.<sup>96</sup> Evhan and Orysia blamed the regime for the persecutions and repressions and the starvation that resulted in the Holodomor.<sup>97</sup>

## Religious persecution

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<sup>92</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."

<sup>93</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>97</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."

The persecution of the religious has been documented earlier. It took many forms and affected many Ukrainian people. The priests were targeted and churches were closed down.<sup>98</sup> People needed to be vigilant and careful and secretive if continuing to practice their worship. In some towns, the churches were actually used as grain stores or to house cattle from the collective farms. Hanka blames the Communists for such practices and indicated there were revolts over such occurrences. She also stated that they were threatened their church would be used as a picture theatre. She spoke of this as being demeaning of a sacred space. It seemed to be an enormous sacrilege that such an action could be considered.<sup>99</sup>

Survivors spoke of the religious icons that decorated their homes. Nina had many in her home, as was the practice. During the dekulakization and collectivization these icons were hidden by most families. Parents hid them so that even children did not know the whereabouts. After some years they were again brought into the open and decorated the houses again. After the years of the Holodomor Nina's mother was no longer prepared to hide the icons nor fear the Communists, and did not send her daughter to the Communist school. The father was not a Communist and did not recognize Communism. The interviewee noted that life was made very difficult for them as a result.<sup>100</sup>

Those Ukrainian migrant refugees who returned to visit Ukraine many years after migration were surprised to find that many icons existed after being hidden during the Soviet era. Stefka's aunt had some that had been hidden during the 1930s, back on the walls of her house during the early 1980s. This aunt took Stefka to what was previously the priest's house, where his granddaughter now lived. The priest had, of course, perished long ago. There were beautiful icons kept in a cupboard at this house. They had been hidden for safekeeping for decades. Stefka was offered one to take back to Australia. Such an offer was very special and held great significance for her. She felt saddened to hear that the young Ukrainians within Ukraine 'were not interested in them and they were just gathering dust'. It was a timely acquisition, for this lady's Orthodox parish was building a church in Perth and she was keen to donate it to this church where it still hangs.<sup>101</sup>

The Ukrainian migrant refugees remember that any cross worn was taken away. Most children became accustomed to taking their cross off before going to school and putting them back on upon returning to their home. They were forced into such behaviour at the beginning

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<sup>98</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

<sup>101</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."



of dekulakization and religious persecution for fear of repercussions.<sup>102</sup> Irka made an interesting comment that she was more religious during the Communist years of repression than she was in the free world.<sup>103</sup>

## **Conclusion**

There were many different aspects common to the survivors of this era of Ukrainian history, but the ones that were the most vivid and remembered by the Ukrainian migrant refugees that settled in Western Australia were outlined throughout this chapter. Although the events over the years prior to the actual famine years of 1932-1933 were particularly difficult, brutal, and forced unbelievable hardship upon the lives of these people, it did not prepare them for the horror of what was to come, the Holodomor itself. By the time that Stalin had decided to unleash the man-made famine of 1932-1933, people had already been weakened by the earlier repressions and offered very little resistance. The resulting Holodomor was 'an act of genocide that cannot now be questioned' stated Ukrainian President Yushchenko in 2006.<sup>104</sup> It has been said, however, that 'the worst crime is, that the Ukrainian nation was forced to forget about these events'.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> "Ukraine's President Unveils Holodomor Monument: "Such Monuments Should Be Erected in Thousands of Ukrainian Villages", E.M. Williams.

<sup>105</sup> "Ukraine Security Service's Declassified Documents on 1932-1933 Famine to Be Published in Several Languages," E.M. Williams.

## Chapter 4

### Memories of the Holodomor

The Ukrainian famine initiated by Stalin beginning April 1932 began an unprecedented period of terror, tragedy and death by starvation. The Western Australian migrant refugees' memories of the Holodomor reflect the very same themes prevalent in the historical data and other related testimonies.

My father died on the road near the hamlet and his body lay there for ten days; nobody buried him, because the dead lay scattered everywhere. My mother could not bury him because she too had become swollen with hunger; her body was covered with sores and she was very weak. She could hardly walk and the seven hungry children beside her looked even worse than she did. The things we had to eat. Even now the memory haunts me and a lump rises in my throat. Merciful God, forgive me!<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation taken from Pidhainy's publication about the Great Famine of 1932-1933, the Holodomor in Ukraine, was one of many sourced as preparation for a research project focussing on the small community of Ukrainian migrant refugees living in Western Australia. It is reflective of the stories shared by Ukrainian migrant refugees interviewed for this study.

The Holodomor left Western Australian Ukrainians with heartbreaking memories. This chapter discusses those memories by thematic development, in order that they relate to other historical overviews outlining those same themes. As Jacobs notes, 'while there is scholarly debate regarding experiential memories, especially those associated with horrific events, most would agree that they remain an initially primary source in which to enter the arena of examination'.<sup>2</sup> This was the premise by which this study was conducted. The famine was depicted as an inhuman outcome of policies of the Soviet regime, and those carrying them out.

The stories were very personal memories of what occurred in the daily lives of the Ukrainians struggling to survive starvation during 1932-1933. Stories of physical and mental degradation, children being the only members of their families left and the cynicism of the interviewees in discussing survival were shared. The repressive policies and the resulting horrifying deaths were inescapable, especially for the Soviet Ukrainian people.

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<sup>1</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*, pp241-42.

<sup>2</sup> Jacobs, "Raphael Lemkin and the Holodomor: Was It Genocide?," p.165.

The stories collected reflect those testimonies already published in English language documents sourced for this study.<sup>3</sup> Document length prevents the re-telling of that material although much of it has already been included in the historiography of the Holodomor. The aim has been to obtain a sense of what was remembered and endured by the Ukrainian migrant refugees in Western Australia and to focus on recording the main themes reflected in their stories.

### **Death by starvation**

Peter Kardash describes Soviet policy towards Ukraine during the 1930s, as being 'merciless, repressive and inhumane'.<sup>4</sup> Nina, a Western Australian interviewee argues that:

They [the Soviets] wanted Ukraine to be starved out because we had very good land, peasant land ...people started to die.<sup>5</sup>

The description of death by starvation earlier in the thesis outlined the horrific physical deterioration of the human body. Not only were people unable to escape the effects of starvation but they witnessed loved ones undergoing an agonizing and inhumane death. There are a few translated interviews available from the Australian study by Elizabeth Waters. Basil, an interviewee from her research, speaks of his mother starving to death. It was noted that although her children found such food as grass and weeds, she was too weak to eat. This researcher wondered whether she simply left her children to eat what there was in the hope that they survived.<sup>6</sup> Another interviewee, Claudia, of the same study, speaks of one mother having only a bowl of snow to give her children as they starved from hunger. She said there was nothing to eat from 1932 onwards, and that it was such a tragedy where she lived in Kharkiv.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*; Dolot, *Execution by Hunger. The Hidden Holocaust*; Isajiw, ed. *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine, 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*; Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*; Makohon, "Witness: Memoirs of the Famine of 1933 in Ukraine."; K Olijnyk Longley, "Remembering Rublivka: Life Stories from Lost Worlds," University of Western Australia, <http://www.arts.uwa.edu.au/motspluriels/MP2303kol.html>; Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*; United States. The Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, "Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: First Interim Report of Meetings and Hearings of and before the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine Held in 1986: Organizational Meeting, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1986: Meeting and Hearing, Washington, D.C., October 8, 1986: Hearing, Glen Spey, New York, October 26, 1986: Hearing, Chicago, Illinois, November 7, 1986: Hearing, Warren, Michigan, November."; Werth, "Case Study: The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933 - Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence."; Wynnycky and Isajiw, "The Famine Witnesses: Oral Histories in North America."

<sup>4</sup> Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*, p.97.

<sup>5</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 6: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]," (Canberra1983-1994).

<sup>7</sup> Morgan, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 4: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]," (Canberra1983-1994).

Kardash's latest publication contains testimonies of survivors from different regions of Ukraine suffering the worst. The stories reflect Ukrainian peoples struggle to survive and subsequent death by starvation suffered at all levels of their communities.<sup>8</sup>

Kardash states that 'Ukraine is filled with the lost names of former villages, and the whole country, down to the last village, faced this Golgotha', the Holodomor.<sup>9</sup> Stefka remembers asking her father how people survived starvation, by lying in the street, or sitting and begging at the marketplace. She remembers people just lying down and dying. She did not remember her father's reply.<sup>10</sup>

The Ukrainian artist Bondarenko notes one of his engravings of food available at the time, that 'children delirious from hunger would catch and eat all sorts of bugs, cafers, butterflies, moths etc. Caterpillars were gathered and eaten with leaves'.<sup>11</sup>

Hanka speaks of a lady at the collective farm asking for food *before* beginning work, as she was so weak from hunger. This follows the description of her own delirium from hunger, as a child during the Holodomor:

People go and work but they want to eat first - give her food! No there isn't anything. She went, the woman, and said 'give me at least a little bit of soup that you have.' The manager, as we called him, on the collective farm, came and asked her 'have you already done your work?' 'I can't, I have done a little, but I can't.' 'Go home,' he said... So she went, and just at that moment, she fell down and died.<sup>12</sup>

Fania's entire family was not yet swollen but they were starving. They were fortunate because they were still a family unit.<sup>13</sup> Djenia, who was seven years old, said her strongest memory of her childhood was she simply wanted to eat.<sup>14</sup> According to survivors, the dead bodies of starved victims were collected by carts and thrown into large burial pits.<sup>15</sup>

The hunger caused children to react in inhibited and strange ways. Marika, whose family appeared to abandon the children to fend for themselves, was visiting her aunt, who offered her some varenyky, a typical Ukrainian dish that looks like little dumplings filled with potato. The child did not know why this aunt was able to produce such food. She replied she was not

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<sup>8</sup> Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p.99.

<sup>10</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>11</sup> M. Bondarenko, "Ukraine 1933: A Cookbook. Linocuts by Mykola Bondarenko," (South Bound Brook, New Jersey: Historical and Educational Complex of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, 2003).No pagination.

<sup>12</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>13</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>15</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

hungry and could not be persuaded to eat any after an hour of pressing by the aunt, who knew that she was hungry. The child went home and cried so much she could not breathe. This survivor said she was too embarrassed to eat the varenyky. She would not go to her aunt's house for a long time as she was too embarrassed to eat. They always seemed to have had some food. She said it was a stupid thing to do especially when she was so hungry.<sup>16</sup>

Luba remembers that although there was a 'really good harvest', she believes the Soviet authorities simply wanted to 'get rid of all Ukrainians'.<sup>17</sup> She could not find a good word to say about the Soviet government of the time and the disastrous affect on Ukraine. Starvation saw people succumb to sickness such as pneumonia because of their weakened physical state. The total lack of protein-based food to help recovery from such illnesses saw death follow swiftly.<sup>18</sup>

Tonia felt extremely fortunate that six out of thirteen children of her family on her mother's side, survived. Her father's parents had fifteen children and she was not sure if anyone had survived.<sup>19</sup> Such was the tragedy of starvation and the Holodomor on families. Almost half of Fania's village starved to death. Ivan states in his interview, 'that the Soviet regime destroyed a nation'.<sup>20</sup>

Marko remembers people being very poor and dying of hunger or, 'the bags of bones', as he referred to them, might make it to the station before dying of hunger.<sup>21</sup> Djenia spoke of people dying on the roadside in her village.<sup>22</sup> By 1933, the authorities flew black flags in the village, if every resident had died of starvation. It was a signal to collect the dead.<sup>23</sup> Many survivors stated whole villages had died out.<sup>24</sup>

Halena speaks of a family friend who had buried her entire family, but because she had work, albeit unloading trains, she had survived. She remembers this lady always crying and speaking about having buried her entire family in the village where they lived.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>17</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."

<sup>18</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>19</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #2 "Ivan"."

<sup>21</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>22</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>23</sup> Natasha Lisova, "Ukraine Marks 73rd Anniversary of Forced Soviet-Era Famine," E.M. Williams.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>25</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

One interviewee spoke of his friend Hrytch, whose mother had picked a certain weed and made soup for her family with it. The friend died in four days and Josep believed that it was simply starvation and not the soup that was responsible.<sup>26</sup> There was not one person with a lifelong friend from their childhood as we have in Western Australia. This man speaks sorrowfully, of a poignant memory of one family in his village:

In our village there was one poor family – there were five children – all died. Father and mother went together. One was left but all eventually died. They took them away in carts because there was nothing with which to make coffins. There was no-one to make them either. They buried them. Later people died in the fields.<sup>27</sup>

Survivors dotted their stories with comments such as ‘people died in the streets and at home, because they had nothing to eat’.<sup>28</sup> Petro says he felt as if the whole thing was a dream. He couldn’t understand why people not guilty of anything should die of hunger. He believed the Holodomor was purposefully organized.<sup>29</sup>

Interviewees spoke of death by starvation in the third person – the people, some people or villages died out. It seemed too difficult to speak of deaths in more personal terms. For example, Taras speaks of ‘people’ going to the cemetery so they would die there and be buried more easily by others. However it seemed as if people who were being spoken of in such a sorrowful way were actually related to him.<sup>30</sup>

Mila remembers her father dying, then a sister and then another sister. She was thirteen and it was agreed she would look after children belonging to another family. This ensured she would be fed. Living away from home, meant she missed seeing her mother and a sister before their deaths from starvation. They were thrown onto a cart and taken away for mass burial somewhere unknown. Word had been sent of their deaths but it took some time for her to return home. A neighbour had informed her of their bodies being thrown into a pit. This memory haunts her as she ponders her own salvation from the starvation. Theodora and Halina share similar memories.<sup>31</sup>

We actually survived the whole year, I don’t know how, but we survived a whole year.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

<sup>29</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>30</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #39 "Taras"."

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>32</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

## Loss of family

The loss of a mother to starvation left children in difficult circumstances, even if they were in a home with the other parent. Basil, of the Waters' study, speaks of his brother and sister surviving the famine years, however, dying soon after.<sup>33</sup> Darka describes 'there were three of us with no mother nor grandmother. We had to look after each other'.<sup>34</sup> That was until:

There was a woman who lived in our district, not very far – dad asked her to come and live with us. If she decided to be his wife she could stay because she was living with her brother. She came and she never had her own children. Of course I could not say the word mum. I could not call her mum straight away. She was a bit unhappy about that. However, the youngest one did straight away, she was happy to have someone in the house. It took me a long time before I started to call her mum.<sup>35</sup>

Darka speaks of her mother dying and the outcome of a substitute as such a difficult time of her life. As a result of the mother's death, a sister was taken away to live with an aunt without children. This child lived with that aunt until she was transported in 1942, as forced labour in Nazi Germany. The sister would not discuss the circumstances, however, she was better clothed and enjoyed better conditions than the sibling left behind.<sup>36</sup>

Volodya also lost his mother during the Holodomor. The mother had gone to sell milk along the railway tracks, hoping to be able to buy food for the family. Some was kept for the family but some was used to purchase other food. She was run over by a train. His father married another woman to care for the family, but soon turned her out and married a third wife. The last wife was four years older than the survivor at the time. This woman's parents were dispossessed kulaks, and the survivor spoke of how ashamed he felt with that.<sup>37</sup>

Some parents who had been taken away and imprisoned found their way back to their families at the end of their sentence. Stefka had been left without either parents and she was not aware of their whereabouts. However, two years and eight months after having been arrested, her mother returned. With much emotion and flowing tears this survivor retold the story:

My mother was a solid lady with curly hair but when she came home she was skin and bone with no teeth. All I knew was that she had to have an operation as she had a prolapsed womb. [she sighed sadly] She told us that she had been working – you know those iron foundries and the slag heaps? She was working at the top of the slag heap and she fell down. Afterwards I found out that they were beating people up as they

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<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 3: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]," (Canberra 1983-1994).

<sup>34</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

were considered to be spies. A spy, a women with three kids? She was no good for anybody.<sup>38</sup>

The mother had lied to the daughter about the injuries in order to spare her the grief of knowing what had happened to her. The situation was difficult enough without the mother distressing her child even more.

Stefka remembers the Holodomor as a terrible episode in her life. Her father was sent to Siberia by the Soviets. It was known he had attempted to return but ‘disappeared’ somewhere on the way and was presumed to have been taken by wolves.<sup>39</sup>

Suicide featured during in the years of dekulakization and famine. It was a way of stopping the pain of a slow death by starvation. Claudia, in Waters’ study, notes that period of time saw many suicides by hanging.<sup>40</sup> This was also prevalent in the preceding dekulakization period when people such as Lesia’s father suicided off the church bell, because he could not bear to see what was happening with his family. As a result, her brother was sent to Siberia as punishment for what the father had done. The mother remarried but was still in the same desperate situation and so, before the borders were closed, the family fled to Russia. There they moved to a shared house. The survivor remembers the house being very dark. From that time, Lesia has detested dark houses. She keeps all the windows open and keeps her home light and bright. She says when she goes into a dark house her blood freezes - a legacy from the Holodomor.<sup>41</sup>

Marko’s father, although alive and working for the local collective farm, was not with his family. His job was grazing the collective farm’s cows, somewhere in the kherson steppes.<sup>42</sup> Parents might have been alive but may not have been physically present for their families.<sup>43</sup> Other families had lost their children and family to starvation.<sup>44</sup> They had little choice but to split up to alleviate the starvation or, had the mental burden of having family members that could ‘escape’, move on to Siberia away from them.

In discussing family and outcomes of starvation, Marika speaks of legs that swelled. They were ‘as fat as barrels’. She also speaks of her mother leaving her and the loss of two sisters:

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<sup>38</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 4: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."

<sup>41</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."

<sup>42</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>43</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>44</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."



Mother went to stay with our auntie. Our oldest sister stayed but two sisters had gone to Siberia.<sup>45</sup>

Marika went to live with her married sister who had two children and lived twelve kilometers away. She helped with the sister's children, but there was little to eat there either. The sister would cook some thin soup for Marika and the children, whilst she and the husband were provided with some food at work. She made no comment as to why this was and it was assumed that they must have held important positions supported by the regime.<sup>46</sup> It was said that people who were teachers were provided with rations and food stamps which assisted their survival.<sup>47</sup>

People knew not to speak openly about hunger or starvation, because it might result in arrest and a prison sentence. Ella's parents were in prison just before the Germans invaded Ukraine, in June 1941. The survivor recalled that her parents were freed. Although they were due for deportation to Siberia, the German Army was too close, and it was not possible for the Soviet authorities to mobilize rail transport for prisoners so they were set free. The parents had been arrested quite suddenly one day, and this person, a child at the time, had come home to find them missing.<sup>48</sup>

Schooling was interrupted with the loss of parents and children such as Yurko, whose mother had died, completed only two years.<sup>49</sup> Others stopped their schooling not because of loss of parents, but because they needed to escape.<sup>50</sup> The whole family, including the children had to work in order to survive, if they were able to remain where they were.<sup>51</sup>

A sibling disappearing was commonplace and disturbing for children. Danylo wonders to this day whether his brother was killed or cannibalized.<sup>52</sup> Family members being arrested and tortured could subsequently affect the behaviour within the rest of the family, to the extent that it could prove detrimental to their survival. They were considered enemies of the state.<sup>53</sup>

Theodora recalls the night her mother was 'beaten with rods... by the Bolsheviks'. The children were rescued by the grandfather who loaded family possessions with the children,

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<sup>45</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 6: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."

<sup>48</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

<sup>49</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."

<sup>50</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

<sup>53</sup> Ibid; Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

onto a cart, and took them away. Within a week the Communists located them at the new home and killed their grandmother in their presence. Such was the retribution for escaping.<sup>54</sup>

The culture of living together as a family group, caring for and respecting family members in the hierarchy made this a difficult time for Ukrainians.<sup>55</sup> Families faced the total inadequacy of saving their own family. As Mila states 'there was no-one to complain to, neither father nor mother'. Children may have been fortunate to be placed in an orphanage where there was a slight element of care or adopted out, but essentially they were alone.<sup>56</sup>

Parents understood the danger of life in their villages or towns and encouraged their own children to leave, for hopefully better circumstances elsewhere. Sofi left her family and believes that she still has a sister left in Ukraine. She still has no knowledge of this sister's whereabouts and thus no means of contact.<sup>57</sup>

Janina had been married and had witnessed her husband's exile during the dekulakization. Word got out that authorities were looking to execute her for being a kurkul. Her father encouraged her to escape the country. This would have been a safety measure for not only her, but her two children and her parents. This lady had a son and a very young daughter. The father encouraged her to take the son who was older, and leave the little girl behind with them, with the words 'maybe you'll save yourself with him and leave your daughter here. We will manage somehow with her'.<sup>58</sup>

Janina eventually found her way to Germany where she was put to work. She did not elaborate how she managed to escape. She became separated from her daughter forever. The Soviet government would not let the daughter leave Ukraine and join her. That was her punishment. Now she can only speak to her daughter from time to time by telephone. She fears returning to her homeland to this day. She spoke of remembering her siblings, of how well they lived, and how they were separated and their lives destroyed.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>56</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>57</sup> Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2005).

<sup>58</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>59</sup> Ibid; Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

## Swollen people

Swollen people were common memories of the survivors.<sup>60</sup> It was a physical effect of extreme starvation.

She stood near the porch, that girl. She was eight or ten years old. Her legs were swollen like bottles, big glass bottles. They were leaking. Like broken glass, water was dripping from those legs. Do you understand?<sup>61</sup>

Luba said that many people were swollen with legs like buckets, and also with swellings under their eyelids. She said that it was as if someone had poured water in there. It was difficult to walk in this state of starvation and thus people would crouch and rest in a gutter somewhere to die.<sup>62</sup> Darka lost her own mother that way.<sup>63</sup>

The other description of swollen people was that they looked almost transparent. People became so accustomed to seeing people swollen that it was no longer as frightening as when it first manifested itself. According to Fania, in the beginning, people and children would stand around and stare.<sup>64</sup>

Marika has first hand experience of swollen legs. She remembers that hers were 'as fat as barrels'. Her married sister arrived and took her to live with her family. Unfortunately there was little to eat there as well. In the end, the father came to the rescue and somehow provided more 'food' for her to eat and the swelling in her legs subsided.<sup>65</sup> As soon as Danylo became swollen his food intake was also somehow increased by his family, out of fear of him dying. He managed to survive but in both cases someone would have had less.<sup>66</sup> In Suzanna's family both she and her mother experienced swollen legs.<sup>67</sup> Petro's family faced the imminent death of their father. His legs were swollen. It was understood that once the swelling began and there was nothing to eat, death was imminent. The father said to the family:

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<sup>60</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>61</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."

<sup>62</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."

<sup>63</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>64</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

<sup>65</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>66</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."

<sup>67</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

If we don't find anything to eat we will all die of hunger, because my legs are already swollen.<sup>68</sup>

The family managed to obtain some barley and cooked soup and porridge. Whatever could be 'found' helped sustain their health for a period of time. Mila faced the swelling of her body as well as her legs. She survived by eating grass which did not help reduce the swelling.<sup>69</sup> Mila managed to get to Pyryatyn and work for a Jewish man and be fed. She then went on to Moscow where there were no shortages and remained there until the end of the Holodomor.<sup>70</sup>

Of the other interviewees, Theodora's father was very swollen in 1933, and Evhan also remembers people with swollen legs.<sup>71</sup> Orysia had developed swollen legs and arms but the rest of her remained skinny. If children became swollen their stomachs became distended. Orysia's friend was standing in front of her one day with a very swollen body but standing like a weak sack. She had just taken some sort of hot meal and subsequently fell over. The children knew the signs and were powerless to help each other in such extreme circumstances. "In such a weakened state of human health disease also became rife.

### **Disease**

Disease such as typhus, associated with famine, often took the lives of people if starvation didn't. The health problems associated with the Holodomor came as a result of the effects of such devastation on people. Cats, birds, dogs, and even dead livestock were devoured by the hungry. Spoiled fish washed up on the beach in Mariupol, on the Azov Sea, were eaten and resulted in deaths of the starved and weakened people. Survivors spoke of the difficulty of livestock, such as pigs, dying from disease on collective farms, and not being able to eat them when everyone was so hungry.<sup>72</sup> Of course people did devour these animals, starvation being so great.

Djenia speaks of an outbreak of malaria and typhus in the villages. She remembers a bitter medicine made of wormwood that they were encouraged to drink. Because clean drinking water was also scarce she would arrive home from school thirsty and drink some bracken water. Quickly she developed a fever and shook all over. According to her, it was like that every day. She would come home thirsty, drink some water and start shaking. She would then

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<sup>68</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>69</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."

<sup>72</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

have to lie down and get under a blanket. When the fever and shaking stopped, she warmed up.<sup>73</sup>

Djenia lost her mother from typhus disease. The entire family had typhus except her. She remembered that she liked washing herself, and she believes that because of that she did not contract typhus. She believes that it was a miracle that she did not succumb to it. Djenia similarly states that first it was the starvation, then malaria and then the typhus. People were already weak from hunger and often succumbed to the diseases that followed.<sup>74</sup> Others spoke of dysentery and malaria as well.<sup>75</sup> Tuberculosis was rampant in Siberia with those who were exiled. Many people perished from this disease.<sup>76</sup>

People died from eating noxious weeds or plants and the effects of a lack of protein in their bodies. Whatever foodstuffs were consumed often had long term damage on digestive systems. Children ate bugs, moths and even caterpillars gathered with leaves. The roots of plants were often dried and added to boiling water to drink as a tea.<sup>77</sup>

Indeed the extreme circumstances of widespread starvation lead to outbreaks of cannibalism, the ultimate human taboo.

### **Cannibalism**

A research project conducted in the early 1950's by Harvard University, focused upon Ukrainian refugees and discovered the issue of cannibalism raised during the interviews. Although the researchers were focused upon the life histories being recorded, some unknown and tragic historical material evolved from the stories of the refugee group. Quotations such as the one below were recorded:

There was mad woman who killed her children one by one and fed them to the others.<sup>78</sup>

It was said once the authorities in Ukraine during 1932-1933 realized such behaviour was occurring, they declared cannibalism to be a crime. Up to one hundred and fifty people were

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<sup>73</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>76</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>77</sup> Bondarenko, "Ukraine 1933: A Cookbook. Linocuts by Mykola Bondarenko."

<sup>78</sup> Anna Pylypiuk, "Anna Pylypiuk, Chicago," Ukraine Weekly,

<http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/1986/508618.shtml>.

imprisoned in Kyiv, for being involved in such behaviour.<sup>79</sup> Keis [a witness] in Kuromiya's book, was quoted as saying some people had no qualms about cutting off the flesh of a dead person. The meat might be eaten or sold for precious bread if it was available.<sup>80</sup>

Mace, in reading of such an interview, reflected upon the case of a man ravaged by starvation who had gone to the large Bessarabian market in Kyiv in 1933. There he had obtained some jellied meat. When he began eating he noticed a human finger imbedded in the jelly. Although the militia was called, as cannibalism had been classified as a crime, the lady attempting to sell the meat was applauded for killing off what they had hoped had been a kurkul.<sup>81</sup> Pidhainy's publication outlines many such incidences of cannibalism.<sup>82</sup>

Parents lived in fear of allowing children to roam alone for fear of them being abducted and their bodies used for meat. Sinchenko remembers his experience as a child in the spring of 1933, when a woman offered candy to him to accompany her. He was four years old and he still believes that she wanted him for her dinner. His grandfather saw what was happening and knew from the woman's swollen state her intentions. He pulled his grandson away and Sinchenko remembers crying for the candy. A few days later a butchered child was found in the woman's house.<sup>83</sup>

It was also known that some fat people, usually Party members, also lived in fear of going out in the dark for fear of becoming meat.<sup>84</sup> It was generally assumed that if people had disappeared then they had been cannibalized.

If we are talking about missing people, missing children, I bet you they had been eaten by someone, because they couldn't be found... There, in those years, people were never found. Gone without a trace.<sup>85</sup>

Interviewees from the Waters' study raised the issue of cannibalism in their discussion about gangs who roamed the streets, murdered adults and children and, made sausages from the

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<sup>79</sup> James E. Mace, "The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Ukraine," in *Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, ed. Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies University of Alberta, 1986), p.9.

<sup>80</sup> Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s*, p.169.

<sup>81</sup> Mace, "The Man-Made Famine of 1933 in Ukraine," p.9.

<sup>82</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, pp.649-64.

<sup>83</sup> Volodymyr Sinchenko, "The Cruellest Spring," *The Quarterly Digest of Ukrainian Culture, Economics and Politics Magazine from The Willard Group, TWG 2*, no. 2 (2000): p.7.

<sup>84</sup> Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s*, p.169.

<sup>85</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

flesh of bodies. The survivors remember jellied meat that might have been purchased from someone, and finding human finger nails in it.<sup>86</sup>

Fania from this current study remembers hearing of slaughtered people being eaten. Fania also speaks of the fear of walking alone at night because of the threat of abduction. She was quick to say that ‘it was hard to blame people, because they were so hungry’:

People simply went crazy, hungry people, hungry children, old people – everyone was so poor. There was no help, no pension... [as was her understanding as a child] it was an awful life...there was nothing anywhere.<sup>87</sup>

Parents were terrified for their children and Djenia’s story reflects the fear that parents felt during the years of starvation.

Our parents did not let us out of the house, because they were afraid that somebody would abduct us and eat us. If there were dead people lying around who had died of hunger, someone would cut off a piece of flesh and eat it. Like an animal. Not like a human, like cattle. Because they were no longer normal, but were hungry.<sup>88</sup>

Parents advised children to watch out for themselves so as not to be caught. Ukrainians from Waters’ study noted a similar comment. Children were not spoken to about cannibalism but were told not to mix nor venture out alone.<sup>89</sup> Valya in Western Australia remembers not knowing many children and not mixing with anyone.<sup>90</sup> It was believed that people would stalk kindergartens and catch children as they came out.<sup>91</sup> It was also said that one should not buy sausage from the market for it was believed children were slaughtered to make sausage meat that was then sold.<sup>92</sup> Olena claims that half the village people ate their children after death, they were not buried. ‘After they ate their children they waited for each other to die’.<sup>93</sup>

Olena relates a story of a well dressed woman who always hovered at the front of her house and invited people inside. Fifteen large pickling barrels were found with bodies inside, stocked up for the winter. This woman was arrested and the barrels thrown into the burial pit at the cemetery.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 6: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."; Morgan, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 4: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."

<sup>87</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

<sup>88</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>89</sup> Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 6: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."; Morgan, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 4: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."

<sup>90</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>92</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

<sup>93</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

When I was there recently, there was nothing there. Nowadays there is only grass and trees in that area. It is terrible. There is no cross. Nothing is there. I couldn't believe it.<sup>95</sup>

The memory would have been difficult enough, but the lack of any form of recognition to mark the place, made it even more upsetting.

Tragic stories from survivors involving cannibalism were not sadistic. They were told in a resigned manner reflecting the lack of any other choice. Evhan and Halina also spoke of cases of people, including themselves, being targeted as possible victims of cannibalism.<sup>96</sup>

Mila remembers a young boy coming to her home on a Sunday. She speaks of beggars going to the homes in her village, but this boy was twelve or thirteen years old and left her family with a grave story. After sharing some watery soup with this young boy, he told them that he was afraid to go back home. It appeared that he had been left with his little three year old sister. His fear in returning home was because this little sister had been abducted, killed and eaten by the neighbours.<sup>97</sup> The dilemma was the family was already struggling to survive and this young man was a burden to them if he was to remain. Mila was unaware of what became of him.<sup>98</sup>

The markets were empty for a period of time until people began to bring whatever they had to sell, in order to buy some food for their family. When people went to the market, parents would talk about not buying sausage.<sup>99</sup> A child's finger was in some jellied meat bought by Marika's mother.<sup>100</sup>

Clearly the manner in which people disappeared in such circumstances would have implications for those collating statistics of the death by starvation if there were no records of such deaths. Again the statistics are not a probe of this research and it is hoped that with the census data of that period and the current government's project to collate names of victims from those still alive, that eventually a more accurate figure might be possible. Child victims became nameless very quickly as they had yet to make some mark on a community, especially the very young and newborn. Their records may have been lost for ever.

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."

<sup>97</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

<sup>100</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."



## Children

It became clear that the collective farms had some form of kindergarten attached to some of them and children were given meager rations.<sup>101</sup> However when children were the last to live their circumstances became extreme.

My neighbor's children were left. The people collecting dead bodies took their mother who was still alive. She begged to be driven home but they said no, you can come with us, we will drive you and she was taken to be thrown in a hole with dead corpses.<sup>102</sup>

Nina speaks only of children surviving the Holodomor. She speaks of the fact that in her village many people perished with only children surviving. These children seemed to survive by scavenging for beets or anything they could find.<sup>103</sup> This occurred even though the law passed for theft against state property should have been a deterrent. In families where the surviving children were a little older and more capable and could help each other, their survival rate appeared better.<sup>104</sup> Djenia, seven years old at the time, echoes the sentiments of all the survivors of the Holodomor: 'What I remember is that I wanted to eat. That is all'.<sup>105</sup>

Some people, traveling through the parts of Ukraine that clearly showed the ravages of the famine, and who had been in a better predicament, gave children food at the stations. Consequently survivors targeted the stations in order to obtain food from such travelers. Irka used to cry at the stations in order to illicit such an outcome, but she said that no-one took any notice of her.<sup>106</sup>

Valya remembers many unpleasant things. She would go to school and find that friends were no longer there, they had died. She remembers her friend Dzenia [not the one from this study] not appearing at school one day. She herself had been ill from hunger but was able to return to school. When she did return after two weeks there was only one class left where there had previously been two.<sup>107</sup>

Trying to stay alive was the prime objective in the lives of children during the Holodomor. In most cases parents were in no position to provide for them, as would be expected. Marika describes her life with her sister and how they would gather weeds in order to cook soup. She

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<sup>101</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka".

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina".

<sup>104</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka".

<sup>105</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia".

<sup>106</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka".

<sup>107</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya".

remembers that at the collective farm the pigs and cows were dying from some sort of disease but they would keep the carcass and cook it up for people.<sup>108</sup>

Marika could not believe that children were left alone during these years. They could do whatever they wanted, for their parents were gone struggling to earn some food. The children were left with no food and nothing to drink. She said tearfully and with a shake of her head: 'We had nothing! I don't know what they thought about us children!'.<sup>109</sup> To be thinking those same thoughts in her eighties indicated that she did not fully understand the extent of the situation and how impossible it was for all concerned. It has become important for survivors themselves to understand the extent of the Holodomor and its outcomes.

Many parents sent their children to forage for themselves when they themselves could not feed them. In situations if parents had died then the authorities would evict them. Janina, in sharing her memories, could only cry, 'poor children – poor swollen children. They were dying and being thrown out of the house'.<sup>110</sup>

Children saw things that they could not fathom and as adults could not yet discuss openly in Western Australia. Katerina says: 'Now when I think, I can't speak about that'.<sup>111</sup> Katerina remembers her mother keeping her children at home and thus not placing them in a vulnerable situation with other children by discussing what they had to eat at home. It could place a family in jeopardy if it was known that there was food available, or better food. Children could not help but talk and compare. Parents were scared of the repercussions of such actions.<sup>112</sup>

Dekulakization and collectivization left people with nothing. It was not just the animals, but the house and any household goods that were confiscated.<sup>113</sup> For children, this meant that apart from the trauma of being left alone, they were often left with no shoes (with clothing and shoes being confiscated during kulakization and those left having been worn down or grow out of quickly) in winter, in the snow. No shoes meant no school and school was usually

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<sup>108</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."; Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.174.

<sup>111</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

some distance away. 'I finished school, literally in my father's boots and my mother's coat', said Halina who had to borrow these items and have her parents go without.<sup>114</sup>

The Holodomor destroyed any semblance of a normal education for children. Of those who remember, six survivors had not gone above the fourth class.<sup>115</sup> Some managed to reach the eighth class.<sup>116</sup> Six reached the eighth and tenth classes.<sup>117</sup>

In some areas where children got to school, some were fortunate to receive minimal food that survivors called 'pidporka' or additional forage. This was to support children in order to stop them from 'falling over from weakness'.<sup>118</sup> Unfortunately not even the 'pidporka' could save some children.<sup>119</sup>

The cruelty of the hunger saw children eating vermin. One survivor recalls watching a brother and sister who had caught a rat:

Blood was dripping. They each had one end in their mouths, and were sucking.<sup>120</sup>

Children would, in desperation for food, resort to stealing from the fields of the collective farms and also risk the wrath of the militia guarding those fields.

We children ran about ten kilometers to the fields where the wheat was growing. We took bundles with our hands, until we had blisters. They [the guards] had large whips, horses and, when they hit you, well... Whoever could whistle would do so or call out or something and we would escape one by one. As you left the field one went this way, one went that way. But, the communists, all the communists - they didn't want us to eat. How many children did they kill? The children fell under horses. For me, that was barbarism. On horses with whips they struck and a girl fell. And they did this to a hungry child. They left but she was already dead. This is what God gave me, this

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<sup>114</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."

<sup>115</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Lesa Morgan, "Translated Interview #38 "Maria", in *Holodomor 1932-1933 Interviews* (Perth: 2005); Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>116</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #11 "Julia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonja"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #39 "Taras"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>117</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #13 "Fedor"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>118</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>119</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>120</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."

is how I was judged, and this is my faith (words indicating their belief that somehow they deserved this treatment, that God was punishing them).<sup>121</sup>

Dolot, himself an eyewitness, remembers children being beaten to death for stealing food with no consequences.<sup>122</sup> Thefts, burglaries and robberies that were almost unheard of in many communities, became common, as communal life and human relationships disintegrated. The thought of starvation and the ensuing panic of such a thought, freed people from the fear of being caught for stealing food. Guards were placed in the fields to guard the crops at collective farms as starving people would raid whatever crop might be growing. A law was passed in August 1932 that classified as state property all family goods, property, crops and livestock. Theft of anything resulted in penal service or execution. It was the cruelest law for the starving millions and it did not matter the age of the child, they faced the full force of this law.<sup>123</sup>

### **Orphanages**

The topic of orphanages was raised by interviewees. It was felt that inclusion of the results of this theme merited mention as it directly affected the Ukrainian migrants as children. Some interviewees felt that from the misfortune of having lost parents to the Holodomor, the Soviets believed that they had gained access to a malleable child, who could be turned into a solid Communist.<sup>124</sup> The children who found themselves in an orphanage, were given what Hanka described as, a tiny piece of black bread, thin soup, tea and water. Children's fear of being abandoned and finding themselves in an orphanage was very real during these years and this fear was well remembered.<sup>125</sup>

There were situations where fathers left to seek work and thus hopefully help their families. No-one knew where they had gone. By the time they returned, they would find their wives and children dead or children having been taken somewhere to an orphanage.<sup>126</sup> Often these children were never reunited with their remaining parent or family. There was a generation of orphans resulting from the famine. Those who were fortunate were adopted by people who did not have children or who had lost their own.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Dolot, *Execution by Hunger. The Hidden Holocaust*, p. 155.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., p.157.

<sup>124</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>125</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #11 "Julia"."

<sup>126</sup> Morgan

<sup>127</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

During the Holodomor children lived in fear of being abandoned. Julia wondered how they as children had found out that children were being left by parents at what was left of the local markets.<sup>128</sup> This was in the hope that someone would take pity on their child and take them in. Julia's sister was younger than her at the time and was always asking the mother not to abandon them. Julia states that carts collected abandoned children in the evening, and took them to the local orphanage.<sup>129</sup>

## **Beggars**

Seven survivors spoke of the beggars that roamed villages and towns and knocked on doors or simply begged in the streets.<sup>130</sup> Marika speaks of beggars coming to their door with bags hanging on their chests. 'Please give me your leftovers. Give me anything', they would beg. These people would be grateful to be given old clothes, even if they were ripped. According to Marika, they would take these old clothes to the Jews who traded in such goods and exchanged them for needles, cotton and buttons. People had been left with nothing to wear as well as nothing to eat.<sup>131</sup>

Marika remembers that her family also needed such goods, and how upset her mother was when she found out some of their old clothes had been given away by someone in the family. Nothing was unusable in these times. Marika admits on one occasion, when they saw an old lady coming to the door begging, they closed the door and shut the window. This old lady knocked for some time and finally gave up and went away. 'What could we give her – we didn't have anything ourselves. In autumn there were still a few potatoes that we could give but in spring we didn't want anyone to come near us'.<sup>132</sup>

Those childhood years still shock Josep who remembers a poor beggar with swollen legs coming to his house. 'Auntie [everyone was addressed in a friendly manner as auntie or uncle], give me a piece of bread'. Josep's mother replied saying that they had no bread.<sup>133</sup> For people who were very friendly and always shared what they had, this was a distasteful memory that had remained with this gentleman since the Holodomor.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #11 "Julia"."

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #11 "Julia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>131</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

Zoya and Sofi also remember the beggars, always asking for bread.<sup>135</sup> Sofi remembers the shabbiness of the beggar's clothes and the desperation. She said that some of the beggars were from a neighbouring village. People were too embarrassed to beg in their own neighborhood and would go to another village.<sup>136</sup> She believes that her own village had probably been depleted of any foodstuffs.

### **Border closures**

The hungry left their homes and provinces searching for food as well as work, in order that they could earn some money for bread. Kuromiya states that those with some sort of tie with Russia were able to go back in search of a better situation. Koromiya speaks of hungry people from collective farms gathering along the railway tracks, hoping that people traveling on the trains might throw them some bread. Keis, a witness at the time and quoted by kuromiya spoke of the corpses that littered the sides of the railway lines. They were of people who had died begging.<sup>137</sup>

In remembering the time after the border closures Ivan states that no-one was permitted to leave their villages. 'It was so strict', he said with great emphasis, 'that even dogs were not allowed to move'.<sup>138</sup> As Josep noted, 'where would they go anyway?' Josep's brother's village was approximately twelve kilometers away and was also full of hungry people. Their village was closed off and movement forbidden. 'We could not go anywhere or escape. The Soviet Union closed the borders'.<sup>139</sup>

Mykola also speaks of border closures and people forbidden to leave the country. He said that some did leave Soviet Ukraine, although he wasn't sure where they went because there was nowhere to go.<sup>140</sup> Zirka spoke of the people attempting to leave being returned by police to their own village.<sup>141</sup> The issue of requiring passports to move from village to town was raised by Mila.<sup>142</sup> This was a system for all citizens over the age of sixteen. It kept people from moving to find food elsewhere, but it also trapped kulaks who were attempting to escape their villages, as well as those who might have escaped the penal camps. It must be remembered that such travel orders were not cancelled until the end of 1934.

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<sup>135</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>136</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

<sup>137</sup> Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s*, p.169.

<sup>138</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #2 "Ivan"."

<sup>139</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>140</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>141</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>142</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

Information passed on to Evhan in the Displaced Persons' camp after World War Two related a story about someone in the camp who would attempt to cross over the Ukrainian/Russian border during the Holodomor to obtain food for his family. Although this person was able to obtain some food, it was confiscated as soon as he crossed back into Ukraine. According to this person there was no famine in Russia. This was a shock for Evhan who had assumed until then that everyone had suffered the same fate across the entire Soviet Union.<sup>143</sup>

A unique outcome of trying to travel out of Ukraine was outlined by Halina who lived close to the Polish border and whose mother was able to obtain a special passport. The passport was required to show date of exit and also date of re-entry. It kept strict controls of movements and was only issued for special circumstances. This person did not remember what those circumstances were being so young at the time. A kind woman in the office handling such passports provided one for her mother as well as her. The woman allowed them to make the crossing and return with food for the family.<sup>144</sup> This was still a particularly harrowing experience, given the possibility of being caught. The mother would have to return because her entire family was in the village and she would not leave them at such a difficult time.

### **The plight of women**

Women were often exploited out of love and desperation for their family's plight, and gave sexual favors in return for food. Kuromiya, an historian of the USSR, in accessing testimonies, read about a wife who 'agreed to sleep with the plenipotentiary at night in return for a little flour in the morning'. The husband had tearfully recounted this situation to an interviewer, in his wife's presence.<sup>145</sup> The degradation and separation suffered by parents was probably witnessed by some but not understood by the young children at the time. Discussing such times, Julia remembers her sister and the tragic circumstances of their lives. She tries to focus on the present and put the past behind her. It was a past that could not be altered. She leaves the discussion for the historians. 'You know our fate and where we have been... and that's it', she said.<sup>146</sup>

Women were taken on as step mothers if not already married. Many of them were not much older than the children they cared for. Stefka spoke of her shame at the situation of her father marrying a dekulakized young woman after the death of her own mother from starvation.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."

<sup>144</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."

<sup>145</sup> Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s*, p.173.

<sup>146</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #11 "Julia"."

<sup>147</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

The starvation saw young women as well as children being handed over to uncles and aunts or friends to be taken care of, because the family was not able to provide for them.<sup>148</sup> Irka spent her life with her grandparents, with her parents only visiting spasmodically. This was her life until she was taken to Germany in 1943 as a forced labourer.<sup>149</sup>

As already mentioned many fathers were imprisoned, exiled, or committed suicide. Mothers were left alone and homeless with children facing the terror of the local militia.<sup>150</sup> It must have seemed as though there was no-one to protect them or their families.

There were also stories of heroism. The case of church bells in the village of Syniushyn Brod being taken down and earmarked for smelting was outlined by Pidhainy. Several hundred women arrived to surround the church and protest on the day that they were to be removed.<sup>151</sup> Boris a survivor, remembers another incident with women marching onto a collective farm in his village in 1932, and taking away the livestock and farm implements, and dragging it all back to the village. This 'rebellion' as he called it, lasted a week until it was 'liquidated'.<sup>152</sup>

### **Collection of dead bodies**

As people died of starvation wherever they were during the height of the Holodomor, a system began of collecting bodies by carts began each day. People were too weakened by hunger to bury the dead properly, with a service and in separate caskets. As has been noted, people not yet fully dead, were also sometimes thrown on the carts by those wishing to expedite matters.

People were dying faster than the Soviet authorities could deal effectively with their bodies. If anyone died in a gutter, and if someone had the strength to shovel dirt over them, they were buried where they lay.<sup>153</sup> There would be no-one to carry them to the cemetery.<sup>154</sup> Strangers did their best with whatever circumstances were at hand. Luba's parents remember this treatment. They suffered greatly, with a many of their relatives having perished and carted off

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<sup>148</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>149</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>150</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

<sup>151</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.226.

<sup>152</sup> Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 6: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."

<sup>153</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.631.

<sup>154</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."



in such a manner.<sup>155</sup> As Hanka remarked, 'they threw the corpse in like rubbish. Like the rubbish man who collects the rubbish and uncovers it and it all falls out'.<sup>156</sup>

Hanka recounts the cruel story related by a woman who, weakened by hunger, asked for a lift home on one of the transportation carts. The lady was asked where she lived.

They took her by the legs and by the arms and threw her onto the cart. She was crying, to be driven home. They said they would drive her. They drove the bodies to the cemetery, threw them off and then they threw her off. She begged them to take her home where she had children waiting at the kindergarten. They told her the children would stay there.<sup>157</sup>

The carts were often pulled by people, not by horses. Many horses perished during the Holodomor as fodder was consumed by the starving people. The horses were either killed for food or let loose because there was no feed for them.<sup>158</sup> Other livestock were also dying and could not be harnessed for such work. There would be people pulling the shafts in front and others pushing from the back. Stories of people being loaded on when not fully dead were common.<sup>159</sup> Evhan asked with incredulity in his voice, 'How can that be possible?'<sup>160</sup>

Sadly, people did not know where the corpses were being taken at times and thus any knowledge of where family might have been buried was lost forever. Bodies were removed out of homes without any ceremony and family members might return from the day's work on the collective farm to find people missing and their whereabouts lost.<sup>161</sup>

Some fortunate survivors knew where family members had been carted off to. Mila's sisters were able to inform her of the burial place of their parents. The sisters had told her that ground was made flat and covered over. As Mila said, 'They didn't make a burial mound. They didn't want others to know and didn't make a mound. It's not right'.<sup>162</sup> There were thousands of dead who were collected and 'buried in ditches like cats and dogs'.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila".

<sup>156</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila".

<sup>157</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka".

<sup>158</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.516.

<sup>159</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania".

<sup>160</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan".

<sup>161</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna".

<sup>162</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila".

<sup>163</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia".

The carts were also driven by local people who needed work. There was always a shortage of collection carts to keep up with the rate of daily deaths. Zoya's cousin in Kharkiv was such a driver during the Holodomor years. He drank so that he could do the work because it was so disturbing.<sup>164</sup> The guilt and sadness associated with such a role has its unique place in the history of the survivors. It would have contributed to the silence of not wishing to talk about the Holodomor, when people were not able to bury the dead traditionally.

### **Soviet prison camps**

Oleg Khlevnyuk, the senior researcher at the State Archive of the Russian Federation in Moscow, describes the exiled kulaks who had been jailed by the state as 'hungry, emaciated, and completely pauperized... who suffered the most during the terrible famine that peaked in the winter and spring of 1932-1933'.<sup>165</sup>

The Gulag was a very dangerous place for women who were sent there for crimes related to starvation during the Holodomor. Women faced rape and abuse from guards, camp employees and even male prisoners. No respite was afforded in the event of childbirth and their children were taken away, never to be found.<sup>166</sup>

Bohdan speaks of his father being taken to Siberia for some associated crime and being lost, never to return. Bohdan was also exiled to Siberia with his mother and six year old sister. The mother gathered food from the rubbish that she found and cooked it for her family. They also ate horses' hooves that were cooked day and night to make jellied meat.<sup>167</sup>

Other survivors also spoke of relatives being sent to Siberia.<sup>168</sup> Some such as Stefka's father managed to smuggle out a letter written in pencil on a piece of a cement bag. The father's letter got to the grandmother requesting that she send salt. It was later learnt by the family that teeth would fall out and people fell ill through lack of sufficient salt. The grandmother sent a parcel with salted fish as well as some salt but there was nothing else that could be sent because the grandparents had little themselves.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>165</sup> Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *The History of the Gulag: From Collectivization to the Great Terror*, trans. Vadim A. Staklo (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p.82.

<sup>166</sup> Schweitzer et al., "Trauma, Post-Migration Living Difficulties, and Social Support as Predictors of Psychological Adjustment in Resettled Sudanese Refugees."

<sup>167</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."

<sup>168</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>169</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

People in the interviews were cynical and would ask, 'Where could you escape the Holodomor? Go to Siberia or the Solovky islands?' in this cruel time. Fania stated that whatever happened to Ukrainians was so brutal that it would take generations to get over it.<sup>170</sup> The prison camps were the last stop for many of the dekulakized Ukrainians. They suffered the hardships along with the illnesses that came from living in such conditions and sadly perished in the camps.<sup>171</sup> Evhan was one of few survivors interviewed who was dekulakized to Siberia and actually survived.<sup>172</sup>

## Conclusion

During these turbulent years there was no access to records that might assist anyone to locate people displaced by the Holodomor and determine what happened to them.<sup>173</sup> The memories uncovered by the study of the Western Australian Ukrainian migrant refugees can be matched against those found in Pidhainy's collections of testimonies published in 1953, the U.S. Commission's testimonies and Kardash's more recent in 2007.<sup>174</sup> When the stories can be placed alongside and compared, to those sourced at different earlier times, it provides a measure of credibility that the memories of the survivors silenced for so long and living so far away in Western Australia are the same.

There is now a new dimension to the emerging facts related to this defining period of Ukraine's history with such interview data being collected. When placed in the context of emerging historical data it begins to provide a clearer picture of the outcomes of Stalin's Soviet policies and the ensuing consequence of the resulting starvation.

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<sup>170</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

<sup>171</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>172</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."

<sup>173</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>174</sup> Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*; Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*; United States. The Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, "Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: First Interim Report of Meetings and Hearings of and before the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine Held in 1986: Organizational Meeting, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1986: Meeting and Hearing, Washington, D.C., October 8, 1986: Hearing, Glen Spey, New York, October 26, 1986: Hearing, Chicago, Illinois, November 7, 1986: Hearing, Warren, Michigan, November."

## Chapter 5

### Memories of escaping the starvation

The issue of how people actually escaped starvation during the Holodomor is something that surfaced throughout the period of this study. In outlining the memories of the Ukrainian migrant refugees it became clear that there were specific themes common to most interviewees of having actually survived the years of hunger and famine. It was decided to group those memories separately in this chapter. These specific memories contribute to and enable the reader to somehow understand the horror and depravity that was forced upon these people during the years of the Holodomor and how some were able to live through it. Again the stories can be compared to similar published testimonies.<sup>1</sup>

A useful reference that specifically focused upon the food that sustained survivors was that of Ukrainian graphic artist Bondarenko. Born in the Sumy region, a region affected by the Holodomor, Bondarenko's linocuts were his attempt to remember those who perished there and in Soviet Ukraine during this tragedy. He questioned elderly people who had managed to survive the Holodomor and decided to portray pictures of the food that they were forced to eat rather than emaciated peasants. He also included the 'recipes and tools' used in preparing the 'food'. His graphic depiction of the Holodomor is a moving tribute but a particularly worthy inclusion in any reference list on the subject. It assisted in describing weeds and animals that were not common to this researcher.

After great stores of grain and foodstuffs were confiscated by Communist Party activists, and measures were put in place to stop Ukrainians from leaving their villages and towns to search for food, the people resorted to extreme measures for sustenance. The 'food' that people were forced to consume in order to survive gave great insight into their plight.

#### Escaping hunger

What we knew very well was that the famine seemed to be more in central Ukraine, and especially in the south. People from those parts were coming to our region, fleeing the

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<sup>1</sup> Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*; Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*; United States. The Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, "Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: First Interim Report of Meetings and Hearings of and before the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine Held in 1986: Organizational Meeting, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1986: Meeting and Hearing, Washington, D.C., October 8, 1986: Hearing, Glen Spey, New York, October 26, 1986: Hearing, Chicago, Illinois, November 7, 1986: Hearing, Warren, Michigan, November."

famine. This we knew. They were coming and working among us, lived among us. And we had a sort of saying: Oh, here's someone who's arrived from Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

Fedor lived in Chernihiv, in the north of Soviet Ukraine close to the Belarus border. This was a region where many Ukrainians had managed to somehow cross the border to escape starvation. Fedor said that this was a place that people came to in 'fleeing from the famine'. He remembers that his staple food was potatoes and that the potatoes saved the community from suffering severe effects of famine. He also speaks of the many forests of Belarus and those in the north of his region where there was an abundance of mushrooms and much fruit, as well as rabbits and other animals that could be hunted for food.

The Holodomor, did not permeate into this region, although Fedor states he knew about it from survivors arriving there to work and search for food. People told those in his village that everything was being taken from them, even from their own gardens. Most of the survivors stayed in this region with only a few leaving and moving on.<sup>3</sup> This was a place where starving Ukrainians found solace and food from the events further south.

Some people from the villages escaped to the cities where they managed to obtain some work. They were the lucky ones. Darka remembers that some of the people out of the fourteen houses in her village 'escaped to the city'. These people would send some 'dry bread in boxes for their family in the village'. 'It was like a biscuit but it was just bread'. It was almost with shame that people spoke of such issues and by speaking as if this occurred to others, they did not have to face the actual truth of their own experience.<sup>4</sup>

Fania speaks of some villagers being so unworldly that they had not ventured out of their villages or even seen a train. These people did not know what to do when faced with starvation.

People came from other villages either begging for food or brought something to sell, but other villagers were poor and they couldn't sell anything. They didn't sell because they didn't have much and it was expensive to buy.<sup>5</sup>

Fania's father managed to get to Belarus. He took whatever clothes they had in order to sell or exchange them and obtain some food for his family. She states that there was no famine in Belarus and that you could exchange clothing or whatever you had for precious grain or flour. He would get a ticket, travel there and return with something. Corrupt officials were soon

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<sup>2</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #13 "Fedor"."

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>5</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

exploited by the smart ones desperate for their families. This was very dangerous behaviour, for if he was caught, he would have had everything confiscated and could be imprisoned. The survivor spoke of the risk of being accosted by other people doing the same. She said:

If you came across someone they could attack you and take away everything. It was a risk with no certainty that one could go and bring something back. It was possible that one would go and never come back. But people risked this.<sup>6</sup>

The risk of getting out of Ukraine in order to obtain food for families was great. Although the Communists had closed down the borders, some managed to get to Russia where 'it was easier to find food'.<sup>7</sup> Corruption could be helpful in times like these. Lesia's mother took such risks for her family until one fateful day when her efforts were to be thwarted by an accident.

Mother was on the train and unfortunately an accident occurred and the train crashed. In that train there were one or two carriages where people from Ukraine were going to Russia. On the train was all that had been stolen from Ukraine. There were two freight carriages with timber, loaded with such big cut tree trunks. They were being taken to a factory or something. That train was sent off the rails. It is very hard for me to speak about it. When it was sent off the rails, people started jumping off the two carriages and those tree trunks fell right on them. My mother did and was maimed.<sup>8</sup>

The mother was somehow pulled out of the carnage and was taken away by some people. She was terribly injured and lay in bed for six months in someone else's home. The family did not know what had happened to their mother. During that time there wasn't much to eat for the family. The mother eventually healed and arrived back home. She urged the family to leave for Russia during the Holodomor because she saw that life was better there and, they could have whatever they wanted. She knew that they would die of starvation if they remained in Ukraine.<sup>9</sup>

Lesia's father also decided that they should leave Ukraine. It was agreed that the wife would travel back from Russia with food and necessities for her brother's two children who were motherless. It was simpler for her to travel alone but, as Lesia said;

When she went there it was dangerous. People would kill for a piece of bread, and she [mother] couldn't go on her own. Someone had to look after her, because otherwise the starvation was so bad that you yourself could be eaten.<sup>10</sup>

With the collective farms it was expected that everyone would work and receive their contribution of food. Every little bit was a help from the hunger. The authorities would not let

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

anyone seed their own little plots of land if they had any. Ella's mother took the risk and planted potatoes so that they would have something. They managed to save some young potatoes before the rest were confiscated.<sup>11</sup>

Danylo remembers people leaving the village looking for food. They could not go anywhere because their father had disappeared. He was almost fourteen years old at the time and everyone in his family had to work on the collective farm in order to be fed. They did eventually leave however for there was not enough to sustain the family and it was decided to move on as was the case with kurkuls. It was in the winter, very cold with snow on the ground. They took a sleigh and he remembers it being extremely cold as they traveled for fifteen kilometers. His mother told him to get off the sleigh and run after it to warm up.

I started running and then I saw the sleigh so far away that I got scared because I couldn't run that fast. There was no road, and I was so scared. I'll never forget it. I remember how I was running and how mother told me to get off so that I could get warm because it was very cold.

It was snowing, Epiphany, January 19, when water is consecrated, and we were leaving on that day. Mother took some consecrated water and garlic that she had hidden. We were to eat it (garlic) every day to prevent illnesses.<sup>12</sup>

Others remember people leaving to search for food elsewhere. Suzanna, Petro and Zoya all spoke of this in their interviews. Again it was unclear whether they were specifically referring to their own families or about others in their villages.<sup>13</sup> As previously mentioned one could hide in the Donbas in the Donetsk Basin where coal was mined and where no-one checked your papers, you earned some money, but you lived in extremely difficult circumstances.<sup>14</sup>

Survival often came with separation. Parents were faced with the dilemma of their families perishing through starvation or perhaps their children surviving by being left with relatives. Mykola was taken by his mother to stay with a Polish lady. This lasted for some time. The uncle's father was Polish. He had been killed in the Civil war around 1921 because he had a mill and a lot of land that had been confiscated during these years. Mykola's mother remained alone and worked on a collective farm. When the Polish uncle heard that he was not going to school he arranged for the boy to go and stay with him. This man was twenty-five kilometers away and Mykola's mother took him there. He had no shoes, no trousers and it was winter. Everything had been taken away from them. That uncle had work with some Jewish friends in

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<sup>11</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

<sup>12</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."

<sup>13</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>14</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

town and he had a little apartment there. He was able to clothe Mykola and sent him to school with new documents. He escaped the hunger and starvation with his benevolent uncle.<sup>15</sup>

Taras survived and moved back to his village after the Holodomor with his family. They had fled to the Caucasus to survive the famine before the border closures. Upon their return they found that many people, close friends, had died. He was young at the time and did not realize the significance of this. His father went to work at the collective farm when they got back and was appointed the head, so they lived reasonably comfortably. The grandmother who refused to accompany them to the Caucasus died during the Holodomor.<sup>16</sup>

Another family that made their way to the Caucasus was Zirka's. Her father was also the first to go, with the family following. They had a twelve kilometer trek to the train station in the winter snow. There was straw in the fields when they were leaving. Armed people, not always militia, were watching, so that people did not run away from the villages. They were escaping and in fear of being caught. The mother hid her family in the straw along the way to avoid detection. The family finally covered the twelve kilometers and caught a train to Odessa. They journeyed by boat to the Caucasus to join the father. There they escaped the starvation for the duration of the Holodomor.<sup>17</sup> Stories such as this were ones of courage to save a family.

### **Factory workers**

Many people survived by going to the towns looking for work in the factories, as it was a means of receiving a monetary payment rather than harvested items that may or may not be forthcoming.<sup>18</sup> Mykola speaks of hunger being a problem everywhere but he notes that as well as being paid with currency if you worked in the factories, you might also receive a piece of precious bread.<sup>19</sup> Theodora, born in 1909, worked at a plant where they were actually provided with soup for breakfast.

As for the starving people from villages ... we were sitting at tables and they [the starving, jobless] were standing in front of us and waiting until we finished eating that soup. The soup was so watery, we could drink it from the plate and they were standing there. When we finished eating they would rush to the plate in a crowd to lick it. That's true.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>16</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #39 "Taras"."

<sup>17</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>18</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>19</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."



It was only the workers who were provided with soup. The people who came to lick plates were simply the starving who waited anywhere it was known that food was available. The survivor said that there were many such people.<sup>21</sup>

When people arrived at the work plant in the mornings, there was a tunnel to go through to get to their workstations. The starving beggars would also try to also walk through to get inside the factory. Some actually stumbled and dropped dead from starvation. The foreman would make a worker collect the dead bodies. Theodora was called upon to do this. She was weak with hunger herself and not a particularly big woman and physically couldn't pick up dead bodies and would actually say that she couldn't do that job.<sup>22</sup>

The only positive aspect of working at the factory was that Theodora received eight hundred grams of bread and that made her life somewhat easier. However, the reason that she was there was because her family had been dekulakized and she herself had been exiled to Siberia for some time.<sup>23</sup>

Halina confirms the need to pay for the food in the factories. 'They paid wages but you had to pay for any food. There was no other work'.<sup>24</sup> Bread was the staple craved by everyone.

## **Bread**

Bread was spoken of repeatedly by many interviewed survivors. Bread was the staple and yet in the 'bread basket of Europe' it was denied to the very people who grew the grain. The following account retells the lengths to which children went to find some bread to eat. Marika was a twin whose father worked as a driver for a doctor. He actually lived at the doctor's premises as well. The father earned enough to sustain himself, but no more for his wife and family. He did not share what he earned with his family either. For children it must have been difficult to comprehend how a parent would not take care of them with the basic provision of food. This person actually tearfully lamented that fact.

But there was no food. Oh God. My twin and I – at home – well what can you do - stick to those walls when there is nothing – no food, no drinks? Let's go to our father. We went to him but he was not there. He had gone to the village. The door was open so we went into the house. Father had some bread and he had some jam. We took it and ran away. There were some bushes near our father's place. We sat down and ate the bread and jam and brought the rest home and hid it. In a few days our father came. Were you there? he asked. No.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."

We got into everything because we were the youngest and we were hungry. If we were not hungry we wouldn't have gone there [to the father's room] and stolen the food.

Well he didn't say anything. They [the doctor and the father] began to lock doors. After a few days, well where will we go [for food]? We will go to our father's place. We got there, he wasn't there and the door was closed... So we got in through the window and stole the bread again. But we didn't take it all. We broke some off and left a piece. They came back and saw that someone had been in and left just a piece of bread. Again they locked up everything, the windows, the doors - we couldn't get in there again.<sup>25</sup>

And so another source of food was closed off to the starving girls.

Hanka describes in some detail and with much indignation the story of how she had her meager portion of watery soup and a piece of black bread (indicated as less than a slice of bread) literally taken from underneath her nose by another little boy who was already swollen from hunger.<sup>26</sup> In some kindergartens and schools they gave out bread each day. It was usually around 200grams of heavy rye bread called 'palanytsya'. Hanka was given this and a glass of water with a little milk poured into it making a soup. This survivor would carefully crumble the bread into tiny pieces and put some of them into the water, with the rest to be saved for later in the day. She was very specific in describing this procedure, a daily ritual that she savoured.<sup>27</sup>

As a little child Hanka realized that a boy was looking to steal her 'soup'. He was starving and positioned himself underneath the table and swiftly reached up with one hand and grabbed the crumbed bread that she was saving for later. Hanka remembers being extremely upset, fully understanding that although this precious food was all she had for the day but that unlike her this little boy would not be getting anything as he did not belong to that kindergarten attached to the collective farm.

Hanka remembered crying with anger and explained that the boy had been picking up tiny crumbs off the floor as he was so hungry. He was removed by an adult who asked Hanka why she had given the bread to him. The survivor went on to describe in great detail how one didn't actually drink this soup but one licked it so as to extend and savour the experience.

Darka states that if you had enough bread then you were happy.<sup>28</sup> Bread was life. The researcher remembered herself as a child in Western Australia being chided for throwing

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<sup>25</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>26</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>27</sup> Morgan

<sup>28</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

away left over bread by her very frugal mother. It was a sin to waste food but bread seemed to elicit the worst anger.

Lesia also recounts a tale of stealing bread that had affected her as a child. Her family lived in a single room after having been thrown out of their home. Her mother instructed her to remain inside when she was eating any bread that they may have acquired. On one occasion she went out and a man passing by snatched her piece of bread out of her hands. On hearing her crying her mother ran out and comforted her but told her little daughter to leave the poor fellow alone. 'Leave him alone. He's poor, he's got nothing'. On hearing those words the man stopped and began to cry. 'You know,' he said, 'I took the bread from the child because I haven't had any for months and I only live on loboda [a plant like weed in Ukraine]'.<sup>29</sup> Lesia discussed this plant 'loboda' that was mentioned by Bondarenko in discussing plant life that sustained people during the Holodomor.<sup>30</sup> Lesia spoke of how scared she was when the bread was snatched out of her hand. At this point she spoke in a sad, resigned voice: 'What do these Australians know? They know nothing, they don't have a clue', referring to the Holodomor.<sup>31</sup>

People would come begging from house to house looking for bread that didn't exist.<sup>32</sup> They came from the starving villages hoping to find a job that might give them bread as payment.<sup>33</sup> Zoya's mother knew many people at the train station who were able to sometimes help her with pieces of bread, potatoes. She wasn't sure that her mother was actually given or had to pay in some way for what she acquired. There still seemed to be good people who helped others during the Holodomor.<sup>34</sup>

Because everyone was expected to work in order to receive the requisite piece of bread it was made extremely difficult for women who had given birth or were caring for young children. Although the penalties were severe if directives were disobeyed, Larissa said that her husband had stood up to the authorities and firmly told them that his wife needed to look after their child and could not work. Her husband worked and received a tiny piece of bread for his hard effort. The wife and grandmother received nothing. The father would leave the bread for his young son whom he felt was needier than him.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."

<sup>30</sup> Bondarenko, "Ukraine 1933: A Cookbook. Linocuts by Mykola Bondarenko."

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."

<sup>32</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>33</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>34</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>35</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa"."

In order to receive bread people in the cities were required to queue for it. ‘If you wanted bread you had to stand in the queue. Everywhere in Kharkiv there were queues, queues, queues all the time’, said Irka.<sup>36</sup> This changed after the Holodomor, when people were able to obtain bread. It was white bread, considered better than the rye bread. Irka’s grandmother used to kiss the bread. Her mother used to put it in the oven, dry it, cut it into pieces and put it in sacks to store it. The mother was worried that something else might happen and they would be faced with more starvation. They would always be prepared for that eventuality and so she would hide the bread.<sup>37</sup>

Irka spoke of working in a hospital in Western Australia, well after the Holodomor and World War Two and having to feed the patients. If some patients left part of their meal, the nursing sister at the time would dispose of it. The survivor would be horrified and began to take it home and feed the chickens. She could not bear to see it thrown out into the rubbish and would often remark that it was a sin to throw out food. Every morsel was used in some way.<sup>38</sup>

Halena remembers getting bread from the station by lining up with work coupons (both her parents worked).<sup>39</sup> People would be given 200 grams per day for work. This was required to feed the family, including the elderly grandparents who were living with the family.<sup>40</sup> Some areas, where Halena was, provided school children with a piece of bread. Most children saved it up to take home and share with their family. Because she was head of the class Halena was able to get a few extra pieces which she always took home and gave to her parents.<sup>41</sup>

The joy of picking out the soft inside flesh of a fresh loaf of bread is a sensation most people can relate to. Even if the flesh was not of the type that we might expect today. Marika’s story of bread collection is poignant in the context of the Holodomor.

We walked two kilometers to town for bread. We got up at two am in the morning and walked the two kilometers for bread. Mother, my sister and I stood in lines. I stood in one place, mother in another and the sister in another. We could not stand together for they would not give you the bread. We stood. Mother took some bread, I took some bread and my sister also took some bread... The bread wasn’t worth anything but it was like bread– it was baked from something like straw, sawdust (usually discarded on gardens/fields)... We arrived at home. Mother brought out the bread and put it on the table and asked ‘Well where is your bread?’ Only the crust was left. It was soft – we walked and picked and picked and, my sister and I ate it... We were smacked. It is

<sup>36</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

<sup>40</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>41</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

not only for you it is for others. ... If you don't go for bread then you won't eat. We had to go but how often we got a smack for going for bread but only bringing home the crust.<sup>42</sup>

Most stories discussing bread, however, noted that children brought the bread or any foodstuffs home and gave it to their parents to deal with. There was the understanding with even very young children that the situation was very grave and that the parents would control the distribution of food for the family, if they were to survive.<sup>43</sup> Yurko remarked that 'No-one died in my family. We had bread'.<sup>44</sup> Orysia stated that they were all hungry and, if you were lucky enough to get some bread you didn't chew it, you sucked it.<sup>45</sup>

Josep remembers as a seven-year-old boy everyone focused on giving up bread and grain to the government. 'God forgive anyone who retained bread', he said. He remembers how people would hide grain if they could and try to sow it in the spring. He spoke of hiding the covered up grain mill. It shocked him that they were required to give up the mills (grinders) as well as any bread to the government even though people were dying from hunger.<sup>46</sup>

Although people might have been fortunate to somehow get bread, there were many cases, if they did finally obtain some, they died soon after consuming it. A starving person would eat the bread so fast they could actually die from it.<sup>47</sup>

### **Food available**

As for eating, it was something horrible. It was really something horrible – this dirt, this grass and weeds were mowed on meadows, thrown into a pan, boiled and given us to eat.<sup>48</sup>

In eighty unique linocuts, Bondarenko describes the preparation of thistles (budyake), clover leaves (konyushena), poppy seed (makuha), orach (loboda); bare corn cobs; birch bark (bereza); willow leaves (lestya verbi); nettle leaves (kropeva lestya) as well as the total consumption of cats, dogs and birdlife.<sup>49</sup> In fact anything that moved or had died, such as dead horses, was consumed. This was the type of 'food' that the Western Australia migrant refugees spoke of, that sustained them.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>43</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

<sup>44</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."

<sup>45</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."

<sup>46</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>47</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>48</sup> Grinchenko, "Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich: Remembering and Forgetting as the Strategies of Survival", p.3.

<sup>49</sup> Bondarenko, "Ukraine 1933: A Cookbook. Linocuts by Mykola Bondarenko." (No pagination in text)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

When we came back from the Caucasus (after the Holodomor had ended), we didn't see a dog or a cat anywhere. They had all been eaten by people.<sup>51</sup>

Stefka also noted that there were no cats or dogs to be seen on the streets during these years.<sup>52</sup>

During the winter of 1932-1933, some schools served breakfast to children, consisting of a little rye flour mixed with water. This was salted, boiled and called 'zatirka'. Two hundred to three hundred grams was given to each child. It was like a thin gruel, much like what the farmers might have fed their pigs before the Holodomor. Slowly in spring some sorrel was added and later some potatoes.<sup>53</sup> This became the only meal for many children and was mentioned by the Ukrainian migrants in their interviews.<sup>54</sup>

Just like dogs, when they eat dry biscuits, the latter swell in the stomach; so those flour rubbings, (zatirke), also filled our stomachs.<sup>55</sup>

Another food item called makuha was available for some time and was described as a kind of fodder for cattle. It was made by pressing sunflower seeds and removing the oil. What is left is a kind of 'cake' in pieces. It was often fed to the animals but became part of the diet of the starving until the sunflowers were eaten.<sup>56</sup> It was not substantial but it served its purpose for the time that it lasted.

One thing that stood out in the study was every item of food that was spoken of was stated in specific measurements. There was a preoccupation with the measurement of food that was reflective of the Communists control of everything, to the last grain.

Survivors spoke of 'kindergartens' which were a loose interpretation of places attached to a collective farm. These places were primarily to baby-sit the very young who could not be relegated to work on the collective farm. If children had been orphaned they might also be taken in by the 'kindergarten'. There were different age groups of children and a form of schooling was conducted there. The children received one meal during the day and only for the duration of the Holodomor. That would seem to be an admission in itself that starvation was a problem for authorities to be providing foodstuffs of some kind. Children could be

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<sup>51</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>52</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>53</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book, Vol. Two. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932-1933*, p.574.

<sup>54</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>56</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."

moulded into good communists if they were to survive, otherwise why provide any foodstuffs for them at all.

They gave a watery soup... half a glass of water and they poured a little milk in it and a piece of bread, like this [survivor indicates less than a slice]. Black bread. They gave this to you...<sup>57</sup>

You ate a little bit of soup and then half an hour later you were hungry again. We used to pick all sorts of berries out in the forest.<sup>58</sup>

Darka's father tended the horses on the collective farm while her mother worked in the fields. Some women were relegated to milking the cows. Of course when they were not being observed they would drink some milk (Darka gestured how to steal a drink of milk whilst milking).<sup>59</sup> Sometimes the horses would be given a type of grain to help strengthen them as fodder was also scarce. The father would take a handful of this grain and smuggle it home to his family where it was boiled to feed them. Occasionally Darka's aunt would arrive with some small 'platsky' (pancakes) that she might have cooked from weeds. This aunt lived a little better, because 'her husband was a Communist Party member'.<sup>60</sup>

Other collective farm workers were fed a type of bullion soup or potato soup during harvest times. This soup was cooked from wheat and prepared near the threshing machines whilst they worked.<sup>61</sup> Thin watery soup was the mainstay during the Holodomor and made in different ways. Parents went to great lengths to hide anything that they might have from their neighbours. Any grain that they might acquire would be stealthily buried so as to avoid exposure by equally starving neighbours.

Nina's mother began to hide in the ground what little she could find or prepare when spring arrived. She as others including Danylo also spoke of seeing people eating cats to survive.<sup>62</sup> She remembers people being caught for stealing the new emerging ears of wheat. They were imprisoned. Others would search for the forgotten or missed frozen beetroot in the soil.

People search for something, anything... the worst was winter... when summer came, in the forest there were wild apples, you know, all kinds of fruit... people began to revive a bit, but the winter was very hard.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>58</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>59</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."

<sup>62</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."

<sup>63</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

Nina said how lucky her family was that the authorities didn't take their cow and that there was still grass to feed this cow. She remembers that those who had chickens had to give away the eggs. They would be in trouble if the chickens were not laying. Those with pigs were required to provide the meat after slaughter and so on. Nina's father slaughtered their remaining piglet whilst still young and hid the meat from the Communist activists collecting the quotas. When questioned where his pig was, he lied and told them that it was small and, because they had nothing to feed it, it died.<sup>64</sup>

Darka also remembers the kindness of an old lady who lived next door and who took an interest in her family when the mother had died. She would cook up hot potatoes and come with some for her. She also collected peas and honey and would bring them combs of honey on a plate.<sup>65</sup> This was unusual in neighbours during such difficult times but for some reason not understood by young children at the time, this old lady had enough for herself, and shared what she could with a motherless family.<sup>66</sup>

Constipation was a sad outcome of the diet that was endured by the Ukrainians during this period. Darka did not speak at length of the food that they ate, however, it was because of her constipation that she was reminded of the pancakes that her mother used to make out of wheat husks mixed with water. These would be baked in the oven and provide a staple for the family. It seemed to relieve the symptoms of constipation. Darka's mother and Irka's grandmother were also able to somehow acquire a goat that served to sustain their families with milk and cheese.<sup>67</sup>

Marko noted specifically that it was because of his mother that the family survived. He would line up daily for bread if there was any, and knew many people at the local station who were better off. They shared whatever they had with his mother. Bread could be bought with coupons from work or by selling personal items for currency. He mentioned potatoes as one item that was shared by some of the station employees. The family was a big one and everyone did their share to help the mother provide for the family.<sup>68</sup> Marko lamented at the activities of the authorities in treating the Ukrainians working on the collective farms:

Oh-oh-oh. It's such a tragedy, so hard to speak about. To imagine people, hard-working people, grain-growers, who grew wheat, [were deprived of that] and it was sold abroad. At our station there was 'Sovpoltorg' [Soviet-Polish Trade]. They bought

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>68</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."



chickens which were processed and the chicken meat sent abroad, with nothing left for us. They gave us nothing. We couldn't buy meat, they didn't sell it.<sup>69</sup>

'Mamalegga' was a kind of corn meal that was available to some survivors. Djenia's mother had little to give her children who were crying for food. They ate whatever she could provide and in winter that included leaves from trees.<sup>70</sup>

Horse meat and old grass were on the menu in Irka's house. She remembers being woken up in the middle of the night to share some honey that her father had buried. He had kept bees at some stage. She was so sleepy that she couldn't swallow it. The family tried not to alert the neighbours that they had something to eat and so stealthily dug up the honey and consumed it in the dead of the night. She also spoke of many people coming to her village from other villages searching for food. It was especially sad at the train station where many gathered begging for food. Irka remembers going herself to cry at the station. Because many other people were begging for food no-one took any notice of her. Everyone was desperate to find something to eat, rather than bothering with a little girl crying.<sup>71</sup>

Geese were aplenty in Ukrainian villages before the Holodomor. One survivor lived in Poltava, a place heavily affected by the Holodomor. When it became clear what the authorities were doing her father had hidden some slaughtered goose meat which fed them for a short time. He received food at his workplace and was fortunate to be given some portions of beef or pork. As he did not need it at home, the family was able to benefit from the extra rations.<sup>72</sup>

By the end of 1933, fruit began to ripen and vegetables began to grow and, there was again enough of everything with the severe restrictions finally lifted.<sup>73</sup> The worst of the restrictions had ended by March of that year, however, people were severely starved and were consuming anything they could, including grinding bones into flour, digging up roots and catching mice, rats, ants and earthworms.<sup>74</sup>

The Holodomor saw great variations in how children were cared for by families and how they battled against great odds at times to stay alive, when it seemed that they had been abandoned by their own parents. It had been clear from the onset of the interview with Marika that her

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>71</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>72</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing*, p.157.

situation had been particularly harsh. Her parents had seemingly abandoned the children and they were left to forage for themselves with no evident assistance from either parent. She spoke of finding some corn in the attic of the house they were living in during the early part of the famine years.

[Her sister] found this corn and said, what are we going to do, there is no wood? But at home the mattresses were made of straw. We could pull out the straw, light it in the stove and cook the corn. ... We ate the corn, drank some water because mother took the milk to the market in the morning. She sold it to buy some needed kerosene, salt ... Mother worked at the collective farm and she ate the pork and potatoes that they cooked there – she ate that but, us ... [she swallowed hard at this point, implying that there was nothing for the children]... Everywhere on the farms, people would go looking – we would bring those potatoes that were collected, remove the skin and put them in the pot but, oh the worms were huge! Well when you threw them in the water they would rise up. We would drain that water and put the potatoes through a sieve and with the flour from the husks we would throw it all together with salt, mix it and cook the potato pancakes. We would eat it all... It was winter and we badly wanted to eat. Let's eat the onions. There was onion. I will never, ever, forget that onion. After onion you just want to eat badly. Well, I would have eaten needles. In spring we went gathering 'grass' that was growing. It was a little like some sort of grass. When you looked out there were people everywhere – they were gathering this grass to cook soup. My God!<sup>75</sup>

Marika's father worked for the doctor and her mother worked on a collective farm and fed there. She was not able to bring food home. Like other collective farm workers they were fed but for their children there was nothing. And yet some other people stole whatever they could in order to feed their families. Evhan remembered that 'we survived only on what my father took from the collective farm and hid, so we survived'.<sup>76</sup>

Marika spoke scathingly about people these days not eating potatoes that were burnt a little by the sun. She spoke of how theirs were actually rotten and riddled with worms because it was winter and they were searching for and digging them out of the snow. 'Whatever you ate, you ate and survived', were her last words on the topic.<sup>77</sup>

Sometimes the worst outcome actually worked in a child's favor. It was a story that had the researcher listen and re-listen to the taped interview in order to ensure that the translation was correct. Ella explained that for a period of nine months during the Holodomor she was fed by her father who was in prison for bringing home remnants off building sites. He had been a builder. Her mother would put her on a train and she would visit him in prison where he would feed her. There was a reminiscent laugh at the absurdity of the situation.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>76</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."

<sup>77</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>78</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

At least... at least they had soup. At least they fed them in prison... but we didn't have anything. Stalin took everything away.<sup>79</sup>

When released, her father took care of some of the searching for food. She noted that the situation was worse in winter, but in summer he was able to find some 'loboda', or goosefoot weed, and would make soup out of this.<sup>80</sup>

Survivors who were old enough to be conscripted into the army during the Holodomor would speak of not facing starvation. Yurko remembers that people died in his village area. He states the figure of about five thousand. His family lived through the Holodomor but there were many deaths in the village. He spoke of the family being able to get milk and bread with family 'connections' and repeated that no-one died in his family. His brother was 'with the Soviets' which was taken to mean he was a Communist Party member, and he was in the army where he was fed.<sup>81</sup>

Those holding responsible positions on collective farms fared better than the workers. An accountant would be provided for in a superior way because of his position and the family would benefit from extra food that this person would be offered. Josep specifically notes that this was the situation with his grandfather. It meant that unlike most people in his village, they didn't need to kill their only cow for food, they were able to keep it and benefit from the milk.<sup>82</sup>

Cows were clearly valuable beasts. They sustained families and provided essential nutrients for growing children. Other families had their cows taken.

We were allowed one cow, but they took away horses and two other cows. It was good that at least one cow was left, because Mother, whatever she had, gave everything to her children. Because one child was only two, he lived only on milk. I was six.<sup>83</sup>

katerina speaks of springtime and some 'green stuff' growing, perhaps sorrel. The mother of this survivor gathered those leaves and cooked and fried what she could. When they went out the mother would say, 'Don't tell other children what you ate, because other children don't even have that'. This mother cooked patties from the weeds and some sort of soup, but if they were going in the street, the mother would tell the children, 'Don't tell anyone what you ate

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."

<sup>82</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>83</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

because other people will come and take your mother away, or kill her, or something else, God forbid'.<sup>84</sup> The fear was over weeds. This survivor, as others, struggled to tell her story.

Sunflowers often grew wild in gardens. Luba's family ate the seed from the heads until the plants were depleted.<sup>85</sup> It was one of the only foods that sustained them.

Cannibalism was perhaps the worst aspect of the Holodomor. Danylo spoke about this being a fact of life during the Holodomor. It did not stop with children, however, for people ate the dead flesh of family members no matter what the age. It is a horrific aspect of this research that one must note that human flesh was in fact one of the ways that sustained these unfortunate peasants in such drastic times.

The stories reflecting the consumption of milk, pieces of bread, grass, weeds such as nettles, hidden foodstuffs, dead animals, tree roots, leaves, lime tree blossom for tea and any rotten vegetable that could be found or stolen from collective farms, abound in the interviews.<sup>86</sup> There were stories that sometimes defied belief and illustrated the desperation of hunger.

Suzanna remembers being so hungry that she and her brother took a belt belonging to their father, lit a fire, held this belt over the fire until it melted and became soft, then chewed on it. The two children could not bring themselves to owning up about what they had done, but their father had guessed. What could he say or do? He himself would be collecting grass and any corn seeds that might have been left in the fields for his family. This interviewee lamented that they were lucky now to have everything they needed to live life, but they were too old to enjoy it.<sup>87</sup>

An interesting story of survival in Odessa oblast came to light where an abundance of hedgehogs were the target of the starving. Everything had been depleted including what Mykola said were 'the good horses'. This man's mother used to catch hedgehogs, slaughter them and cook the meat for her family. When he spoke of this it was with some incredulity in his voice. This mother needed to resort to something, for she was fed at the collective farm but he was denied maize soup at school, because his father had been dekulakized.<sup>88</sup> He resorted to stealing in order to sustain life and help his mother. There were mills in his village that were targeted by children:

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."

<sup>86</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>87</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

<sup>88</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

At school they all knew about it – everyone knew about it, but most importantly, all their parents – they were all enemies of the state [according to the authorities]. Everyone used to steal from the mills.<sup>89</sup>

Dolot in his own testimonial publication describes hungry people being tormented by the thought of food.<sup>90</sup> When children watched parents suffer or die and knew that they also faced an agonizing death from hunger, they developed the courage to steal, such were the effects of starvation.<sup>91</sup>

Mykola speaks of harvested grain being left to rot. He remembers joining some other hungry children who had broken a window to access a grain storage building. It was, in fact, the local post office that had been converted (as were churches at the time) and used for storage purposes, because the train station was too far away to transport the grain. Someone threw a stone through a second floor window and rye began to pour out. This man, a child at the time, quickly took off his cap and filled it with the pouring rye, and then ran to avoid being caught by the guards. He remembers that when he got home his ears had ‘nearly frozen off’ but ‘everyone at home was overjoyed’.<sup>92</sup>

Some survivors believed the reason their family had some food while others died of starvation during the Holodomor, was because their parents must have been members of the Communist Party. Maria remembered her father never being home but he was able to travel. The father had told his mother that he was an agent. Of what, she was not told. The survivor believes he held a state job of some kind because he was able to get food from state suppliers without any problems. The grandmother never spoke about the father work or why they were allowed to keep their farm and grow everything on it. This may explain why some people such as an elderly neighbour were able to help out children left without parents. And why their gardens were not raided for fear of arrest for theft. In the short interview that was had with her she said ‘Now I understand more than I did then’.<sup>93</sup> This explained her reluctance to speak at length of her memories although what she did share was pointed.

Grandparents often lived with and were the responsibility of the family in Ukraine. During the Holodomor this was a heavy burden for those trying to escape and the elderly refusing to go with them:

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Dolot, *Execution by Hunger. The Hidden Holocaust*, p.141-43.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.161.

<sup>92</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

Those who could hide something somewhere did - like between two walls. My father did that for my grandmother so that she could have something to eat. He hid two buckets of wheat. She died but didn't open them. She left him a letter saying that she knew he would come back home, and didn't want to involve him in any problem if the grain was found.<sup>94</sup>

This old grandmother knew that if and when the survivor's father was able to return to his home (he had been dekulakized) and they had found the hidden wheat, he would have been sent straight back to prison or worse, executed. The father believed that his mother chose to die rather than implicate her son. It was the supreme act of selflessness.

The Ukrainians had only their own immediate family for help and support during the Holodomor. Teenagers went to work on the collective farms not only to be fed but to help feed their younger siblings left at home. Mila's elder sister who was sixteen did precisely that. She would save her slice of bread given once a day with soup for her three year old sibling. She eventually went to live with another family in order to care for their newborn child. They were in a better position and helped her as a hungry child. She believed that she would have died if not for this arrangement and the kindness of the other family.<sup>95</sup>

### **Torgsin stores**

The trade syndicate Torgsin stores, were where real gold, silver, jewelry or other quality items could be exchanged for food. The wealth of Ukraine was stripped by the Soviet regime, as Ukrainians used every last valuable item they possessed in exchange for food. This appears to be part of the Soviet plan. The resolution 'On creating the all-Ukrainian Torgsin office' was passed on 29 June 1932.<sup>96</sup> As Stefka states, people would go to the Torgsin store (Soviet contraction for 'Torgovlia Inostrantsami' or, trade with foreigners shop) with gold to buy all manner of goods.<sup>97</sup> It was starving peasants not foreigners who were the customers.<sup>98</sup>

Although interviewees mentioned the Torgsin stores it should be noted that they have recently become a topic for discussion amongst Ukrainian scholars. Oleh Nadosha and Volodymyr Honsky discuss the notion 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'. They called it 'a gold rush... Communist style'. People received coupons for their precious jewelry which

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<sup>94</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>95</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>96</sup> Oleh Nadosha and Volodymyr Honsky, "Holodomor Was Not Only 7 Million Lives but Also 66 Tons of Gold, 1,439 Tons of Silver as Well as Diamonds and Antiquities," *Ukrainian Genocide Journal: History of the Holodomor 1932-1933*, 11th March 2007.

<sup>97</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>98</sup> Nadosha and Honsky, "Holodomor Was Not Only 7 Million Lives but Also 66 Tons of Gold, 1,439 Tons of Silver as Well as Diamonds and Antiquities."

they could exchange later for food. Sometimes this exchange would take months. Those people with coupons often died before they could redeem their coupons for food. Eye witness accounts note starving people dying, waiting in kilometer long lines to get to the Torgsins. They often died after they subsequently received food.<sup>99</sup>

Vasyl Marochko states this gold was ‘a dangerous asset because it was part of sacred spiritual traditions... family valuables, crosses, wedding rings, baptismal crosses’, handed down through the generations and part of the national spirit. The Communist Party revenue from transacting with Ukrainians during this time was on a massive scale. In 1931, it was estimated that six million karbovanets (hard currency) was earned by Torgsins. By 1932, it was fifty million and 107 million by 1933.<sup>100</sup>

Stefka’s mother had some gold earrings. During the Holodomor her grandmother told her mother to take them out because someone could rip them out of her ears. Her father cut them in half. Her mother traded them at the Torgsin store and purchased up to two kilo of flour.<sup>101</sup> Stefka’s mother would go to the Torgsin store at a time when people wouldn’t see her, to trade what she had for flour. With gold they wouldn’t die stated Stefka. That’s all her mother had. She states that they weren’t wealthy but they used all they had.<sup>102</sup>

Mother took along her only jewelry, such a precious necklace and everything... those bloody Soviets opened a shop, it was called the Torgsin... It was good, because you could get bread there, a loaf of bread for a gold ring or something else. They tried to acquire all the gold that people had... I survived, because my mother was exchanging gold and other things in the Torgsin to buy a piece of bread.<sup>103</sup>

The food that was available at the Torgsin stores was of the highest quality. Zoya remembers her mother taking not only valuable gold and silver jewelry but also the silver cutlery for a kilo of flour, half a kilo of sugar, a lump of butter and cereal. The flour was white and not like flour that they had ever seen. The Soviet government ‘wringed valuables from people, because whoever had anything, took it there to the Torgsin store, to save their family’.<sup>104</sup>

## **Conclusion**

This chapter provides a comprehensive outline of foodstuffs and measures that survivors’ families were forced to undertake in order to survive the Holodomor. It is clear that those

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."

<sup>104</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

families with some valuable household and personal items, or links to more official government work, were able to access more grain and foodstuffs.



## Chapter 6

### Memories of life after the Holodomor

As the Holodomor came to an end at the end of 1933, when Stalin put an end to the grain requisitioning, Ukrainians, already weakened from famine, were to face another repressive period in the history of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> The mid-1930s marked a radical shift in Stalin's power. According to Eric Weitz, Stalin 'took immense interest in the proceedings of political show trials and signed tens of thousands of warrants for mass executions'.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, from 1936 the political repressions, purges and show trials in Ukraine extended the assault on people who had experienced the Holodomor. The repressions were followed by World War II in September 1939 and the Great Patriotic War in June 1941 with the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany. This led to forced labour in Germany for many unlucky young Ukrainians.

#### Life after the Holodomor

It must be noted that the interviews did not provide any direct information as to what specifically happened to these Ukrainian migrant refugees post Holodomor and before forced labour to Germany. As the interviews were open-ended with the question *What do you remember of the famine in Ukraine 1932-1933, the Holodomor*, there is little account or evidence of life 'in-between' the events, disclosed during the interviews. Small mention was made of behaviour such as drying and saving bread long after the Holodomor was over.<sup>3</sup> Halyna Miroshnychenko, a survivor in Ukraine, speaks of being abandoned by her mother and being placed in an orphanage because of the lack of food to feed her. Her life remained there until she was later reunited with the mother and the new family that included more children. Again no description of life during those years from that interview either.

We know from Sheila Fitzpatrick's publication *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization*, life continued to be difficult for the Soviet Ukrainian peasantry. Her material was the outcome of research into Russian archives. She notes all sources, published or archival, persistently ignored peasants and the village. Focus remains on the regime's production and procurement, with more information about collective farm livestock than people. Fitzpatrick notes educated Russian society had little or no contact

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<sup>1</sup> Bohdan Klid, "Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Publicizes New Research on Famine," *The Ukrainian Weekly*, <http://www.ukrweekly.com/Archive/2003/520326.shtml>.

<sup>2</sup> Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*, p.72-74.

<sup>3</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

with the countryside during these years. Most material related to records of state and party bureaucracies during a very repressive Stalinist climate. Fitzpatrick was able to source a small number of memoirs and using such sources reconstructed some sense of what life was like.<sup>4</sup>

Fitzpatrick speaks of families, such as the dekulakized Tvardovskii family sent to the Urals, where they moved around for some years, not able to settle anywhere and not able to return home. Men fled to places in Kazakhstan and began a life without their wives and children. Deportees ended up working in industry with no means or permission to return to their own regions. Many Ukrainian peasants went to work in the mines of Donbass. The number of peasants who went to work on state farms increased substantially during the early 1930s but this was a temporary refuge against the famine. Young people who were called up for military service used this as a way of getting out of the state collective farms. Training programmes for young people and further education was also seen as a way out of the farm and a means into urban life. The major complaint by peasants during 1935 was a lack of respect, arbitrariness and brutality in the exercise of power.<sup>5</sup> This was followed by a period of repression and purges during 1937-38.

Already religion had faced a heavy toll with repressions and collectivization. Fitzpatrick notes a Kyivan peasant woman who dressed up in vestments and would direct liturgy and prayers. She further writes of the resurgence of church people and believers during 1936-7, however, notes another crackdown in 1937 during the elections for the Supreme Soviet.<sup>6</sup>

The collapse of the crafts related to peasant life saw a change of culture. If a peasant continued to practice a craft such as producing felt boots then he would be accused of showing capitalist tendencies. He would be taxed punitively.<sup>7</sup> More urban customs began to take over life, with the greater move to urban centres looking for food and survival during and after the Holodomor. Public health and medical facilities were poor with the 1937 census, showing one hospital bed per thousand population. Fitzpatrick states rural medicine was left to the traditional 'wise women'. She discusses rural medical care being a subject of complaint during the 1936 Constitution. Widows and children went without treatment because they could not afford it. She notes earlier, hospital treatment was free.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization*, pp.80-102.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.177.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.205.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.214-15.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.217.

This period saw the development of a problem that lasted for many years, that of orphaned children and abandoned wives. Early peasant custom decreed that orphaned children were the responsibility of the extended family. This was no longer possible and a law was passed in 1936, placing the responsibility on the chairmen of rural soviets to place the orphans. If not placed in an orphanage the children became vagrants and went into a life of crime.<sup>9</sup>

Orlando Figes, writer of life in Soviet Russia, discusses a mother's search for her children who were abandoned after she was sent to the Gulag. Figes writes the end of the war witnessed the the first mass release of prisoners from the Gulag. The mother, Maria Ilina, was the director of a large textile factory in Kyiv and was arrested as the wife of an 'enemy of the people' in 1937. She was eventually able to locate one daughter Marina and removed her from the orphanage where she had been placed, to take her to live in Cherkassy. Mother and daughter lived together for twelve years but were not able to develop a close relationship. Figes states they were too damaged to open up to each other. He writes that Maria was too afraid to tell her daughter what she had experienced in the labour camps and Marina was too afraid to ask until her mother's death in 1964. Marina learned that she had two brothers when one reappeared in 1955, and she learned that the other had died. She lived with her remaining brother in total silence as she slipped into depression with the memories of her past.<sup>10</sup>

Although deported kulaks regained their civil rights in 1934, a 1935 decree established they were not permitted to return to their homes until the late 1940s and early 1950s. 1937 saw a new wave of terror with officials fearful that there would be retaliation by the kulaks for their treatment. In order to exist, kulaks were required to live as best they could given their circumstances.

Miron Dolot provides a simple overview of life after the Holodomor and notes that most people had no choice but to remain working on the collective farms. World War Two separated him from his family due to his enlistment in the army and he does not know what happened to them. He was taken as prisoner of war by the Germans and interned in Stalag 3 in Germany. Dolot decided to stay in West Germany as a displaced person after the war and finally emigrated to the United States. These details were very sketchy but provide the reader with a basic idea of what life was like for him after the Holodomor.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp.218-20.

<sup>10</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, pp.449-54.

<sup>11</sup> Dolot, *Execution by Hunger. The Hidden Holocaust*, p.230-31.

Fitzpatrick outlines how World War Two brought more suffering to Soviet Ukraine. Procurements and taxes rose even more. It is noted by Fitzpatrick that the period between the end of the war and Stalin's death was the harshest the people had endured since the early 1930s.

The suffering faced by Ukrainians did not end with the Holodomor and nor did the current interviewees view it that way. The current interviews did not begin and end with the story of their memories of the Holodomor but the interviewees went on to describe their lives after that period. They shared stories of immense hardship, terror and suffering. It was clearly thought by them to be of significance to disclose them. Thus an outline of those stories has been included in this chapter.

This section serves to provide a complete picture of how the Ukrainian migrant refugees have viewed their lives since the trauma of the Holodomor. Little did they know at the time post Holodomor that Stalin had more repression in store for his Soviet citizens, and that Hitler was also planning to disrupt their lives. Their resulting deportation as forced labourers and subsequent migration post World War Two was to finally bring these Ukrainians to Western Australia. It was continual displacement with memories of the struggle to build a life wherever they were.

### **Great Terror**

As if collectivization, dekulakization and the Holodomor was not enough, Stalin and the Great Terror saw a huge expansion of the powers of the state, and further violation of basic human rights. The survivors remembered it as the the same as what occurred during the Holodomor. Conquest's publication *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* notes that 'there was no longer a section of the community reserved from the operation of arbitrary rule', and that the sufferings under the Communist Party increased immeasurably during those years.<sup>12</sup> Mass deportations, mass executions and trials, were part of Stalin's rise to power with extreme terror. His actions were said to destroy any opposition to absolute rule. Robert Service, a Soviet historian, speaks of Stalin using both physical and mental torment with his victims, in 'degrading them in the most humiliating fashion'. Service in his biography of Stalin notes that he [Stalin] would keep even his closest confidants in 'unrelieved fear'.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Conquest, *The Great Terror. A Reassessment*, p.29.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Service, *Stalin: A Biography* (Massachusetts: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2005), p.5.

Kuromiya quotes figures of 267,579 Ukrainians arrested between 1937 and 1939. During the same period, 122,237 Ukrainians were sentenced to be shot. Statistics have been inconclusive however, as many arrests and prisoners were transferred to Kyiv or Moscow which made it difficult to compile precise numbers. The author also notes that the groups hardest hit during the terror were:

Party and government officials, people with non-Bolshevik political records, industrial managers and engineers.<sup>14</sup>

Mass graves of victims of the Great Terror of 1937-38 have been uncovered in various parts of Ukraine. The site of one such burial ground is in Rutchenkove, Donetsk. It is not the purpose of this thesis to specifically discuss the Great Terror in detail rather, note the period as having an affect on the survivors in this study, and to record their memories of that time.

Larissa's family was taken to Siberia 10 February 1940.<sup>15</sup> She did not disclose why and it was believed that she did not know. They were not alone – the entire Ukrainian village in kolomyia was sent to Siberia with them. The Communist authorities murdered many others. Larissa remembers seeing a mother and daughter being thrown down a well by Soviet guards. She remarked that if her family had not been sent to Siberia they would have been executed.<sup>16</sup>

According to Halena this period was marked by betrayals against others. She states in order to qualify as a Communist one had to nominate two or three people who were against the Soviet Union. This woman's father, it was found, had been betrayed by a neighbour who lived opposite her grandfather.<sup>17</sup>

Yurko was sent to dig canals. Although accused, he lived through that harsh punishment and remembers it well.<sup>18</sup> Others like Danylo's family were fortunate, and escaped from Soviet Ukraine by train to what they called 'a free country', Germany. They left Ukraine because their father was going to be dekulakized. They were told by someone in strictest confidence that they would be exiled to Siberia. The father had been working in a local council office and it was there he was told about his fate.<sup>19</sup> Had he stayed behind he would have faced the same fate as that of Zoya's father, who was arrested, charged and imprisoned for being a Ukrainian nationalist. The last of the family's land was also taken away from them.

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<sup>14</sup> Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s*, p.246.

<sup>15</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa"."

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

<sup>18</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."

<sup>19</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."

## German invasion

In August 1939 the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed a non-aggression pact called the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. On 22 June 1941 Hitler broke the pact and invaded the Soviet Union in what was called 'Operation Barbarossa'.<sup>20</sup> Primary source microfilms (World War II Documents from the State Archive of Kyiv Oblast) indicate that 'Ukrainians were classified as Untermenschen (sub-human) and their land, the 'breadbasket of Europe' was considered Lebensraum', or arable lands that Hitler wanted to colonize. He sought to liquidate and enslave the Ukrainian population. The archive details Hitler's order of December 16, 1942 when he ordered the obliteration of Ukrainian 'guerillas' that included women and children.<sup>21</sup>

Johan Dietsch writes of Ukrainians trapped between the Soviet and Nazi regimes after the years of the Holodomor. He notes they were vulnerable to victimization because there was effectively no formal Ukrainian state that could protect them.<sup>22</sup> As the German front advanced into Ukraine, the Soviet army burned as much as they could in their retreat, so as to leave little behind for the Germans.<sup>23</sup>

Given this history of brutal Soviet repression, it is not surprising that some Ukrainians viewed Germany's occupation in the winter of 1941-42, as a better alternative to life under Stalin. Many initially believed that the Germans were liberators.<sup>24</sup> They 'hoped with the end of Soviet rule their country would enjoy a better life and perhaps some form of national sovereignty'.<sup>25</sup> However, they soon found that they were ruled by another brutal regime that looted properties, killed indiscriminately, raped women and burnt villages. The collective farms were found to be extremely useful by the Germans, as they provided a means of collecting grain and other produce for themselves, leaving the Ukrainians to starve yet again.<sup>26</sup>

According to Magocsi, Hungarian forces served alongside the German. He discussed this with relation to the 1944 campaign defending the road to Budapest.<sup>27</sup> Similarly Zoya speaks of the Hungarians, and describes them as looking like paupers. The survivor states they did not look as if they belonged to an army but like they were 'those who had been sitting at the church in rags begging for a piece of bread'.<sup>28</sup> The German units had normal supplies of everything, but

<sup>20</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p.622.

<sup>21</sup> "Part 2: From Bolshevism to the New Order: Museum-Archive of the Transition Period in Kiev, 1942."

<sup>22</sup> Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering: Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*.

<sup>23</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>25</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p.625.

<sup>26</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>27</sup> Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine*, p.625.

<sup>28</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

the Hungarians were supplied with nothing. The German army took whatever was needed from the Ukrainians, but neglected those 'conscripted to assist their cause'.<sup>29</sup>

Marika, a Holodomor survivor, had an horrific memory of the German occupation involving the massacre of Jewish people near her village. She had survived the Holodomor as a child but was to witness the atrocities of pogroms against Jews, near her village in Ukraine. Marika was one of a few children who witnessed Jews being herded by German soldiers up onto a local hill. They watched these people being undressed and having pockets emptied. They saw the victims falling into ditches dug as their graves, with a 'trootootootootoo' (imitating the sound of machine guns) machine gun execution by the soldiers.<sup>30</sup>

Marika said that no sooner had one group been shot, in half an hour there were others standing there again. The procedure was repeated. It happened three times. Some young men in the village went to get the German policeman. He arrived in a German uniform but the people took fright at speaking of what they had seen. They feared for their own lives in witnessing such an atrocity.<sup>31</sup>

Marika remembers people having a look at the fresh execution site and found the Germans had covered up the bodies. She said that the ground was still moving and blood was rising to the surface because the grave had not been dug very deep. The Germans did this, she said angrily, yet nothing happened to them. She spoke of Ukrainians being accused of 'beating' the Jews but she said that she saw German soldiers murder them with her own eyes during the occupation.<sup>32</sup>

Historian Norman Davies writes of the numbers of Ukrainians who perished during the German occupation. He estimates it to be 6-7 million. This he says matched what he believed was the 6-7 million who were starved to death on Stalin's orders during the 1932-1933 famine. Davies regards the Ukrainians as 'the nationality that suffered the largest total of civilian war dead during the Second World War'.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Norman Davies, "Holodomor: The Truth Will Overcome," in *Holodoor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomy Y Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p. 218.

### German forced labour

The Nazi occupation also led to another of Ukraine's tragic moments in history. Thousands of young people were transported as forced labour to Germany.<sup>34</sup> The Ostarbeiters were permitted to write to their relatives via a postcard system to the Kyiv Oblast, but their letters never reached their destination and were kept in a secret archive. The letters were kept in *Collection R-4826*, until it was declassified in 1990. These highly emotional letters contain the testimonies of Ukrainians who 'express their longing to return home and concern about relatives and friends'. During the Soviet period such documents were closed to researchers.<sup>35</sup>

Hitler ordered the forcible deportation of people from countries such as Ukraine, to work in German homes, on farms, as well as in factories, whilst the German men were involved in military service.<sup>36</sup> These Ukrainian labourers were as young as twelve and, as old as sixty according to the above archival documentation.<sup>37</sup> There was little or no financial remuneration for their work. Nonja Peters, a Dutch migrant and historian at Curtin University in Western Australia, has comprehensively documented the lives of migrant groups that migrated to Western Australia after World War Two. She writes of a young fourteen year old Ukrainian boy from Ternopil, transported as forced labour in 1942. He was given one hour to pack until taken by a goods train to work at the Cologne railway station.<sup>38</sup> This was a common story told by the Ukrainians involved in this study.

By June of 1943 Ukraine was fully involved in Hitler's campaign to import labour into Germany to work for the Third Reich. Propaganda told of benefits of working there, with land to be had, a good wage and free housing and medical care.<sup>39</sup> It was actually put as a patriotic duty to defend 'your fatherland' and to defeat Bolshevism. The messages urged that German youth was going to the front and Ukrainian youth 'must perform its labour duty'.<sup>40</sup>

The reality of the situation saw young villagers being rounded up by German policemen with dogs. Young Ukrainians were forced into cargo vans. 'On 2 May 1942, some 1400 young people in Kiev (Kiev spelling as in the text) were arrested this way'.<sup>41</sup> From March 1943, three

<sup>34</sup> Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s*, p. 272

<sup>35</sup> "Part 1: Postcards Home: Postcards of Ukrainian Forced Labor Workers from Nazi Germany", Primary Source Microfilm.

<sup>36</sup> Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers. Enforced Foreign Labour in Germany under the Third Reich*, pp.163-90.

<sup>37</sup> "Part 1: Postcards Home: Postcards of Ukrainian Forced Labor Workers from Nazi Germany". (Primary Source Microfilm, [cited 19 November 2008]).

<sup>38</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.33.

<sup>39</sup> Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), p.253.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., pp.262-63.



thousand labourers were forcibly recruited each day. Most of the 'eastern workers' were female and were said to work harder than their Western or Balkan counterparts.<sup>42</sup> Those attempting to escape from the roundups were shot.<sup>43</sup>

The workers were required to wear a badge on their clothing with the letters 'OST' (east). They lived in camps, suffered abuse, bad housing, bad food, and resented the wearing of the OST letters. Karel Berkoff notes these eastern workers were treated worse than any other foreign workers. Girls and women were fearful that they would be put to work in brothels. The contemporary songs of that time express profound sadness, with themes of leaving school and study, because they became slaves in a foreign land.<sup>44</sup>

By 1944, 50,000 eastern 'maids' as they were called, mostly Ukrainian, were working in German households.<sup>45</sup> The Nazi authorities were ordered to burn the homes of those who had resorted to escaping. Not only were the relatives arrested and sent to labour camps but properties were burnt down.

Before transportation to Germany, the recruitment process involved medical examinations. People went to some length to fail them and subsequently be deemed unacceptable. Self inflicted illness became a mass phenomenon. The people provoked diseases such as scabies, by using different herbal preparations that caused swelling or roughness when rubbed on the skin. Such behaviour was very common amongst females facing the prospect of deportation.<sup>46</sup>

In one town over one thousand young people caused injury to themselves in order to avoid the roundup.<sup>47</sup> Under German rule even Ukrainian doctors joined the deception by giving out false diagnoses and prescriptions and, even inducing illnesses. These physicians placed themselves at great risk and many faced punishment.<sup>48</sup>

Initially only single people were deported, causing a rush for marriage of quite young people. Pregnancy was the only legal way to avoid deportation, although some authorities forced women to abort their unborn child.<sup>49</sup> Workers were taken under threat from their beds in the

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 256, 59.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p.263.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p.259.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.266.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p.268.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.268-69.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.270.

middle of the night. In the case of the researcher's family, two daughters, including her mother, were taken in place of the older sister who begged not to go.

Terror was used again, to coerce an outcome by a controlling authority. More than half of the workers were women and girls. These people were transported to Nazi Germany, deloused and placed in lineups to be selected for positions of employment. The war economy of Nazi Germany had become dependent upon such foreign labour.<sup>50</sup> Peters notes Wyman's statement that by May of 1944 this labour force made up approximately thirty percent of the Third Reich's industrial labour force and twenty percent of the total labour force.<sup>51</sup>

This era of history was certainly seen as a great part of and, important to the journey of this group of Western Australian refugees already having survived the Holodomor. One major inhuman event was replaced by another in the history of their lives. In attempting to evaluate what effect the Holodomor had on them as migrants in Australia, it was important to be reminded of these major challenges that their 'journey' to this country had occasioned.

The survivors starved during the Holodomor and many starved as forced labour in conditions that were 'little different from those in concentration camps'.<sup>52</sup> Ulrich Herbert reveals 'disgusting brutalities' unimaginable in their 'cruelty and arbitrariness' and racism, as being part of everyday life.<sup>53</sup>

Hanka hid the first time the German soldiers were rounding up the young people for transportation as labour to Germany. She was accosted a second time, returning from the top of a hill herding the family cow. The soldier stood in front of her and demanded, 'Are you ready?' She replied with, 'To go where?' She told him she didn't know anything. When he reminded her it was about going to Germany, she told him Germany had nothing nor anyone there for her. She told him that it was a strange land for her, and that she had things to do in her village. Hanka also told the soldier she was needed in her village to help her mother. The soldier told her that she had to go and would not let go of her hand. She was told to go home, tell her parents that she would be leaving at a particular time the next day, and that she would

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<sup>50</sup> Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers. Enforced Foreign Labour in Germany under the Third Reich*, p171.

<sup>51</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.30.

<sup>52</sup> Herbert, *Hitler's Foreign Workers. Enforced Foreign Labour in Germany under the Third Reich*, p.383.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

have to be ready for transportation. She was sixteen years old, the eldest of three children. According to Hanka, the German soldiers took one child from each family.<sup>54</sup>

Twenty one of the Ukrainian migrants interviewed for this thesis spoke of being taken as forced labour to Germany.<sup>55</sup> Their stories were all tragic. Nina was the only child of an elderly couple, and although she knew three days beforehand when she would be taken, she did not wish to increase her mother's suffering, so did not tell her until the last day. Nina did everything for this couple and it would have been a great loss to lose their beloved daughter.<sup>56</sup>

Nina finally told her mother that she had to go. The soldier had told her if she didn't, then her father would be executed. She said she didn't want that on her conscience and she didn't have anywhere to escape to. Although this woman wrote home often, her letters did not reach her parents and they had no further contact.<sup>57</sup>

Tonia remembers the German's occupied her town twice. The first time was in 1942 when it was too difficult to collect people for work. At this time the Red Army counter attacked and eventually forced them out. The Germans were more successful the second time, and began rounding up children to take back to Germany. Tonia's mother intervened at the office that they had set up, and told them that she was the eldest daughter who helped her very much. They threatened her with, 'Well you have another one at home - we will take her as well'. The mother had no choice but to let the daughter go or she would lose both her children.<sup>58</sup>

The Ukrainian forced labourers were engaged in many different types of work. Bohdan was based in a factory that repaired water pipes and waterworks of all kinds. After cities were bombed these workers would be enlisted to repair and reset the pipes and machinery to good running order. This man was also engaged in digging canals to lay pipes.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #38 "Maria"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>56</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."

<sup>59</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."

Many females were taken to work on the farms. They would work from 5am until 5pm every day. This would be alongside kitchen duties of cooking, cleaning and whatever else the farmer's wife required, as the men were at war. This was the fate of the researcher's mother.<sup>60</sup>

Taking these young people as forced labour was traumatic for many reasons. Many Ukrainians had never set foot outside their own villages. The thought of losing a child to some far off place was terrifying for the parents. The thought of young children being taken in such a brutal way, especially after the dekulakization years, was more than many of them could endure. Stefka begged not to be taken, as did her mother, who lamented that this was her only child. The soldier allowed her to stay as long as he could, but at the end of autumn her time was up. She had been told that if she didn't get to the collection point, they would take her little brothers instead.<sup>61</sup> These were frightening threats to young people.

The young were initially transported to Przemyśl, just over the border in Poland. They thought that they were going to be killed, however, they were being lined up for delousing. People were stripped naked at one end and emerged at the other end to collect their clothes and get dressed.<sup>62</sup>

Some of the young female workers faced very hard labour. Some were relegated to work carrying iron from one train carriage to another. The iron was secured in bundles making it harder to carry such loads. Fania labored in such a way with another young woman.

She loaded it on her shoulder and I on mine, but she was taller and I was shorter, so I always had black shoulders. They gave us nothing to protect ourselves, no padding, nothing.<sup>63</sup>

This person spoke with a heavy voice about how difficult the work was for her. When they finished for the day and went back to where they were housed they had to contend with all manner of bugs. She shook her head and said that there was nothing to suck out of them [their bodies], but the bugs [presumably lice] sucked at their bodies all the same.<sup>64</sup>

Fania remembers every night a policeman with a dog would come and check whether they were there or not. In the words of another interviewee:

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<sup>60</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>61</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

It was not good when there were Communists, but when they took us to Germany, we were taunted there as well.<sup>65</sup>

Djenia spoke of her experience of being taken for forced labour to Germany. She relates the story of being thrown into wagons with straw on the floor. She began crying and struggled to speak about this episode. She remembered being told to stand straight up and get moving onto the wagon. The soldier had a gun and threatened to shoot her if she ran away. As she said, 'It was winter, where would we run to?'<sup>66</sup>

Djenia said she just did not wish to speak with her family of this time in her life because she had 'had enough of everything'. She said that they had enough grief, especially being bombed repeatedly during the war and trying to survive in one room with other people in a twelve story building. They had lost everything. Djenia had tried to stop being transported out of Ukraine by burning herself with caustic soda. She thought that if the wounds looked like scabies it might dissuade the soldiers from taking her to Germany. Djenia spoke of girls she knew who became prostitutes by force.<sup>67</sup>

Valya spoke of the constant food shortages that they faced as forced labourers. She remembers many people dying from a shortage of food. She comments that Germans also faced shortages, but the foreign workers only had whatever was left over.<sup>68</sup> Their work was not always in the same place despite the bombings. Yurko was moved from Dresden to a place in the province of Bavaria. There was little stability in their lives in a strange country.<sup>69</sup>

Young people were also dispatched to work for the German Army. katerina spoke of the night that the soldiers came to collect her. They told her parents that they needed her to dig trenches. The soldiers told her, not to pack anything just a change of clothes because they may be bombed. They could not carry suitcases. She remembers her parents were forced to oblige because otherwise they would have been arrested. She was fifteen years old.<sup>70</sup>

Some of the survivors did not elaborate, but just made a short statement about forced labour, such as Suzanna, who said that she was taken away to work in Germany in 1943. She was

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>69</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."

<sup>70</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

transported to Berlin where she lived in a camp. The feeling was one of a weariness of having to tell a story that had a tragic ending.<sup>71</sup>

Zoya who was eighteen at the time, described herself as a naïve schoolgirl. She had been taken in by a German woman to help at the woman's home. For some reason this woman took a liking to this young Ukrainian girl. The husband belonged to the German SS and he had been appointed to work in Ukraine. When this officer came home there were always arguments about what was happening in Ukraine. This was distressing for her.<sup>72</sup>

The SS officer would tell his wife about the atrocities that they were carrying out against Jews in Ukraine. The survivor remembers one story that concerned a doctor, 'a very intelligent woman', who was tortured and hung, just to terrorize others. After the war the survivor heard the German SS officer had been charged and sentenced to two years in the mines at Sachsen in Germany. Whether this was for war crimes, she was unaware.<sup>73</sup>

Sofi had been placed on a farm where her jobs were to work in the house, in the fields and milk the cows. There were no days off for three years. When finally given a rest day, it was to go to church. Church was a distance away and required them to catch a train. When she arrived at the church, with many others, they were rounded up and taken to a police station. The police questioned them as to whether they had permission from their bosses to have left. Some had permission and some did not. They were beaten and told to get back on the train and return to their workplaces. She was traumatized by the experience.<sup>74</sup>

That's how we saw the church. They wanted us for confession. Probably to find out something. We didn't have confession nor time at church. It was rather cruel.<sup>75</sup>

Sofi remembers being taken one night by her farm mistress, along with the lady's children, and running away from the farm because of bombing. She still has vivid memories of that night.<sup>76</sup>

Mila, a survivor of the Holodomor, spoke of this time with resignation. She remarked that by this time Ukraine only had old people and children left and, 'the rest were taken to Germany – even twelve year old girls'. She spoke of crying her heart out on the transport train and said

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<sup>71</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #38 "Maria"."

<sup>72</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

that she told God she was putting herself in his hands because she didn't know where she was going.<sup>77</sup>

Mila worked on a German farm for two and a half years, during which time bombs dropped near the farm house. One bomb blew her off her feet and she was forced to a nearby bunker in town for safety. She was very scared of more planes and more bombs. She finally emerged after a day or so and went back to work.<sup>78</sup>

Peters' research discloses the largest group of displaced people after World War Two was eight million young Europeans. These included those from Ukraine. Rations for their labours consisted of 'turnip soup given once a day... two hundred grams of bread, a little margarine, that's all'.<sup>79</sup> These people admitted to begging or stealing whenever they could.

## DP camps

Starvation after the war again. And you know that starvation is more horrible than war, that is for sure. You know it is said, Anything but war! No! Anything but starvation and cold! If only not to endure starvation and cold! We were fed up with seeing swollen bodies everywhere.<sup>80</sup>

One contemporary, post-World War Two definition of a displaced person is:

A person in Germany, Austria or Italy, who is out of his country of former residence as a result of events subsequent to the outbreak of World War II and, is unable or unwilling to return to the country of his nationality or former residence because of persecution or his fear of persecution of race, religion or political opinions.<sup>81</sup>

The ordeal of Ukrainian conscripted labourers did not end with liberation in 1945, for in order to avoid the forced repatriation to the Soviet Union, many committed suicide, were billeted in private homes by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, or went to refugee camps for displaced people.<sup>82</sup>

Life in the DP camps was said to be better than life in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, following emigration, life in the Ukrainian camps of the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia made Ukraine and the Soviet Union appear quite dismal and extremely

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<sup>77</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.30.

<sup>80</sup> Grinchenko, "Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich: Remembering and Forgetting as the Strategies of Survival", p.5. Electronic copy sent by the author from Kharkiv Ukraine.

<sup>81</sup> "Dp Camps in Europe," <http://www.dpcamps.org/dpcamps/dpcampseurope.html>. Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Yury Boshyk, and Roman Senkus, eds., *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War Two* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, University of Alberta, 1992), pp.xv-xxi.

<sup>82</sup> Nonja Peters, *Milk and Honey - but No Gold. Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2001), p.31.

unsafe. It was said that the best thing about such early migrant experiences was the exposure to foreign culture and a critical look at the Soviet way of life.<sup>83</sup>

Young people, faced with further displacement after the end of World War Two, found it difficult to move on. Hanka remembers not wanting to leave the farm where she was responsible for milking cows, cleaning and harvesting the crops in the fields. She wanted to remain and help the farmer, the German lady who owned the farm. She had met a young man by then, a Ukrainian also brought in as forced labour. He had different ideas for her, however, and arrived one day to persuade her to leave the farm and join the many young people who had signed in to one of the Displaced Persons Camp. This young man was to become her husband, and she thanks God and her husband for sending her to the camp and not back to Soviet Ukraine.<sup>84</sup>

Of the forty-one survivor's interviews, nine survivors referred to life in the DP camps.<sup>85</sup> DP camps were places where survivors again faced hardship, displacement, loss of family, uncertainty, yearning for homeland, vulnerability, fear of the future, concern for their safety and a basic desire for love, relationships and some stability in their lives.

Tonia was relegated by the camp management to working in the kitchen of the camp that she had joined. She said that after the food that she had encountered as a labourer, 'the food was heaven. The rice was boiled and in buckets'. She married her husband whom she had met in the refugee camp. He had actually been a prisoner of war and came to be in the same camp after liberation. They had their first child in this DP camp.<sup>86</sup>

Stefka found herself in a refugee camp for Poles. She said that stealing became rampant during this time with the arrival of the American soldiers and the availability of things that they had not had for some time, and the temptation must have been too great after having faced deprivation.<sup>87</sup>

Marko was told by the farmer at whose farm he had worked, he could no longer feed him because his farm was small. He was forced to move to a DP camp. There were Orthodox and

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<sup>83</sup> Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror in the Donbas. A Ukrainian-Russian Borderland, 1870s-1990s*, p.314.

<sup>84</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>85</sup> Ibid; Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

<sup>86</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."

<sup>87</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."



Greek Catholic priests at his camp. The camp was not far from the Austrian border and held three buildings of Ukrainians. He lived on the floor where there was a Greek Catholic Church. That was where he worshiped because he did not want to go to the Russian Orthodox church. Such were his negative memories of the Soviet influence he had faced in his short life.<sup>88</sup>

Djenia was eventually placed in what she referred to as an 'international kitchen' made up of people from different nationalities. In this camp Ukrainians were given unpeeled potatoes in boiled water. The French, she remembers, 'had better food than in a German restaurant'. The French refugees had told them that 'their country fed them' and our people, the Ukrainians, received no such support from Soviet Ukraine.<sup>89</sup> They were forsaken by Stalin. The Ukrainian survivors needed the compassion of others to survive their time in the DP camps.<sup>90</sup>

If camp inmates married they did not necessarily cohabit. Valya describes the situation in her DP camp where men lived in a men's barrack and women in a women's barrack. She would have to arrange for her husband to meet her after work, so that she could share bread with him. He would have to meet her within the gates of the camp, for any food that was given to them was not to be taken elsewhere or it would be confiscated.<sup>91</sup>

The post war Ukrainian DPs people spent up to six or seven years in the DP camps of Europe. Sofi migrated to Australia after six years. She said that 'it was a long hard road'. She married an Australian man but after seventeen years of marriage, during which time there were difficulties in the relationship, the husband left. With no relatives in Western Australia she was alone again, and having to come to terms with surviving another difficult event in her life. 'It was one of those things' she said, 'what can you do?'<sup>92</sup>

Some Ukrainian DPs simply picked themselves up and began rebuilding their lives and accepting any opportunities being offered. Evhan set out to organize camp schools and cultural events. Within the camps there were teachers, artists and people with plenty of time and enthusiasm. This man continued with his education in the various subjects that were offered. He tried to remember this time as a more positive experience during a very tenuous

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<sup>88</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>89</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>92</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

period of his life. He did not have much to say and it was felt although that he remembered about life in the camps, he did not wish to dwell on some aspects of it.<sup>93</sup>

### **Returning to Soviet Ukraine (Yalta Agreement)**

Halina still had her father's arrest document with her when surrounded by American soldiers in the DP camp. She was very frightened and destroyed it as well as all the papers that she had of her qualifications. She thought the Americans were going to take her back to Ukraine after the war and she wanted no evidence to assist that passage. The Ukrainians were already aware that to return was perilous. Her father's arrest document would have incriminated her.<sup>94</sup>

Because she was an Ostarbeiter, Halina was labeled a Russian and told by a person in charge to go over to where they were rounding up the different nationalities. She objected profusely and told him she was Ukrainian. He insisted that she was Russian.<sup>95</sup>

At the end of 1943 Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin agreed on post-war occupation issues as well as re-affirming the Atlantic Charter. At the Yalta Summit Conference, the eastern half of Europe was according to Mamtschak, 'handed over' to Stalin.<sup>96</sup> Ukrainian forced labour workers in Germany were encouraged to believe by they would be welcomed back to the Soviet Union, and thus began the transportation back home. Others, such as a large number of Cossacks, committed suicide, rather than go back home.<sup>97</sup>

Many refugees were 'repatriated' at bayonet point by American, British, French and Canadian soldiers.<sup>98</sup> Nicholas Stargardt notes that approximately 482,880 were moved back into the enlarged Soviet Ukraine. Stalin however, reneged on his promises and promptly sent some of these people to Siberian gulags as traitors, or had them executed.<sup>99</sup> This forced repatriation showed the clear naiveté of the Western allies to the Soviet regime and the ensuing loss of life.<sup>100</sup>

Survivors remember why they chose to migrate rather than return to loved ones and missed families in Ukraine.

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<sup>93</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."

<sup>94</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Lydia Mamtschak, *Galicia* (Sydney: Hippo Books, 2002), p.136.

<sup>97</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.31.

<sup>98</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk and Bohdan S. Kordan, *Anglo-American Perspectives on the Ukrainian Question 1938-1951: A Documentary Collection* (Kingston: The Limestone Press, 1987), p.11.

<sup>99</sup> Stargardt, *Witnesses of War. Children's Lives under the Nazis*, p. 367.

<sup>100</sup> Isajiw and Palij, "Refugees and the D.P. Problem in Postwar Europe," p.3.

Stalin didn't tell Roosevelt and Churchill that he would bring his people to court; he said all of them should be sent back. We understood that we would become parasites. They just needed a free labour force. I thought that I would be arrested if I went home.<sup>101</sup>

Marko states that there was only one way to go and that was to Siberia. He had married in the DP camp and his wife had wanted to go back home but he said to her, 'Where? To that hell?' He talked her out of it.<sup>102</sup>

As Luciuk states, 'everyone who had been within the borders of the USSR on 1 September 1939, was a Soviet citizen and must be repatriated'. Those who avoided such a forced move, lied to the authorities that they were not citizens of the Soviet Union in order to live. It caused great anguish for many years to come, for to admit you survived the Holodomor, meant that you deceived the Soviet authorities, and risked facing deportation and denaturalization in your new homeland.<sup>103</sup>

Josep was actually transported 120 kilometers into Soviet territory before he realized what was likely to happen. He escaped and returned on foot to the English Zone of Germany. He said that once he got to the English Zone he knew that he would be safe. He joined a Ukrainian DP camp and stayed there. Some refugees eventually went to Belgium, some to France and he went to Australia. Josep spoke of friends who chose to return to the Soviet Union:

Some didn't get home but were lost to Siberia. Some went back home. They had longer roads, only back to the village, to the collective farm.<sup>104</sup>

From August to December 1945, the Soviets interrogated thousands of the DPs as well as their own remaining Ukrainian citizens and decided that most had not shown resistance to their German 'masters'. They were thus treated as enemies, spies or saboteurs. They created what they called a 'filtration file' (a dossier) on these people that was then filed in the kGB archives. This created problems not only for those who managed to escape through migration but also those who were still in the Soviet Union. The distrust of the Soviet citizens, both those remaining and those returning to revisit homeland was to last for decades. These archived files – 115,940 in total, were a Soviet state secret until 1993.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

<sup>102</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>103</sup> Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, "Ukraine Must Pursue Perpetrators of *Holodomor*," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p. 209.

<sup>104</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."

<sup>105</sup> "Part 3: The Long Road Home: Documents of Ukrainian Forced Labor Workers Detained in Soviet Filtration Camps in Germany," Primary Source Microfilm.

## Migration

Luciuk writes about the DP experience and the migration of Ukrainians to Canada after the war in *Searching for Place*. His account provided a disturbing picture of life for these people in the camps of Europe, as well as migrating and settling in Canada.<sup>106</sup> Luciuk discusses the difficulty faced by Western governments in accepting people as 'Ukrainian', for according to them, there was no official nation called Ukraine. To classify them thus in their documents, would mean officially recognizing the existence of the country. Admitting such an outcome would put them at odds with other foreign governments such as Poland and the Soviet Union at the time.<sup>107</sup>

The situation was repeated with Australian migrants. Migration to Australia began in 1947, peaked in 1949, and then dropped by 1951.<sup>108</sup> Between 1947 and 1953, Australia received over 170,000 migrants from DP camps under the Displaced Persons' program. This was part of the International Refugee Organization resettlement agreement.<sup>109</sup> When Ukrainians began arriving in Australia in the late 1940s, mostly from DP camps in Europe, they faced a society that, according to Lachowicz, viewed them with both 'parochial suspicion and patronizing egalitarianism'.<sup>110</sup>

The refugees went wherever a country would take them. Sonia Mycak classifies them as political refugees who had been the victims of Soviet occupation, Soviet persecution, Nazism, prisoners of war, homeless civilians, enforced labourers and political dissidents.<sup>111</sup> Australia was often chosen because the entire family was able to migrate together, whereas Canada, for example, took the male first followed by the wife and children twelve months later. For newly formed families escaping the ravages of the war years, this might have seemed cruel and the fear of separation may have been difficult but it was accepted in order to go to Canada.

Ukrainian refugees with other post-war refugees to Western Australia were bound by two-year government work contracts. This working condition was never to be used against any other migrant group. They were to undertake jobs that took them to small country towns, with

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<sup>106</sup> Lubomyr Y. Luciuk, *Searching for Place. Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada, and the Migration of Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

<sup>107</sup> Luciuk, *Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada, and the Migration of Memory*, p.xviii.

<sup>108</sup> Isajiw, Boshyk, and Senkus, eds., *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War Two*, p.35.

<sup>109</sup> "History of Migration from Ukraine," Museum Victoria Australia, <http://immigration.museum.vic.gov.au/Origins/history.aspx?id=65>.

<sup>110</sup> Lachowicz, "Michael Kmit: Reality, Myth and Methodology," p.97.

<sup>111</sup> Sonia Mycak, "Multiculturalism in Common: A Community Compared," in *First Wave Emigrants: The First Fifty Years of Ukrainian Settlement in Australia*, ed. Halyna Koscharysky (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc, 2000).

neither conveniences to assist in adapting to the new life, nor an understanding of the life they had been forced to leave in Europe.<sup>112</sup> They could be sent anywhere irrespective of their education, background or experience. Work was usually on the roads, railways, airports and the building of homes.<sup>113</sup> The DP label often turned into a slur. European DP immigrants were often treated badly in Australia, while they struggled to cope with strange conditions, food rations, and life in tents in outback camps. The culture shock was acute as they were paying back the cost of passage according to Mycak, which heightened already existing levels of anxiety and depression.<sup>114</sup>

Ukrainian immigrants, along with other refugees, were traditionally seen by the Australian government of the day, under Arthur Caldwell, as a means of developing the labour force and increasing the population (Australia's White Australia Policy at the time).

We must populate or we will perish. We must fill this country or we will lose it. We need to protect ourselves against the yellow peril from the north. Our current population of 7 391 000 (about one person per square mile) leaves a land as vast as Australia under-protected.<sup>115</sup>

By 1952, most war refugees had resettled in Western democracies. The Western Australian ones were grateful for not having to return home, and were full of animosity toward the Communist system left behind.<sup>116</sup> Their feelings were strongly in favour of their new home, even though Isajiw noted, there were no 'political obligations or cultural obligations' to such ethnic groups, making up 0.2 percent of Australia's population at that time.<sup>117</sup> Australian Senator McManus, the Federal Organizing Secretary of the Australian Democratic Labor Party in 1966, describes the Ukrainians as having a strong national feeling and standing firm 'for freedom and independence'. He remarks that Ukrainians were active in causes that sought to defend freedom, which he said 'could well be an example to our own Australians... because they have seen both Fascism and Communism in action and despise both'.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp.33-34.

<sup>113</sup> Lemkin, "Raphael Lemkin on the Ukrainian Genocide: Excerpts from "Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine" (Last Chapter of as yet Unpublished Monograph "History of Genocide"."; Lubomyr Luciuk and Assisted by Lisa Grekul, eds. *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*.

<sup>114</sup> Mycak, "Multiculturalism in Common: A Community Compared."

<sup>115</sup> Quoted in Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.8.

<sup>116</sup> Yury Boshuk, "Repatriation; Ukrainian DPs and Political Refugees in Germany and Austria," in *The Refugee Experience: Ukrainian Displaced Persons after World War II*, ed. Wsevolod W. Isajiw, Yury Boshuk, and Roman Senkus (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, University of Alberta, 1992), p.374.

<sup>117</sup> Isajiw, "Future Directions in Research on Ukrainians in the Diaspora," p.10.

<sup>118</sup> Senator The Honorable F.P. McManus, "On Ukrainians in Australia," in *Ukrainians in Australia: Historical Material of Ukrainian Settlement in Australia*: (Melbourne: The Federation of Ukrainian Associations in Australia: Shevchenko Scientific Society in Australia, 1966), p.9.

Nevertheless, despite the early difficulties and challenges, the Ukrainian migrant refugees were pleased they had migrated to Western Australia.<sup>119</sup>

For Nina the only contact with Europeans once they had moved from the Western Australian migrant camp was with a Russian family and another Ukrainian family. The children would come home from school and cry about the name calling they faced at school. The children were set upon because they could not speak the English language perfectly.<sup>120</sup> Nina speaks of the difficulty of having to take her young daughter with her while she worked. There was no extended family or trusted friend she could call on to care for her child.<sup>121</sup>

Meanwhile Marko's family felt as if they had been born again.

I live here as if I am in paradise, as if I got to paradise. They gave us as much to eat at the canteen as possible and then, I signed a contract with... (a company) and worked for two years. Then they told me, 'You're free.' We went to Perth. Another family (named) who were from the same camp was already there and told us to buy land. There were other neighbors, they also said that we should buy land and so we did. Three Ukrainian families bought at Redcliff. Together we started building houses. We were so happy. We celebrated. That's life!<sup>122</sup>

Such enthusiasm was evident from many of the survivors who had migrated to Western Australia. They arrived, were alive, and were happy. Some say their history makes them so grateful for access to such 'wonderful things in Australia, and we appreciate what we have'.<sup>123</sup> The fact that they arrived with nothing was almost inconsequential because, as Ella remarked, they felt that they had the greatest gift, the gift of freedom. This more than made up for the food at the Northam camp not being particularly palatable, but at least they were fed (there was good natured reminiscent laughter during this part of Ella's interview).<sup>124</sup>

### **Camp life Australia**

The first home the migrants experienced in Western Australia was another camp. The DP migrants were transported to temporary accommodation that was usually 'disused or underutilized ex-army camps or RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force) bases'.<sup>125</sup> Northam and Cunderdin were expressly for the Europeans. These camp sites were many kilometers out of Perth and transport was a three-hour steam train ride followed by a bus or truck trip to the accommodation site.

<sup>119</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

<sup>120</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."

<sup>123</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>124</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

<sup>125</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p. 117.

After enduring an arduous sea journey where families were segregated, the migrants faced further segregation at the first housing camps, often with men in separate dormitories and women and children in another. Their final camp accommodation was usually of dormitory style with army blankets separating couples or families, as at Northam for example. Some accommodation was actually canvas tents with a dirt floor. This was to last for seven years for many migrants.<sup>126</sup>

Valya told the story of what it was like to live in a tent with the burden of unwelcome visitors every day:

In the camp there was only a six-foot tent, and there was everything – ants, and flies, and possums, and infection.

I remember it, it was a bit unpleasant from the start, but I started talking to other women, we shared our grief, talked about what, how and where to go for things we needed, and started getting used to everything.<sup>127</sup>

Peters' first hand account describes how living in barracks or tents afforded the migrants little privacy. Natural light was only able to come in via the gap between the eaves and the iron walls. The migrants also faced the added distress of bed bugs and reptiles that inhabited the region. Children died of snakebite. The winter conditions brought many other challenges.<sup>128</sup> The most horrifying situation facing the migrants in these camps was the fact that they were organized 'along the lines of a German Wehrmacht operation, with lines, block leaders, reveille, inspection, lights out and bed checks', that would have sent them straight back to Europe, but for the difficulty of getting back to Europe with no money and nowhere else to go.<sup>129</sup> A less regimented regime would have made life a little less daunting for these new arrivals.

Camp life for families did not encourage stability for their first years in the new country. Men were transported to different towns to work off their two year work contract. That was their debt to the government.

My husband was in the bush the whole time, because he worked with wheat when we first came to Australia. Well, he worked on the wheat farms... he was away the whole week. He only came home on the weekend. I lived in Currambine in a tent. Later, we bought a house in Northam. We couldn't buy it by ourselves, so we bought it with others - with some Yugoslavians.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

<sup>127</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>128</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.123.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p.129.

<sup>130</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

Conditions such as location of work for the main bread winners went according to the different workplace contract categories that they were signed up for. This then impacted on their labour market options and payments for the work done. The DPs came under a different category to those who had come under the British and European agreements. This was the government policy at the time and DPs were deemed to only be suitable to be 'placed in service to the rest of the community'.<sup>131</sup> The unions had endorsed migration only with the proviso that they could not be used as strike breakers and not take up a position which Australian labour could fill.<sup>132</sup> Those same unions did not interfere, however, when the migrants worked for up to seven months without a day off.<sup>133</sup>

The men who were transported to workplaces would leave on Monday and returned on Friday. Isolation meant that many of the women did not learn English until their children went to school. When the men returned there were no normal relations with the family as they were relegated to their respective dorms. Eventually, people did retaliate and conditions began to change.

Some women took up domestic work while others took up positions at hospitals, hostels and schools.<sup>134</sup> Parents of young girls who were sent off to fill domestic positions were quite opposed to their daughters being employed at such a young age, which for many went against their cultural background. Life brought many such difficulties that resulted from cultural differences. The language difficulty, resulting in people not understanding what employers were telling them, was followed by a common practice of migrants being shouted at as if they were deaf.<sup>135</sup>

## Conclusion

The experiences shared by the interviewees were extremely challenging to listen to and it left the interviewer wondering how difficult the experiences that were *not* spoken of were. The Ukrainian migrants still felt the pain of the Holodomor in their lives. They were still engulfed by sadness and tears of a past horrifying trauma they had endured. Although the Holodomor has well and truly passed, there was the concern that as the old people passed away, there would be no-one to tell the story and relate the history of those years. There was also the concern that, 'maybe some people would be left but would be afraid to say something' The

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<sup>131</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.175.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p.174.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p.183.

<sup>134</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>135</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey but No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, pp.181-82.



confidential interviews were a way for the survivors to share their stories that had remained silent to their own families and community.<sup>136</sup>

The period after the Holodomor also still held many traumatic memories. The series of events endured simply added to the burden of memories for these Ukrainian migrants. The picture provided by these people of their lives during the 1930s and 1940s, served to substantiate the known history of the events of those years. The memories cannot be forgotten for they were traumatic and continuous. The migrant refugees in Western Australia have joined others in providing a voice for the millions whose lives perished in such tragic circumstances.

Nicholas Lysson, in his paper entitled 'Holocaust and Holodomor', writes of the late United States Congressman David Roth who testified before the United States' Congress in 1966. He writes of Roth's comment regarding the deaths of millions of Ukrainians being regarded as less important than the deaths of millions of Jewish Holocaust victims. He notes Roth's statement that we should 'deny the Soviets the ultimate victory of our silence'.<sup>137</sup> By sharing their memories, the Ukrainian migrant refugees interviewed in Perth Western Australia through the period 2004 – 2005, have done precisely that in providing the information for this study.

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<sup>136</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."

<sup>137</sup> Nicholas Lysson, "Holocaust and Holodomor," DESIP.

## Chapter 7

### In the wake of the disaster:

#### The long term impact of the Holodomor

Literature regarding the Holocaust's effects on the lives of child survivors was useful to research in the lead up to the summary of the narratives. It provides some understanding and a reference point in considering the effects experienced by the Ukrainian migrant refugees who were children during the 1932-1933 Holodomor. People of such a young age lacked coping mechanisms that develop with age and experience with life. Young children without a fully formed personality lived in a very hostile environment during the Holodomor, with the constant threat of death and witnessing human rights violations. The Soviet man-made famine was unique in that it was directed at its own citizens. Harrison states the Holocaust destroyed the innocence of childhood and trust in adults.<sup>1</sup> The Holodomor could equally be said to have done the same when one hears the stories by those having remembered the events and who were children at the time. Thus it is important to begin to determine the effects of Holodomor on Ukrainians who remember or witnessed the events related to it or even those that were to follow. This thesis sought to begin addressing this.

Ivan Bahryany, a witness to the Holodomor, was subjected to spending half his life in concentration camps and prisons 'of the Bolsheviks', during this period. He states the Holodomor and the aftermath resulted in 'a type of human being, prevalent in the USSR, intimidated, suspicious, silent and fatalistic'. This man was a Ukrainian artist and he dared to protest in the form of a fable. Ivan watched as family members were executed in front of him for being kulaks. 'I'll see that blood as long as I live' were his words. He ended his testimony with the statement that he was fully aware that in permitting his testimony to be published he risked the murder of his entire family.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately this did not happen. Testimonies such as Ivan's were collated and published as early as 1953. They were candid recollections remembered by people who were children during the period surrounding the Holodomor. They correspond to the stories gathered for this study.

The long term impact for those who remember and who survived the Holodomor in the Western Australian study was reflected in their responses. It is unique to record this material

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<sup>1</sup> Harrison, "Innocents of Nazi Solution," p.R15.

<sup>2</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*, pp. 3-19.

because there are as yet no studies have focussed upon such an aspect of the Holodomor. In fact there are few studies in Western Australia that focus on the long term effects of such a trauma related to post World War Two migrant refugees. Inclusion of this material will enhance our understandings of not only migrant refugees in Australia but more specifically of those Ukrainian migrant refugees who lived through the events of the Holodomor of 1932-1933. What do people who have been witness to such trauma face, in order to rebuild their damaged lives in a new country? The 'misery caused by searches, confiscations, arrests, executions, deportations' and all the tragic ordeals that were confronted by them, will never be forgotten.<sup>3</sup> Sundberg, in his role as President of the International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine, briefly touched upon the effects of the famine and spoke of the sufferings of the Ukrainian people in one paragraph of the report. He notes issues of:

... serious physical and psychological disorders of those who survived malnutrition... the moral degradation caused by the increasing desperate search for food... the jealousy, the fights, the informing, the murders or suicides by hanging... the immense moral distress of the Ukrainian people.<sup>4</sup>

The following chapter outlines those long term effects as perceived from this study that have impacted on the lives of the Ukrainian migrant refugees who remember the Holodomor.

### **Abandonment by family and government**

Dolot, in reflecting on the events of the Holodomor, writes, it all seemed like 'some kind of wicked fantasy world'. The events seemed unreal because of their 'cruelty and unspeakable horror' and it was 'simply too difficult to associate all those happenings with real life in a normal human society'.<sup>5</sup> School friends in classes were dying every day. People felt each time they found a way to escape hunger and death for a time, it was opposed with some official countermeasure. Dolot, himself a survivor, states, 'in their opposition and retaliation against us, the officials often resorted to actions that would have been ridiculous but for their unbelievable sadism'.<sup>6</sup>

Some Holodomor survivors had become orphans at a very early age and faced experiences of such sadism being perpetrated against neighbours, friends, family and possibly themselves. Other Holodomor survivors became orphans in a strange land the minute that they were taken as forced slave labour to Germany.

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<sup>3</sup> *International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine. The Final Report*, (World Congress of Free Ukrainians, 1990), pp.50-51.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Dolot, *Execution by Hunger. The Hidden Holocaust*, p.140.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.151.

Nina who survived the horror of Holodomor describes her disbelief in her father not fighting the German police who came to take her away as forced labour to Germany. Although this was not specifically related to an effect of the Holodomor it is appropriate to include here in order to appreciate the weakness of the Ukrainians to face up to such a development having just survived the Holodomor. There was no means for resistance against the invading forces. Nina speaks of being so angry with her father, she stopped dreaming of him. She spoke of the Germans taking children as young as sixteen years old from her village. Her anger was such that she would not return to Ukraine even though she stated she 'wanted to go back so much'. She eventually accepted it as her fate in life, how it was 'meant to be' for her.<sup>7</sup> There was generally a feeling of acceptance regarding the events in her life.

Darka speaks of the tragedy of being left alone as children. 'There were three of us, with no mother or grandmother. We had to look after each other'.<sup>8</sup> Yurko echoes the same words and speaks of being left as a young child after the death of his parents. He added he had only completed a couple of years at school because of their deaths.<sup>9</sup> In reflecting upon this issue of children being left alone, Mila described how children were collected and driven by carts to orphanages. Some were taken (no formal adoption) by people who did not have children but, most children were left there at the mercy of the state.<sup>10</sup>

### **Burden of loss**

Janina, a very elderly survivor who had been married and had two young children, survived the Holodomor with the assistance of her aged parents. She spoke of her husband being exiled as a kurkul and being left with two young children. When the Germans began transporting people for labour, her father encouraged her to save herself, leave, and to take one child with her.

When the Germans drove people away, my father told me, 'Go, daughter, maybe you'll be saved otherwise they will shoot you in front of my eyes.' I took Valik and left, and left my daughter behind.<sup>11</sup>

The daughter was not permitted to leave the country in the wake of the famine (indeed, not until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991) and continues to remain there. 'The Soviets would

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<sup>7</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

<sup>8</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>9</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #29 "Yurko"."

<sup>10</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

<sup>11</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

never, never let her out,' she said.<sup>12</sup> She had hoped for a better life for herself and her son but laments having left her daughter in Ukraine.

Children such as this one being left behind by the only surviving parent must have felt forsaken by their family. Interestingly, alongside such protracted traumatic events in the lives of these children, the current migrant survivors in Western Australia, for many years, kept the sustained hope of reuniting with any member of their family who might have survived the Holodomor and the aftermath.<sup>13</sup> They did so if they could afford it however in some cases it was too late.

Stefka tracked her family down after first migrating to England after the war. She married and, after locating her mother in Ukraine, began to look after her financially from afar, as best she could until her death. She was not aware of social security arrangements for the elderly in Ukraine during that period of time. The elderly relied upon family for their care and livelihood and that continued for some time.<sup>14</sup>

During her interview, Katerina discussed her return to Ukraine. She spoke of the problems of initially obtaining papers to travel to Ukraine. People were not allowed entry nor exit without strict controls at that stage. It was 1975, and Ukraine had not yet gained independence. Once there, after much difficulty, she was required to report to the village police. Police questioned her regarding why and how she had originally left Ukraine. 'I told them that they knew well that I had been taken away as a child and transported by train, to Germany'.<sup>15</sup> Sadly having survived the Holodomor, these family members treated her with some hostility and assumed she had become a wealthy westerner.

Hanka stopped providing anything for her Ukrainian relatives, such was her disappointment with the attitudes towards them in her village. It became clear that what she could afford was not good enough.<sup>16</sup> The perception of those who had been 'lucky' to have migrated and found life in a western land was that they had unlimited wealth. How could they otherwise travel so far to Ukraine or send parcels over the years?

Anywhere the survivors were moved, required a completely new beginning with little or no support structure and certainly no money. The issues faced, in order to begin a new life were

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep". "

<sup>14</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka". "

<sup>15</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina". "

<sup>16</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka". "

always challenging. The difference in settling in Western Australia meant an opportunity to improve their quality of life, in what was perceived to be a more stable political and democratic environment.

### **Lack of a moral compass**

William Nielderland discusses the Holocaust and the impact on victims. Anxieties, fear of persecution, survival stress and survival guilt were apparent in those having lived through the Holocaust. This event also saw human degradation and loss of a moral compass. Survival was of paramount concern with no-one emerging totally unchanged.<sup>17</sup>

Similar outcomes impacted the Ukrainian victims of Stalin's Holodomor. The effect of losing so many family members and friends to death by famine must not be underestimated. The moral degradation in the constant desperate search for food and behaviour resulting from starvation had deep and underlying impacts on the lives of those who lived through such traumatic events.<sup>18</sup>

Moroz, in Hlushanytsa, stated that although the facts of the Holodomor have emerged from archives, the actual 'atmosphere' from that period of time can only come from those who experienced it. It is a major part of the history.<sup>19</sup> The people who remember this event and what went with it, such as those Ukrainian migrant refugees in Western Australia are providing their share of the facts as they remember them. Their stories will form a part of the understanding of the events and the effects of the Holodomor on the Ukrainian people in this state.

The Ukrainians remember it as a very brutal and destructive time. Survivors spoke of the remembering the events of the Holodomor and its aftermath. The events have overcome the following generations.<sup>20</sup> Fania remembered that there was no-one to ask for help and that people behaved in a crazy way with the hunger. She talked of:

Hungry people, hungry children, old people who were so poor that they received no help from anywhere... They had absolutely nothing. It was an awful life.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Sandra S Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children," University of Central Florida, <http://www.billwilliams.org/HOLOCAUST/holocaust.html>.

<sup>18</sup> *International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine; Prof. Jacob W.F. Sundberg (President)*, (Toronto: World Congress of Free Ukrainians, 1990), p.50.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Hlushanytsja, *A War without Shots Fired* (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohylanska Academia, 2004), pp.10-11.

<sup>20</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

<sup>21</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

Fania also stated that because there were so many swollen people it became less scary over time for children to see people in this state of hunger. They became accustomed to such things. People passed the dead in the street without a backward glance. There was a numbing effect of such constant sights. Photographs in the archives named *Context of a Tragedy* show this phenomenon of people passing a dead body without a backward glance.<sup>22</sup> We would find such a situation inconceivable.

### **Economic Hardship**

The Holodomor left a legacy of economic hardship where once in the 1920s people had enjoyed a satisfying, comfortable and happy way of life. They faced destruction of their economic existence. Those who remained in Ukraine, saw the reduction of the value of simple earnings. Reid tells the story of a couple who placed the proceeds of selling five cows at a time when the money would have had some value. Over the years of the Holodomor and aftermath they faced the realization that their believed sale yielded nothing.<sup>23</sup>

Those who arrived in Western Australia as migrants after years of deprivation following the Holodomor and World War Two arrived as most refugees, without any chattels and needed to begin life from scratch. Most couples arrived with one child.

I arrived with two suitcases and a one year old child in my arms. That's how we lived. It was hard.<sup>24</sup>

Life for the first period of time as Volodya noted, usually around five to seven years, was in a tent, such as those of the different early migrant camps.<sup>25</sup> They slept, ate and conceived families in very primitive conditions.<sup>26</sup> They were the first major influx of Ukrainians into this country with no sizable community of earlier migrants to offer help and support.

Djenia spoke of buying cloth to sew the family sheets because it was cheaper than purchasing what for them was very expensive manufactured ones.<sup>27</sup> Others such as Ella, although they lamented that they had arrived with nothing, reflected upon their new found freedom.<sup>28</sup> Ella also mentioned the fact that it was difficult to throw out anything when one had come from nothing, to then having what they felt was 'everything', their freedom.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> "Context of a Tragedy (1929-1933) Контекст Трагедії (1929-1933): Official Archival Photographs ", (Government Archives Ukraine, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Reid, *Borderland. A Journey through the History of Ukraine*, p.115.

<sup>24</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>25</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

<sup>26</sup> Mycak, "Multiculturalism in Common: A Community Compared," p.33-34.

<sup>27</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>28</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

### **Emotionally spent**

The Holodomor was followed by such a succession of traumatic events faced by the survivors that by the time of migration to Western Australia, they were emotionally spent. Survivors had faced starvation, death, grief, bombings, no work, no home, no family, no normal life and had reached the point where they simply did not wish to talk about their past.<sup>30</sup>

Irka could not imagine her own children being able to go through such experiences and spoke of 'Australia being too easy with everything' and children not being able to appreciate what they had gone through.<sup>31</sup> Others do not wish to share their story with their children because they don't want their children to know what starvation was nor learn about the hard times they endured.<sup>32</sup> There was almost an embarrassment about what had been suffered and a desire to protect them from such horrendous detail.

The migrant interviewees were very protective of their children. They simply wished to shut the past away in the beginning. Others tried to 'live in the present'. They found the whole experience so unpleasant that they worked hard at not recollecting what had happened until this research project began.<sup>33</sup> One could hardly blame them wishing to forget such traumatic memories but when they do, it is with thoughts of how they lived at the time. 'God, I was swollen like a doughnut. I survived somehow', said Marika.<sup>34</sup>

### **Fear of authority – living in fear**

People who experienced Stalin's repressive policies had what Figes stated 'a special reason to forget the past'. The era of increased openness under Khrushchev was soon replaced by tightened censorship under Brezhnev. Any discussion of Stalin's crimes was then seen as dissident behaviour and cause for persecution. Thus the silence of the past occurred again and people conformed to what Figes called 'the silent Soviet majority'. The threat of re-arrest with the KGBs powers of surveillance was enough to instill fear in everyone with anti-Soviet sentiments.<sup>35</sup>

Figes included statements from Soviet citizens such as Maria Vitkevich who, having experienced arrest and a labour camp in Norilsk, could not shake off the fear experienced during that time of repression. She however speak openly of her experience:

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<sup>30</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>31</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

<sup>32</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

<sup>33</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>34</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>35</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, pp. 604-05.



I have felt it all my adult life, I feel it now [in 2004], and I will feel it on the day I die. Even now, I am afraid that there are people following me. I was rehabilitated fifty years ago. I have nothing to be ashamed of. The constitution says that they can't interfere in my private life. But I am still afraid. I know they have enough information to send me away again.<sup>36</sup>

I was never able to shake off my fear of being arrested... As time passed I learned to live with these fears. They became integrated into my personality. I considered them the price I had to pay for my education and professional position.<sup>37</sup>

In establishing such fear into the psyche of the Ukrainian people, when mercy and dignity were simply not synonymous with survival, developed a deep seated fear of authority. The constant fear and subsequent alienation from the state that was presumed to be taking care of them resulted, in abnormal relationships between them. Society, stated Aitmatov, had been profoundly paralyzed by the Stalinist repression.

Figes spoke of 'genetic fear' which he stated affected the children of Stalin's victims in every facet of their lives. From the friends they made to the careers they chose there was the element of genetic fear in making their choices. He reported stories of people who had inherited fears of Soviet authorities that were passed down to their children. One such story was of Anna whose parents restricted details of family until the glasnost period in order to protect their daughter. He noted that Anna recognized within herself a deep-seated fear, a lack of confidence and social inhibition which she believed were a result of her mother's upbringing.

It is hard to say what the fear is, because I have felt it since I was a child. I am afraid of any sort of contact with bureaucracy... It is a fear of being humiliated... This was something I was taught when I was young, to retreat from any situation where my conduct could be criticized by the authorities... From my teenage years I was open among friends, but withdrawn socially... I was afraid to be with strangers and always tried not to stand out.<sup>38</sup>

The above would indicate a further study of the children of survivors of the Holodomor be a future consideration. This was not however, included as part of the aims of this particular research. The fear of speaking out was palpable and deep for the Ukrainian refugee migrants.

Conquest believes that in overcoming this fear of authority, the truth about the Holodomor must be faced.<sup>39</sup> Janina was still in fear of authorities in Ukraine accosting her for speaking out about the Holodomor. There was still a family member alive in Ukraine. This person

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 606.

<sup>37</sup> Janusz Bardach and Kathleen Gleeson, *Surviving Freedom after the Gulag* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p.248.

<sup>38</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, pp. 647-48.

<sup>39</sup> Conquest, *The Great Terror. A Reassessment*, p.488.

actually stated that the interview was difficult for her. She would not use names and only discussed the events. She 'understood how the family in Ukraine could possibly facing some sort of retribution for her having spoken out'.<sup>40</sup>

Survivors told of people they knew being threatened with their life for speaking out and how the events of the Holodomor had made them very cautious. They would not go back to Ukraine for that very reason. As soon as the whereabouts of some Ukrainians might have been disclosed, years after the Holodomor, whether by letter or some sort of contact from Australia, their families would have been taken to court by the KGB. It would mean that this person somehow escaped the repression of the regime. These might have been kulaks who had escaped being deported. Some were desperate to locate their family but were so fearful of repercussions many years later, even after Stalin's control had gone. Communist Party members within their families had also caused great ongoing concern until 1991.<sup>41</sup>

This fear of authority has possibly remained with some survivors since the events of the Holodomor. Two survivors did not wish to sign the consent form which allowed the researcher to use the material from the interview. These people had already consented to being interviewed but did not wish to sign their names to any document. These survivors were perfectly willing, however, to consent verbally to the use of the interviews on the audio taped recording. It was not a question of illiteracy, as the survivors were told that they could sign with any mark they could, they simply did not wish to put pen to paper.

The above situation could be attributed to survivors witnessing as children, those events associated with dekulakization, collectivization and the Great Terror. Those events saw people, parents, family members, being arrested and having to sign confessions under duress for trumped up crimes, to ensure foodstuffs were allowed for families to survive.

### **Hatred of Communism**

If one of the most common effects of the Holodomor on the survivors was to be outlined, it would be the hatred of communists whom they believed were totally responsible for the Holodomor and their suffering. These feelings have understandably remained to this day as was evident from the interviews. It was 'absolutely horrible and abominable what the communists did'.<sup>42</sup> Parents and family were afraid of their own relatives and of each other.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>41</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

<sup>42</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>43</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

A child would be sitting, a pen in his hand, drawing weapons or something, and they arrest his father and say that he has weapons in his house. How would the child know what they look like? It was scary.<sup>44</sup>

The hunger that consumed everyone saw people informing on others in the hope that their own standing and conditions might be elevated and improved.

A Ukrainian artist whose testimony was published in the early fifties gave us the greatest insight into the effects of the Holodomor on those who survived it. This man had dared to say a word of protest 'in the form of a fable'. As a result of this indiscretion, half of his adult life was subsequently spent with hard labour in 'the prisons and concentration camps of the Bolsheviks'. He stated that 'his youth lies buried there'.<sup>45</sup> Although the survivors interviewed had spent most of their lives in Western Australia, their youth also lies in Ukraine and also Europe during World War Two.

We didn't have any youth.<sup>46</sup>

The Ukrainian artist responsible for the fated fable wrote that the conditions during this era resulted in a type of human being, still prevalent in countries that were part of the USSR, who was 'intimidated, suspicious, silent and fatalistic'. Even though there have been pardons since those years of repression, people still carry the burden of memory.<sup>47</sup>

Those four abovementioned words, *intimidated*, *suspicious*, *silent* and *fatalistic* apply to the Ukrainian migrant refugees interviewed for this study. These people could not return to their native home after the Holodomor because of what has been called a crime of 'local nationalism'.<sup>48</sup> Ukrainians have since not felt safe beyond the borders of Ukraine as evidenced by years of silence. They are reminded by a Soviet theory quoted by Evhan that, 'if you have one hundred people and one of them is dangerous for the Soviet power and you can't find which one, kill all of them'.<sup>49</sup>

The International Memorial Society, the Human Rights in Ukraine organization and kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group wrote that there was a 'sense of worthlessness of human life and freedom before the giant regime'. They spoke of the wolf pack morality of 'you'll die today and I tomorrow', the loss of traditional family values and the 'catastrophic lack of

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*, pp.11-12.

<sup>46</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

<sup>47</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.11.

<sup>49</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #5 "Evhan"."

connection between people' following the great terror. Such are the effects of the communist regime on the Ukrainian people.<sup>50</sup>

After experiencing the cruelty of Stalin's prisons and concentration camps many Ukrainians faced Hitler's regime and some passed through the Gestapo camps of Dachau, Birkenau and Belsen to add to their traumatic experiences. They were sent there because they 'believed in a free Ukraine'.<sup>51</sup> Ukrainians interviewed for this thesis found their freedom in Australia albeit with a people whom they felt would not understand the trauma that they had endured, and kept their silence from the time of migration.

It was poignant to read the following words in Australia's national newspaper in 2007: 'It is astounding how thoroughly Australian popular culture has forgotten communism'.<sup>52</sup> Were the Ukrainian migrants correct in assuming that no one in Australia wished to hear about the communists and the events of the Holodomor?<sup>53</sup>

### **Fear of speaking out**

Interviewees such as Nina spoke of not having 'permission' to speak to anyone about the Holodomor.<sup>54</sup> In some cases the researcher was the first person to have been told of their memories.<sup>55</sup> It is doubtful whether some of these people would have actually spoken to a non-Ukrainian with no understanding nor knowledge of the Holodomor. The Waters' study also used Ukrainians in each state to record the interviews. The survivors' fears ran deep and trust was clearly an issue. It was felt that the trust in the researcher to treat this information with the dignity and honesty it deserved was important.

One shouldn't talk but keep your mouth shut, because if you tell Australians it will be the end (concern for your life or that of family in Ukraine- they would not believe it anyway). It's better to keep your mouth shut.<sup>56</sup>

Maria repeated a typical saying: 'keep your comments to yourself. (Tremai yazek za zubame – literally translated – keep your tongue behind your teeth). If you tell Australians, they won't believe it. Keep your comments to yourself'.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Stefan Petelycky, *Into Auschwitz, for Ukraine* (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 1999), p.47.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Greg Sheridan, "Same Heroes and Villains," *The Weekend Australian*, May 26-27 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Lawriwsky, "Australia and the *Holodomor*: 50 Years of Remembrance," in *The Great Famine of 1932-1933* (The Great Hall, University House, Acton, Canberra: Australian National University and The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organizations, 2003), p.3.

<sup>54</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina". "

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa". "

<sup>56</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #38 "Maria". "

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

Grabowicz of the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute called this state of behaviour as a 'chronic state of fear' from the Stalinist period. He spoke of 'emotional autism' and 'suppressed pain' as being an outcome of life during this era of executions, purges and incarcerations. With such a background came a lack of trust and what she called 'an elementary sense of security'. A whole generation of Ukrainians who were 'emotionally paralysed and paranoid' evolved.<sup>58</sup> Grabowicz predicted the return to historical memory and deeper collective feelings as reviving a deeply wounded Ukrainian society.

The Ukrainian migrants still react emotionally when speaking of Ukraine. Their fear is that the youth of Ukraine do not know that the Holodomor occurred and the old people who remember it are still too afraid to speak out.<sup>59</sup> There was also a strong belief, not unfounded, that Stalin would annihilate them if they returned to Ukraine. Their hope is that somehow everything will eventually be known.

This belief was also very strong amongst the Ukrainian community in Western Australia and prevented many from returning to their homeland for many years. Children were sometimes told not to speak of being Ukrainian or disclose family information to strangers. The researcher found such fears unusual given the time lapse and could attribute this to the fact that there was little knowledge and understanding in Western Australia of overseas research and conferences focused upon this event in history. There was no Ukraine studies course at any University in Western Australia. At best the topic might be raised as of a unit regarding Soviet History.

### **Bread high priority**

'No-one in our family threw out bread'. Memories of collecting bread in various stages of deterioration are vivid for survivors of the Holodomor. It has been a legacy of that event and others in the history of famine that bread has taken on such a prominence in their lives. White bread in particular, that was for the 'wealthier' class, was especially revered, compared to the heavy rye bread was that produced by the peasant farming class and if available, distributed during this time of the Holodomor. After the Holodomor, Irka's grandmother couldn't stop kissing the white bread and always hid it 'just in case'.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Grabowicz, "Soviet Collapse and Ukrainian Independence: The Cultural and Psychological Factors", pp. 141-42.

<sup>59</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."

<sup>60</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

Irka couldn't bear to see food being thrown out. 'I'll give it to the chooks (chickens) somewhere or whatever, but I can't bear to put it down the toilet or in the rubbish. No I couldn't do that'.<sup>61</sup>

Nykytiuk stated that 'A reverent attitude toward bread is a tribute to all those callused hands growing wheat and rye; it is our genetic memory of the millions of men, women, and children that died because they were denied their daily bread'.<sup>62</sup>

### **Food provision a major aspect of life**

Most of the current houses belonging to survivors in Western Australia had a large vegetable garden at the back of their house as well as the obligatory chickens for eggs and meat. Their properties were of considerable land holdings that may seem to some to be unusual for such elderly people. A few had, on the insistence of children, downsized but most survivors engaged in this study generally lived on at least a full quarter or half an acre plot. This looked to be reminiscent of life as they had known it as children with their families in Ukraine. This land was their prosperity. It appeared to have great significance for them.

Food in general was always generously shared. Prior to the Holodomor, visitors would always be welcome to join the family at the table to share what meager foodstuffs were available. In Western Australia the tradition had not changed. In fact visitors could not escape being treated to a meal no matter how short the interview time.

Such a tradition became part of my interview visits with the Ukrainian migrants. Even when visiting very elderly people who could barely stand up unaided, custom and pride did not permit them to allow me to assist them during such rituals. The simplest tea and cake (with apologies for it being bought rather than home baked) was a necessary offering and often it was more substantial, with one survivor actually cooking throughout her interview. The interviewer was the recipient of the traditional 'platske' or potato cakes at the end of that particular story.

Most children born to migrant ethnic parents are able to discuss the embarrassment of the 'smelly' lunches that were so lovingly prepared by well meaning mothers. The researcher's Ukrainian friends often laugh about this at ethnic events and gatherings. Most would have been more than happy with a simple 'Aussie' vegemite (a popular black vegetable paste)

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Tetiana Nykytiuk, "A Candle Lit in Memory and Hope," [ArtUkraine.com](http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/candle_lit.htm); [http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/candle\\_lit.htm](http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/candle_lit.htm).

sandwich to enable them to assimilate and avoid the ‘wog’ tag that came with the territory of being a child of migrant parents in Western Australia. The survivors found it stabilizing to continue the traditional ways and do what was felt to be a way of easing the pain of the past, of making it better and providing their families with what their own parents might have prepared, had they not been faced with the Holodomor. Food was the most valuable thing that they could provide for their children.

The women especially still felt the need to ‘cook for an army’ when it came to family gatherings. Often produce was from their own land and toil. Children would have joined the parents at different times of the year to plant or clear the plot. Their pride in providing food themselves was evident especially when there were guests. The ubiquitous potato still features widely in the traditional diet (platske and varenyky) and was usually the first crop to be planted.

Survivors with such plots took pride in taking the researcher out to view the abundant growth. It was a sign of family prosperity that they had such a holding and that the vegetable garden was able to sustain them and the extended family.

Those Ukrainians whom I found in their gardens when I visited them could have just stepped out of the photographs of the collective farms. The attire of these people was reminiscent of the early thirties with very old farming implements that they must have had since they began working on their personal properties. It was stepping back in time for the researcher. They seemed to have maintained the traditional ways that they had seen and known as children. Nothing was extravagant, no up to date implements to make their toil easier and their bodies were bent with the years of such work, on top of other regular work.

Sanders remembers visiting a Ukrainian friend’s house after school as a child and being offered fresh biscuits and bread. She remarked that the only time she heard this ‘Baba’ (grandmother) raise her voice was when she took one bite out of the large piece of bread and threw the rest away. She wondered what the big deal was but went on to say that ‘for anyone who’s wondered about their friend’s quiet Baba who loves to cook and hates to waste, it’s a big deal’.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Carol Sanders, "Waste Is Unthinkable for Survivors: Lessons Learned from Horror Haven't Been Forgotten," in *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times*, ed. Lubomyr Luciuk (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2004), pp.209-11.209-211

## Focus on family

Look even now, I help a lot. I don't have anything special in my house but if I know that my family wants to eat and needs it...<sup>64</sup>

Comments such as that mentioned above is evidence of many parents' wishes but for the interviewees it went past the usual support. There was a strong desire to ensure that there was stability for their families and always something to provide for them. Survivors, from the interviews, clearly drew strength from their family and a family life which was reminiscent of an idealistic version of family life in Ukraine before the Holodomor. The traditions were upheld, the language was taught and the family attended church on Sunday.

So strong was the commitment to family that one elderly couple had in fact emigrated less than ten years ago to provide support for a daughter whose marriage in Western Australia had broken down. She had emigrated some years before and married an Australian man. Such a move at their time of life was extremely difficult. This elderly couple was required to obtain assistance for housing, deal with the infrastructure of life in another country and, learning a language at a time of their lives when they should have been slowing down and living as seventy year olds should live.<sup>65</sup>

The birth of children symbolized a hope for a better future for the survivors. The memories of the past, although in most cases never spoken of, almost became a burden for these children however. The expectations of the children were seen to be more serious, with the parents focusing on the provision of security for the family. Time nor money was not to be wasted. This might explain the desire for the migrants to provide their children with their own family home in order that they were not beholden to any authority or loan that could be taken away. To own your own home was of high priority and the security of work both for themselves and their children was paramount.

We built [the son] one house, the daughter sold hers and bought another. My husband and I built the houses. I am the kind of person who likes to be generous, not selfish. I might not have much but I will give it. I will give the last thing.<sup>66</sup>

It was generally accepted behaviour that parents would assist their children financially when they married. As well as many homes being financed, other such gifts were provided to ensure that children had a financially sound start to married life. This sort of support continued for many years and became even more important when grandchildren were born. Although such

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<sup>64</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>65</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."

<sup>66</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."



behaviour is common with many European ethnic groups we need to remember that although the stories are common, with migrants arriving here with nothing, save a few items of clothing in one small suitcase and no money, the need to emulate what even the poorest peasant could do for their children in Ukraine was still most important.

Dislocation and anxiety about the future would not be part of the life in Australia. Their children would not suffer as the migrant refugees did even if this meant concealing their backgrounds to their families.

Figes writes of a Russian mother living in Leningrad after Stalin's Soviet repressions, who had taken on an assumed name. She wished to protect her fourteen year old daughter from any discrimination or trouble as she would soon be required to apply for university. As an illegal resident she was frightened of arrest and exile as a former member of a kurkul family. She had a false passport with false stamps and signatures and an expired right of residence in Leningrad. This mother, Antonina, had married and become a member of the Party in order to divert suspicion from herself. She was worried for her daughter:

I did not want her to find out about my past. I wanted her to feel that she had a normal mother, just like the mother of every other girl at her [elite] school, where all the parents, or at least the fathers, were members of the Party.<sup>67</sup>

Antonina was to discover many years later that her husband, who had divorced her in 1968, had also been nursing a similar secret. He was the son of a rear-admiral in the Imperial Navy who had been dedicated to the Tsar. He had endured Soviet labour camps and had made up a new identity to protect himself. Stories such as these form the history of the people who lived through such times. It explains their unwillingness to disclose the stories to even their own families and their desire that their families experience a better, more secure life away from the terrors and memories of their past.

### **Loss of identity**

Stalin knew what he was doing, look at what is happening now [referring to the political situation in Ukraine]. He mixed them [the people] up like porridge, like soup, exactly like a soup. That is it. Now I don't know who I am.<sup>68</sup>

Williams outlines the memories that the Holocaust children had noted in past studies and states there was a range of experiences raised. She states these children became excellent observers of human behaviour who fully understood death and, that it was a miracle they had survived. Williams also discovered that some had no papers and thus did not know birth dates,

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<sup>67</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, p.653.

<sup>68</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."

nor their true identity, they focused on food in times of hunger, had trouble sleeping with the memories and were often not able to fully appreciate any kindnesses shown to them.<sup>69</sup>

Those remembering the Holodomor kept to the Ukrainian community in Western Australia. Although they developed friendships amongst other Australian citizens their close ties were mostly with other Ukrainians. They believed only their own kind (national group) would offer them understanding, safety and trust as migrants. Being classed as ‘new Australians’ and ‘wogs’ did not necessarily offer a sense of well being or trust in their new homeland or its people. One survivor anglicized his name in order to assimilate and to not be so different.

My real name is in no way connected with X [he named his current name]. It’s a real Ukrainian name, and this is fully an English one.<sup>70</sup>

Zoya states that she also knew many people who had had their land confiscated and who had hid near coal mining centers such as Donetsk, in the Donbas region. In these places the conditions were so terrible that no questions were asked if you wished to work there. Places like this enabled Ukrainians to work under different names albeit in horrific underground conditions.<sup>71</sup> Williams speaks of the continuing burden of loss that these people felt for their parents, family, friends and themselves. She raises the notion that losing parents in early life means ‘a loss of the very nucleus of one’s own identity’.<sup>72</sup> In some cases they purposefully lost their identity in order to survive.

Ukrainians had been classified as ‘auslander’ or ‘ostarbeiters’ [eastern workers] in Nazi Germany, then classified as ‘Russian’, ‘Soviet citizen’, ‘Polish citizen’ or even “stateless’ in the DP camps of Europe after the war. They subsequently remained classified as Russian when migrating to Australia. They were to remain Russian in Australian census documents for some years. It was not until the last Census that Ukrainians were formally instructed to delineate that they were in fact Ukrainian Catholic or Ukrainian Orthodox religion. This came through as a directive of the Australian Federation of Ukrainians in Australia and announced by the respective Ukrainian clergy.<sup>73</sup>

In recent years those who had lived through the Holodomor have acquired the title of ‘survivor’. Porter defines a survivor as ‘someone who has survived an immediate and

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<sup>69</sup> Sandra S Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children," <http://www.billwilliams.org/HOLOCAUST/holocaust.html>.

<sup>70</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>71</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>72</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

<sup>73</sup> Commonwealth of Australia: Bureau of Statistics: 2006 Census of Population and Housing, 2007. In *Commonwealth of Australia*, <http://www.abs.gov.au/austats.abs@.nsf/3101.0>. (accessed June, 2007).

traumatic life-threatening experience'.<sup>74</sup> Their memories have become part of a collection of testimonies about the Holodomor. However, as Waxman states in *Writing the Holocaust*, by being labeled a survivor, their diverse experiences are somewhat concealed.<sup>75</sup> As with the Holocaust, there was no universal survivor experience. Some aspects, some emerging themes were the same but most were quite unique.

Although these people generally gathered in Displaced Person camps in the allied zones of Germany, Austria and Italy, the term 'survivor' was not yet in common usage and was not so for the Holocaust victims either. It was some time before any understanding of the Jewish Holocaust Shoah emerged, and it has been the same for Holodomor survivors.

### **Stolen childhood - orphaned**

In 1932, when I was not yet 12 years old, I witnessed the weary faces of people tortured not only by hunger but also by terror, many of which were buried alive. Those who starved remained emotionally crippled for life. It's very hard to endure constant humiliation, to feel constantly persecuted, particularly in one's own home. Let this memoir of my stolen childhood help you retain the memory of those who are no longer with us.<sup>76</sup>

In discussing what she saw in her village Hanka spoke of a family whose parents were the first to die from starvation. The children were taken to an orphanage. Children had a basic daily allowance of black bread, watery soup and water. She bitterly stated that 'you could make a communist from a young person'.<sup>77</sup> The implication was that children were indoctrinated into communism in these institutions. They were a captive audience.

Children experienced the daily loss of their playmates, their schoolmates. Nina and Ella spoke of such loss when their neighbours died and the children were taken away. There were no goodbyes, no provision of goods to help them, no familiar things of their lives kept for them – all was lost to such children. Not to mention the loss felt by the young friends left behind possibly wondering when it might be their turn.<sup>78</sup>

One of the interviewees speaks of children in such circumstances being sent to what she refers to as 'asylums'. The literature identified this happening when there was nowhere else to take

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<sup>74</sup> J. Porter, "Is There a Survivor's Syndrome? Psychological and Socio-Political Implications," *Journal of Psychology and Judaism* 1(1981): p. 36.

<sup>75</sup> Zoe Vania Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p.89.

<sup>76</sup> Pylypiuk, "Anna Pylypiuk, Chicago."

<sup>77</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>78</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."

them.<sup>79</sup> In some situations relatives tried to support such orphaned children but they already had mouths to feed and often the children would be abandoned yet again.

Katerina describes how even her eighteen and twenty year old neighbour's children were taken away one night, never to be seen again.

We had to work hard day and night. I dreamt that nobody knew or remembered. I don't know. People like me who had gone through hardships, such things that one can't describe and can't speak about; such trauma that we had, our youth... we didn't have any youth.<sup>80</sup>

Anna Pylypiuk, a survivor, speaks of the stolen childhood that she was forced to endure and the constant persecution in her own home and her own land. She speaks of remaining emotionally crippled for life.<sup>81</sup> For a culture in which family was the core of their world, and the extended family the most valued and important support in raising children and educating them to adulthood, such situations would have been extremely challenging. Pylypiuk states children lost their identity with such upheaval and lack of family stability.<sup>82</sup>

Shulamit Bastacky recalls memories of her survival in German occupied Lithuania. She wrote of the years following her ordeal as a young Jewish girl, and said that she did not allow herself to remember the 'quiet, frightened, curly-headed little girl... She crouches forever in the recesses of a deeper cellar, the cellar of her mind'.<sup>83</sup> This survivor blocked out her memories as a result of being deprived of family, nurturing and basic human needs. The Ukrainian refugee migrants were gracious to allow the researcher to peer into the cellars of their memories and uncover some of their horrific stories.

Lidia Kovalenko states, a 'generation of people with shattered lives... orphans... victims' came into being.<sup>84</sup> We cannot imagine the terror faced by an orphaned seven year old child who, in pulling out two tiny beets to feed herself and her four year old sister was swollen with

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<sup>79</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>80</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."

<sup>81</sup> United States. The Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, "Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: First Interim Report of Meetings and Hearings of and before the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine Held in 1986: Organizational Meeting, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1986: Meeting and Hearing, Washington, D.C., October 8, 1986: Hearing, Glen Spey, New York, October 26, 1986: Hearing, Chicago, Illinois, November 7, 1986: Hearing, Warren, Michigan, November."

<sup>82</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."

<sup>83</sup> Shulamit Bastacky, "Beyond Memory," in *Flares of Memory: Stories of Childhood During the Holocaust*, ed. Anita [Conceived and developed by Sheila Chamovitz] Brostoff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 121-22.

<sup>84</sup> L. Kovalenko, "Spiritual Ruin: On the Question of the Effects of the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine," in *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine 1932-1933. Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research*, ed. W. W. Isajiw (Toronto: Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, 2003), p.149.

hunger, faced being placed against a wall, with a rifle aimed at her. Both children were then beaten with a rope by Communist Party activists.<sup>85</sup>

The Holodomor was faced by children at an age when they had not yet developed basic coping mechanisms and trust. Their personalities and development were not fully formed and they found themselves in a very hostile environment, similar to the children of the Holocaust.<sup>86</sup>

### **Loss of extended family**

Bohdan speaks of not knowing whether his sister is still alive from the Holodomor years.<sup>87</sup> They had faced separation. Another survivor tells the story of one of her sisters being given to an aunt who did not have children. She found the separation to be very difficult, she missed her sibling.<sup>88</sup> Thoughts must also focus on the difficulty faced by the parents in making the decision to relinquish one child in order to save others in the family. How does one choose which one?

Children lost parents and faced having to accept a substitute for the parent who had died.<sup>89</sup> Worse still was losing both. Fania lost her parents to prison as kulaks. Her mother came back but the father was killed and they did not see him again. She then lost her mother again when transported as forced labour to Germany.<sup>90</sup>

Faced with a lack of family and relatives to provide the relationships of the extended family, friends in the Ukrainian community in Western Australia became pseudo aunts and uncles. Godparents assumed a much larger role and the 'kum' (godfather) and 'kuma' (godmother) became as important in the new land as they were in the homeland left behind. These people were predominantly of Ukrainian origin and it was clearly one way of ensuring Ukrainian identity, continuation of the traditions and connections with Ukrainian culture.

Children of survivors have also been given Ukrainian names and often named after patriotic literary figures, saints, past heroes and heroines of Ukraine. The researcher's own name was that of a very well known poetess in Ukraine with the pseudonym of Lesya Ukrainka. This

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.160.

<sup>86</sup> A. Hass, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 9.

<sup>87</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."

<sup>88</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."

<sup>89</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."

<sup>90</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

practice ensured some continuation of the culture and history of the homeland in the k. It provided some basis upon which to rebuild Ukrainian culture and their lives.

### **Loss of religious worship**

One devastating effect of the Soviet regime prior to the Holodomor was the banning of any religious worship not only within the churches but also within the home, along with the confiscation of people's coveted and beloved religious icons.<sup>91</sup> Activists made sure that any hidden icon was collected for destruction along with any manifestation of their religious roots. Some families took the risk and hid these icons that were invaluable to their religious lives and considered to be precious items in their lives. Nina shared the story of her frightened father, who risked the lives of the entire family in order to save their family icons.

We had many icons. The whole house was decorated in icons. He hid all of these icons. He had a great one of when Jesus Christ was born ... I don't know what father did with it, but he hid it somewhere. They [the communists] came and said 'You had this and that.' He said 'I had it, but I don't know what happened to it.' He was very, very afraid of everything.<sup>92</sup>

The Communist influence had made its mark in Ukraine but the Western Australian Ukrainian migrants had no such pressure, with freedom to worship and display icons. In fact the Ukrainian Orthodox community to which Stefka belonged was building a new church and the icon that she was able to bring back to Australia from a visit to Ukraine was gifted to it. It still hangs on its walls to this day.<sup>93</sup> This person was one of few people who had the means able to travel to Ukraine a few times.

Irka remembers taking off her cross before attending school each day and putting it back on upon returning home. She lived with her grandmother who kept her prayers alive in this communist era. This lady stated she was more religious in those days of communism than she was now. She felt the freedom of life here has seen the loss of some of her fervor.<sup>94</sup> It would seem that religion helped to succour the survivors. Religion has been viewed as a coping mechanism and the annual commemoration services are considered by the researcher as a ritualistic healing process.

### **Forced labour and displacement**

Being liberated at the end of World War Two and the period of forced labour thus also coming to an end, meant what Williams noted as the 'beginning of something unknown,

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<sup>91</sup> Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*, p.530.

<sup>92</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

<sup>93</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>94</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."

disturbing, painful'.<sup>95</sup> Many Ukrainians knew that family life and a past history of life in Ukraine as they knew it did not exist for them, with many friends dead as well. These children from the ages of sixteen to their early twenties experienced a deep sense of loss, of not knowing who they were, what they should do, where should they go and where now was their place called home?

Displaced Persons camps became a temporary home for these traumatized and displaced people. Relationships ensued whilst encamped for up to five years or more. Marriages inevitably occurred but for these people the marriages were not necessarily the kind that they might have dreamt about for themselves.

Partnering during a time of war and in refugee camps without the support of parents and family was extremely difficult. Traditional Ukrainian marriages in the village were usually to people well known to the family and were often pre-arranged local unions. Young people still surviving physical and mental trauma, were required to make quick decisions when proposals were forthcoming. It would seem that the thought of some form of security in a partner was better than life as a single refugee in a strange land, took some precedence in these circumstances. Hass previously noted that such commitments of Holocaust survivors were often a result of an unusual amount of mutual dependence and protectiveness. This could be also attributed to those people having remembered the Holodomor.<sup>96</sup>

The men and women who married faced the same regulations as the single people in most camps. In some camps there were different barracks for each sex. Valya speaks of always saving and smuggling half of whatever foodstuffs she could get, to pass on to her husband. They had to meet at the gate and pass it over without being seen.<sup>97</sup> Conditions in the camp were difficult regarding food and people were very careful not to be seen to have extra food, or, they would be begged to give it away by someone who was hungry. Others would simply take it and leave a person hungry. People in the camps were only allowed to have what they were given. Valya speaks of illness from malnutrition and death in the camps as a result. She remarks that the death rate was very high.<sup>98</sup> Infant mortality was also very high with babies dying to undernourished mothers. Babies also died as a result of inadequate facilities to cope with even what we might consider to be simple newborn conditions, such as jaundice. The DP

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<sup>95</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

<sup>96</sup> Hass, *In the Shadow of the Holocaust*, pp.12-13.

<sup>97</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

hospitals had the basic care as opposed to the hospitals in the city. For example the Heillbrun DP hospital did not have required care for jaundice whereas the Salzburg main hospital did.

Often babies who were dead at birth or who died soon after birth were taken from mothers and disposed of without any formalities to speak of. The researcher's mother was finally, as an eighty year old woman, able to discover the date of birth and death of her second child born at a DP hospital in Salzburg. This occurred with the assistance of an Austrian genealogical researcher to unravel the mystery. The result had finally given her peace of mind whilst still alive. She was finally able to understand the reason for the death and grieve for the child that she had lost and a time never forgotten. The baby had died of jaundice in the DP hospital within the camp.

It was against such a background that some people spoke of their spouse as being a good provider or a good parent.<sup>99100</sup> Their relationship was almost inconsequential, as they tried to establish themselves and provide for their families in the new land Australia. They made the best of what they had. The most important reason for marriage seemed to be security which was something the Holodomor originally began the desecration of.

The Ukrainian migrants survived the memories, as well as faced the added emotional disappointment, of not living a life that might have been possible for them. They needed to remember and include the memories of a life once loved as a young nurtured child, into a future world that was the rest of their lives, post Holodomor. The initial fear of discussing this experience meant that they did not see their survival as a victory over Stalin. They were exiled with traumatic memories and attempting to lead normal lives. Jewish Holocaust survivor Primo Levi felt that survivors were almost judged and cruelly repelled because people did not understand what had been experienced.<sup>101</sup> This may have been an underlying fear of the Ukrainian migrant refugees in telling their stories.

### **Misunderstood in hospitals, nursing homes and by families**

As disease and ill health took on a great significance for Holocaust victims in the camps, it became a further death sentence. It became an even greater concern to have developed any illness or need to be hospitalized. Sandra Williams discusses the notion that, as old age has brought the Holocaust survivors into contact with services from hospitals and aged institutions, there have been specific issues such as fear of dying within such institutions,

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<sup>99</sup>S. Melnyczyk

<sup>100</sup>Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>101</sup>Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation*, p.111.



being raised. Mention was made of the fact that such organizations should be aware of the past trauma that has been part of their earlier lives, and adjust the care and treatment accordingly.<sup>102</sup>

Yael Danieli, clinical psychologist, a victimologist and traumatologist warned that the literature on ageing Holocaust survivors showed that memories of the loss of loved ones could resurface and the feelings of abandonment often return in old age. The emotions of abandonment and loss needed to be understood by health care professionals in the event that they might be required to care for survivors. The memory of being taken from their home and being placed in an orphanage or being abandoned may return with a need to place a survivor in institutionalized care.<sup>103</sup> This understanding will also be valuable for family members who are faced with the prospect of placing parents in care facilities.

Danieli describes the delusions that arise with being hospitalized. They could be reminders of starvation, trauma, camp life and being under the control of people again. Faith Malach's paper, notes Hirshfield's comment of a survivor who accused the nurses and doctors of experimenting on him with the tests that he was required to undergo.<sup>104</sup> Ukrainians also speak of the fear of being hospitalized, or being placed in nursing homes. Their belief is that once placed within such institutions, they would not re-emerge alive. Any form of institution or control over life is unsettling to these people, the memories they invoke leave them very nervous and fearful.

Being misunderstood by their own families, especially if the families were not aware of the past history of their parents, raises complicated issues. Children born of Holodomor survivors were precious and considered a gift from God. Many Ukrainians, however, although believing the same, responded badly to their children. Some were overly rigid, overprotective or ineffectual.<sup>105</sup> On the other hand, Cohen suggests that children of survivors of such trauma do not find it easy caring for their elderly parents. These children have had great expectations placed upon them and may harbour resentment towards them as a result. This author contrasts that outcome with the opposite possibility, that children of trauma survivor often feel such guilt for the suffering endured by their parents that they ensure that they receive the best

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<sup>102</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

<sup>103</sup> Y. Danieli, "On the Achievement of Integration in Aging Survivors of the Nazi Holocaust," *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* 14(1981).

<sup>104</sup> Faith Malach, "Terminally Ill Aging Holocaust Survivors: Considering the Effectiveness of Bearing Witness and Completing a Written Life History," Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care.

<sup>105</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

possible care.<sup>106</sup> This may also become a mandate by the rest of the community if it was known that they were in fact survivors of the Holodomor. An outcome of the Waters' study was the community bonding together to 'look out for the survivors'.<sup>107</sup>

The migrant refugees brought with them not only the persecutions but also the remnants of past lives. Williams outlined that a mother's love was constantly displayed by her intrusion into every aspect of her children's life.<sup>108</sup> Parents displayed their love by willingness to sacrifice everything, including their lives, for their children but this came at a cost where these children were constantly reminded of this and praise was often withheld.

Fania provides a very detailed overview of her children's lives. Her two children were fortunate to have been provided with homes by their parents. She spoke about how hard she had worked in order that her children did not have to pay rent. However, having almost lost influence with her own children the survivor focused her attention on the grandchildren. The anxiety of family not being able to live comfortably, of being educated, surfaced with the next generation. There were some disappointments when things did not go as she planned. 'I was anxious that the children (grandchildren) got some education', she said ruefully.<sup>109</sup>

Past parenting behaviour that involved a nature of sharing, generosity and lightness of spirit became replaced after the Holocaust by alerting children to the dangers and evil within the world and to guard that which was theirs.<sup>110</sup> This too seemed to be a trait amongst Ukrainian migrants who remembered the Holodomor. They were ever vigilant even within their own Ukrainian community. 'Don't disclose too much of yourself', was a warning often given.<sup>111</sup>

The Ukrainian survivors had been born into a life where:

Families lived together. It was a family based life where they cared for each other. It was devastating to lose any family members. Children had great respect for parents and grandparents.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> B.B. Cohen, "Holocaust Survivors and the Crisis of Aging," *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services* 72, no. 4 (1991): pp226-32.

<sup>107</sup> Elizabeth Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 6: National Library of Australia: Ukrainian Famine Archive]."; Elizabeth Waters, "Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933 [A2 File 8: Ukrainian Famine Archive]," (Canberra1983-1994).

<sup>108</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

<sup>109</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

<sup>110</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

<sup>111</sup> Stephania Melnyczuk, 1995.

<sup>112</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

The Holodomor and the subsequent forced labour to Germany altered their lives in the cruelest of ways. They were left with ‘what Williams calls, ‘no models for ageing’, for most had not seen their own parents reach old age.’<sup>113</sup>

### Single ‘technicolour memories’

Memories are a number of stored scenes. Huysen calls memories ‘more than only the prison house of the past’.<sup>114</sup> Ukrainian migrant refugees who remember the Holodomor remember certain memorable scenes with some detail. Their visualizations of certain poignant moments, with the accompanied descriptions, formed the basis of their recounting of what happened to them during the Holodomor and beyond. Figes discusses the way trauma victims dealt with their memories. He notes their memory became fragmented and ‘organized by a series of disjointed episodes (such as the arrest of a parent or the moment of eviction from their home) rather than by linear chronology’. Figes includes a quote by Alexander Dolgun, a US Consul clerk, arrested for ‘espionage’ in 1948, and whose statement highlighted such a perspective of memory:

There are episodes and faces and words and sensations burned so deeply into my memory that no amount of time will wear them away. There are other times when I was so exhausted because they never let me sleep or starved or beaten or burning with fever or drugged with cold that everything was blurred.<sup>115</sup>

Such single ‘technicolour memories’ were a unique phenomenon of the interviews in this study and it was felt they deserved some reference and inclusion. Primo Levi in his interview with Marco Vigevani regarding his book *This is Man*, distinguishes between episodes he called ‘in technicolour’, which he believes were essential to describe, and others that describe the everyday routine, the ‘grey material’. He speaks of such memories as being single, clamorous, terrifying episodes that ‘prevail and invade the canvas’.<sup>116</sup> Out of forty-one survivors interviewed, twenty-one clearly displayed such an outcome.<sup>117</sup> Others may have still

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<sup>113</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

<sup>114</sup> Andreas Huyssen, "Trauma and Memory," in *World Memory: Personal Trajectories in Global Time*, ed. Jill Bennett and Rosanne Kennedy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p.17.

<sup>115</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, p. 634.

<sup>116</sup> Vigevani, "Words, Memory, Hope (1984) [Interview with Primo Levi, from 'Le Parole, Il Recordo, La Speranza', *Bollettinodella Comunita Israelitica Di Milano*, Xi, 5, May 1984]," p.251.

<sup>117</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

been afraid to talk about such memories and withheld them as did Vera Minusova in Figue's publication. Minusova has lived in constant fear since her father was arrested and shot during the Terror. She was seventeen years old at the time, and actually asked her interviewer to turn off the tape recorder at different points during her interview.<sup>118</sup>

The first such encounter with a 'technicolour memory' was with the very first interviewee. She shares a lengthy description of an event at the collective farm kindergarten she went to as a child during the Holodomor years. Hanka describes the scene in great detail. The children were given bread and water once a day. She describes the size of the piece of black bread with her hands, speaks of how she used to break this bread into tiny pieces, of how she put only some crumbs into her soup and set aside the rest for later. She carefully describes how this was done and how she put the rest aside that was subsequently stolen by a starving child with a runny nose. This boy was watching her, pushed his head near her and then got under her table to steal her crumbs. The story went on at some length describing her tears and including the method by which she would deal with the bread crumbs, mixing them into the soup and licking the soup to prolong its effect. The scene had been stored in its entirety over the years and seemed to be her reference point for the Holodomor.<sup>119</sup>

This was the start of many such stories focusing on a major incident that left the survivors with an indelible imprint of a time during the Holodomor. Nina's story describes walking past a house on her way to school with a friend and hearing a child screaming. A young abandoned boy and baby covered in maggots were in the house alone. The survivor and her friend alerted their teacher at school and these two children were taken away. This lady remembers not being able to sleep for a long time, remembering the sight of the screaming baby covered in maggots and that a baby should die of starvation in that terrible way.<sup>120</sup>

Children witnessing arrests of family members faced years of anguish at the mere hint of a similar experience.

I will tell you what was difficult for me. What was particularly difficult for me from 1933 was when they came to arrest my father. We had a little porch which went into a small kind of corridor. There was a pantry and then the kitchen. Next to the kitchen was my room. My parents and my sister were in another room. They could probably hear it but when they [the militia] came to arrest my father [a kurkul], they bashed on

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<sup>118</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, p.643.

<sup>119</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>120</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."

my window because it was on the porch. So, it's only the last twenty years now that I don't shake when somebody knocks on the window.<sup>121</sup>

'Technicolour stories' involved dispossession, hidden seeds, icons, siblings fending for themselves, illegal border crossings for food, secret food consumption, parents taken for interrogation and not returning, the kindness of some people when all else was so horrible, death experiences, acts of stealing, being orphaned, early marriage, cannibalism and rape.<sup>122</sup> These were traumatic memories survivors said they would never forget and, were visions that they remembered and rekindled every day. The memories were so vivid that they could only be labeled 'technicolour memories'. They were of an abnormal time in their lives as children.

A memory that had haunted Tonia for many years, involved hearing what she described as 'the clop, clopping of horses hooves in water, splashing, hearing the murmur of people talking, seeing a blanket over herself and a child screaming and crying'. She could not remember what it all meant. Her own mother had survived the Holodomor and arrived in Western Australia for a long holiday in 1969. As soon as she saw her mother she questioned her about this memory. The mother explained to this survivor that the blanket covered her as they secretly left their village. The child screaming was her younger sister, who was two months old at the time and who needed to be fed, but it was wet and cold and they were not able to stop anywhere. The old lady was amazed that her daughter had remembered that night.<sup>123</sup>

Lesia recounts the story of her beloved mother who made illegal border crossings across a sealed border, for food. She was always alone so as not to attract attention. Her train was derailed. The mother was seriously injured and cared for by strangers for six months. She eventually returned home weak and still injured. The survivor describes her achingly painful joy in seeing her mother again, when all she could do was kiss her hands and her feet (an extremely respectful act and common to these families and their culture). The gratitude and love that she felt had been indelibly imprinted in her mind, of that moment in time.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."

<sup>122</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

<sup>123</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."

<sup>124</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."

Children originally abandoned as orphans not only faced starvation but a lack of love and care of parents. Suzanna recounted the moment of being found by her father years after he had been released from imprisonment. The mother had perished. Suzanna had been taken in by another family for a year and then returned to an orphanage. She found out that her father was looking for her. He eventually tracked her down and took her back.<sup>125</sup> To think that you had lost everyone would have been a devastating loss for a child but the joy of reclaiming at least one parent would have been very emotional. This was her 'technicolour memory'. Father and daughter then remained together until she was taken as forced labour to Germany in 1943.<sup>126</sup>

Although having already spoken of finding out her best friend was cannibalized by the child's mother, and the child's head being discovered in the house, Orysia remembers the moment that she began what she called 'another life'.<sup>127</sup> She too had been orphaned by dekulakization. Her memory of this time was being dumped in the snow at seven years old and then being taken around by authorities, trying to encourage someone to take her in. Some people finally took her to an orphanage. She remembers praying surreptitiously, as it was not permitted to even make the sign of the cross. She actually demonstrated how she did it without being detected. A teacher decided to take her home to be company for his own two children. Unfortunately the cook and housekeeper of this household was a Komsomol member and took a dislike to this little 'capitalist orphan' (survivor's terminology). She withheld food from the little girl. The situation improved after a time but she remained an orphan.<sup>128</sup>

Petro's story of being thrown onto the street when the family was dispossessed, seeing his father arrested, watching his grandmother die was followed by the death of his father, all in quick succession.<sup>129</sup>

At the age of seven death became commonplace for Olena but, she remembers that she seemed to be crying all the time during the years of the Holodomor. She always cried at night at their home. One night her mother pulled her close and asked what was making her cry, she recounted what she had seen. On her way to school she had seen dead children being taken from houses and placed on a cart. She was upset by the deaths but also they had been laid out without anything, as would have been traditional, and carried by cart to the cemetery. She had walked along behind the cart with others and watched the cart being pulled up close to a pit

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<sup>125</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

and the children's bodies tipped in. She said that the bodies were not even picked up. 'They wouldn't use their hands'. She saw this near the collective farm of her village. Children witnessed such scenes daily but the effect was no less severe as the first time for a young mind.<sup>130</sup>

Another 'technicolour memory' came from Janina who remembers a young orphan girl, a friend, whom she knew and who had been 'seduced' (very young girls were taken advantage of by men in these tragic times) and as a teenager bore a child. The orphan's child cried from hunger all the time. The young mother who could not support them both had gone to ask the head of the collective farm for some of the bran that they gave to the pigs so that she could feed her child. The head of the collective said that his pigs were more important than her child. The child was constantly crying out for food and so the mother in her anguish strangled her hungry child. It is not known what happened to this young mother. Janina cried whilst sharing this story with the interviewer. She was shocked as such harsh treatment, especially as it could have well been her in the same situation and said:

When my children are not well I always think about this memory.<sup>131</sup>

Recurrent dreams such as those experienced by survivors of the Holodomor are said to awaken people because something in the dream has startled or frightened the dreamer. That is why such dreams are remembered. Thus the trace of that dream is strengthened, making it more likely to recur.<sup>132</sup> This could explain the notion of 'technicolour memories' being remembered so clearly. In moments of quiet and solitude these memories come flooding back. 'It's hard, hard, hard. We think and suffer...With the collective farm and Siberia, often going around and around at night'.<sup>133</sup>

Sofi, who was eighty-one years old at the time of the interview, spoke of planes dropping bombs and flames she experienced where she was working as a forced labourer near the Dutch border. She spoke of how it took confidence to face such events when you felt as if you were 'sitting in a little boat. You could be blown to pieces at any time'.<sup>134</sup>

I had a lot of nightmares for a long time... when lightening comes and thunder. Oh no, the war is in your sleep.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>131</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>132</sup> George Christos, *Memory and Dreams: The Creative Human Mind* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), p.144.

<sup>133</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>134</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

Although every subsequent event was frightening and would have left deeply traumatic outcomes for the Ukrainians interviewed, Olena summed up their feelings towards the Holodomor. The Ukrainian migrant refugees felt as though they were always there. 'I don't want it but it gets in my head by itself. I think that I will die with it. Nothing else can happen'.<sup>136</sup>

### **Validation of being Ukrainian**

Ukrainian migrants, as a result of the events in their lives, have rarely been validated as Ukrainian. Different labels were often assigned to them except their true Ukrainian identity. Documents from DP camps of Europe often labeled them as Russian. It is under that title they migrated to Western Australia where they were then socially classified by Australians as Russian, 'wogs', 'enemy aliens' or 'new Australians'.<sup>137</sup> Many falsified their papers in order that they not be declared as 'Soviet citizens', 'stateless' or 'Polish citizens' for fear of repatriation back to Soviet Ukraine under the Yalta Agreement.

Many survivors, when financially able, returned to their villages or towns to search for family and property. Some were able to find surviving relatives, others found homes destroyed and whole communities replaced by strangers where once everybody they knew had lived. Others continued their search elsewhere in Europe for some years. There was a hope that perhaps some family might be found. The outcome often resulted in disappointment.<sup>138</sup> Comments reflecting upon the situations that had developed during the Holodomor and the German invasion were noted by survivors with an air of quiet indignation.

They sent in the Russians after people died [during the Holodomor]. And now what is to be done? Today we have Russians there.<sup>139</sup>

The same sentiments were echoed by Olena who also noted after a visit home:

A lot of new people came to uninhabited houses from somewhere. Maybe they were Russians. God knows. They came and took over the houses and settled in, in our Ukraine.<sup>140</sup>

Theodora speaks about the German occupation when it was felt safe to return to the homes the Communists had evicted families from. She remembers her father going back to the village to find their home empty. There were Russians repopulating the village but they moved back in

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<sup>136</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>137</sup> Peters, *Milk and Honey - but No Gold. Postwar Migration to Western Australia, 1945-1964*, p.250.

<sup>138</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #2 "Ivan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>139</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #2 "Ivan"."

<sup>140</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."



anyway. She notes that only a few very poor Ukrainians who had survived the Holodomor were still there but the rest she said, with contempt, were Russians.<sup>141</sup>

### **God's will**

You can never explain to anybody what you have been through and how you survived. Only God knows. I think a strong belief helps you be positive. If you are negative you cave in.<sup>142</sup>

For many Ukrainian interviewees the words 'God's will' or 'my fate' was used to explain their life's journey. There was a resignation that everything that happened was meant to be and that it was out of their control. As religious people they held the belief that there was a path for each person and that path was ordained for them by God. They concluded that they lived, they survived, and it was God's will they endured such suffering:

When I recall all that experience (collectivization and the Holodomor) - it is all sad, very sad, it drives me to tears. But on the one hand I think that God let [me] go through all of that for a reason. God gave me health to overcome it with patience and, God saved me from something else. [Communism] was such a power, such a system. I don't understand it any other way because if there had been a different power, it wouldn't have happened.<sup>143</sup>

They wonder why God had allowed this to happen to them? One of the most elderly of the survivors constantly crossed herself during her interview and asked for God's forgiveness as she recounted her experiences.<sup>144</sup> Her feeling was that Ukrainian people must have sinned badly to have had to face such a fate. However, their faith in God in that unique way that only the truly strong and faithful display, played a major part in sustaining them through the years of trauma.

### **Living with a dual reality**

Urvashi Butalia's study of India's partition notes survivors living with memories of that event stating, 'we have put all our forgetting into working this land, into making it prosper'.<sup>145</sup> The Holodomor survivors reflected this behaviour and simply got on with setting up a new life in a new place as best they could, each time they were moved.

Some who live with memories of a traumatic historical experience have great difficulty in separating the past from the present and doing what A. M. Hoffman says 'seeing the past as

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<sup>141</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."

<sup>142</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

<sup>143</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>144</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."

<sup>145</sup> Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence. Voices from the Partition of India*, p.287.

the past'.<sup>146</sup> He states that the forgetting allowed survivors to do just that and allowed their personal mourning to come to an end. In the experience of this study, although it was perceived that survivors were able to separate the past from the present, it was not clear that forgetting actually allowed their mourning to end. The experiences, as with Holocaust survivors, were still occasionally relived in their dreams at night.<sup>147</sup>

The mental act of surviving was complicated. Merridale states that those who 'rebuilt their lives in the new world, developed ways of coping with a dual reality'.<sup>148</sup> This was similar to what Wanner called 'two personalities'. This was a reflection of decades of the Soviet habit where people 'secretly knew one thing and publicly another'.<sup>149</sup> Many Ukrainians have lived with a dual reality since surviving the Holodomor, with one very carefully hidden deep in their consciousness.

Julie Salverson describes the 'surrealness' of memories and testimonies, and how survivors must have found it disorienting to have such memories, whilst attempting to define themselves and establish relationships with others. She states that these memories must displace the terms upon which people function, and must rob them of a sense of happiness and the ability of the world to speak back to them. The act of forgetting in itself became a strategy for survival. The fragments that were remembered were kept in private, and as Catherine Merridale states, 'there was no framework for remembering'.<sup>150</sup> She was also of the opinion that the public silences over the years have been a type of violence in themselves. Merridale noted that there were none of the usual structures of civil society that work to build remembrance – ex-prisoners associations, charities and so on. To tell their stories, researchers and survivors, with their memories, need to 'cut their way through well-rehearsed state-sanctioned fable'.<sup>151</sup>

Salverson states that 'by naming the loss and accepting its burden, it is possible for the subject to re-enter the world'.<sup>152</sup> This description is one that could be applied to the Western Australian migrant refugees who remembered the Holodomor and its aftermath. They had

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<sup>146</sup> Hoffman, *After Such Knowledge: A Meditation on the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, p. 279.

<sup>147</sup> Diane Armstrong, *The Voyage of Their Life: The Story of the Ss Derna and Its Passengers* (Sydney: Flamingo, Harper Collins, 2001), p.473.

<sup>148</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*, p.223.

<sup>149</sup> Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, p.40.

<sup>150</sup> Merridale, *Night of Stone. Death and Memory in Russia*, p.223.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p.242.

<sup>152</sup> Julie Salverson, "Anxiety and Contact in Attending to a Play About Land Mines," in *Between Hope and Despair: Pedagogy and the Remembrance of Historical Trauma*, ed. Roger I. Simon, Sharon. Rosenberg, and Claudia Eppert (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2000), p.69.

moved on, raised families and established their new lives in a new country. It cannot be said however, that there was any desensitizing to the trauma.

Yes. It's hard, hard. Hard. We think and suffer. Often at night... With the collective farm and Siberia, often going around and around in my head.<sup>153</sup>

An eighty-one year old survivor who was proud of the fact that she was still very much in control of her faculties, spoke of how she didn't like to talk about the past, but tried to forget and look to the future. She spoke of how her confidence in herself was broken during the years of trauma, especially with bombs dropping around her during the war. She remembered flames being everywhere and she could be blown to pieces at any given moment. Although she spoke of always trying to look towards tomorrow, she said she had been having nightmares for a long time.

When the lightening comes and thunder... Oh no, the war is in your sleep.<sup>154</sup>

Primo Levi speaks of the feeling of unease in thinking that so many perished 'who were at least as worthy as us, if not more so', of living. This was an issue that surfaced with the Ukrainian migrant refugees' memories. Levi in his interview places against the 'sense of unease', a feeling of a 'sense of guilt'. He also raises the notion of feeling guilty for not perhaps 'putting up more resistance'. He reconciles with himself by recognizing that he had become a witness and was at peace with that, rather than believing that he was a hero, a survivor. He has, like the Ukrainians remembering the Holodomor, 'preserved a visual and acoustic memory of [his] experiences', and his position he said, was 'to remember and to hope', for a more humane future. He believed that suffering was the same for everyone and, it is believed by the researcher, no more so than for those who experienced or remembered the events of the Holodomor.<sup>155</sup>

Olena speaks of always feeling as if she was still there (in Ukraine during the Holodomor) and the whole event was often on her mind. She says that she knows that she will just die with the Holodomor etched on her mind.<sup>156</sup>

It must be remembered that these refugee migrants had not been provided with any emotional rehabilitation, and the silence regarding the Holodomor contributed to the pain of the memories. People in such a situation would find solace in retreating and focusing totally on

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<sup>153</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."

<sup>154</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #37 "Sofi"."

<sup>155</sup> Vigevani, "Words, Memory, Hope (1984) [Interview with Primo Levi, from 'Le Parole, Il Recordo, La Speranza', *Bollettinodella Comunita Israelitica Di Milano*, Xi, 5, May 1984]," pp.253-57.

<sup>156</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

their new lives and families in Western Australia. Perhaps with the new era of openness, transparency and acknowledgement by the Ukrainian Government, the country and survivors will feel better able to publicly outline the events of that time in history, and, name and commemorate their loss in a more global manner.

Commemorative acts might lessen the burden of the Holodomor for Ukraine. By providing people with an opportunity to face and work through such memories, Ukrainians who face the conflict of memory with the struggle of remembering, versus the struggle of forgetting, may overcome ongoing conflict and find peace and healing within themselves. Levi in his interviews regarding Holocaust survivors speaks of the unease that people feel, by becoming a survivor of such a trauma. The feeling of being alive 'in someone else's stead... of having survived by chance', could perhaps be lessened in its intensity.<sup>157</sup> Interestingly, although there was a palpable lament over the loss of what could have been, and who they could have become, the Ukrainian interviewees did not see themselves lacking or hindered in function as human beings.

## Conclusion

As the history of the Holodomor recedes into the past it becomes more important to vigorously remember it. Although there is now an active programme of collecting witness testimony and further documentation for confirmation and posterity, this period in Ukraine's history may remain as Zoe Waxman states, 'a dark period of history that is constantly referred to but never fully comprehended or explored'.<sup>158</sup>

The effects of this event in the lives of Ukrainian survivors have been far reaching and have impacted on their lives. The effects have also permeated the lives of the children of the survivors as the first generation Ukrainian Australians. There is certainly a place for further investigation of this phenomenon.

We still have much to explore in understanding all that there is to know about the Holodomor. In her discussion of the Holocaust, Sandra Williams questions why nations were silent 'when people's lives and dignity were at stake'.<sup>159</sup> David Marples writes that one of the problems in studying the Holodomor has been its obscurity. He suggests that it may take another decade

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<sup>157</sup> Vigevani, "Words, Memory, Hope (1984) [Interview with Primo Levi, from 'Le Parole, Il Recordo, La Speranza', *Bollettino della Comunita Israelitica Di Milano*, Xi, 5, May 1984]," pp.253-54.

<sup>158</sup> Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation*, p.188.

<sup>159</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

before issues surrounding the Holodomor are disclosed and resolved enough, for scholars to develop a complete picture of events.<sup>160</sup>

Australia has provided refuge to many different nationalities having escaped dictatorial and dangerous regimes. Learning from memories such as those of the Holodomor survivors in this study, is of great importance in understanding migrant refugees, and supporting their meaningful transition into our society. Such material states Macnamara, 'erases the boundaries between generations' and ensures that no matter how much time has passed, 'you will be standing in direct relationship with the witness'.<sup>161</sup> With knowledge and understanding of our different communities, comes health and strength for the spiritual and political development of our nations. As Williams states, 'whatever we record, restore, or transmit will become public record. Whatever we decide to ignore, to discard, or to overlook will disappear'.<sup>162</sup>

This story is important regarding the history of migration in Western Australia. This study has given those Ukrainian migrant refugees who sought refuge in Western Australia, a voice to their memories of a painful and traumatic past. Figes calls the people in his research heroes.<sup>163</sup> The Ukrainian migrants in Western Australia join the ranks of such heroes for having the courage to share their memories.

Memories tend to inform the alternative or hidden transcripts of disenfranchised individuals just as official historiography is part of the public transcript asserted by the state to explain and naturalize power relations.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> David R Marples, *Motherland: Russia in the 20th Century* (London: Pearson Education, 2002), p.110-11.

<sup>161</sup> Lisa Macnamara, "Holocaust Stories Now Held at Monash," *The Australian*, May 23rd 2007, p.34.

<sup>162</sup> Williams, "The Impact of the Holocaust on Survivors and Their Children."

<sup>163</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, p. 663.

<sup>164</sup> Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine*, p.205.

## **Conclusion:**

### **Was it genocide?**

Outlined throughout this thesis, have been the effects of policies generated by Stalin's regime in Soviet Ukraine during 1932-1933. There is no dispute with scholars of this era of Soviet history that the Soviet policies at the time resulted in a famine now called the Holodomor. Those who suffered the trauma inflicted upon the Ukrainian people faced purges such as dekulakization, collectivization and the ensuing famine conditions with disastrous outcomes. Those who lived through these years of hardship and repression tell a story that when placed alongside information of the period and subsequent research by historians and scholars, points to an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. The key findings of this study of Ukrainian migrants in Western Australia reflect similar themes that can be added to the current historiography regarding to Ukraine's Holodomor of 1932-1933. While testimonies in other Diasporas have been accumulating, as early as the 1950s, in some cases, this is the first study and oral history collected of those migrant refugees who experienced Soviet Ukraine.

The question of the Holodomor has been debated academically, popularly and politically for years. The Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute hosted an international conference on 17-18 November 2008, entitled *The Great Famine in Ukraine: The Holodomor and Its Consequences, 1933 to the Present*. This was part of its commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Holodomor. Heorhii Kasianov (Institute of the History of Ukraine) in discussing the intervention and memory, notes how:

A canonical narrative about the Holodomor has formed in contemporary times both in Ukraine and in the k. The narrative has proceeded from denial to recognition of the event, then to recognition of the manmade nature of the event, its anti-Ukrainian motivation, and finally to acknowledgement of the Famine as genocide.<sup>1</sup>

### **Conceptualization of genocide**

The concept of genocide was first articulated in 1944, by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish jurist, in an attempt to have nations recognize such crimes and outlaw such behaviour. The term 'refers to a type of mass killing widely regarded as the most egregious of crime'.<sup>2</sup> In 1921 Lemkin insists state sovereignty does not give a state the right to kill innocent people. In the 1930's, he summoned international support from criminal lawyers to decide what to do with regimes

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<sup>1</sup> "Conference on the Great Ukrainian Famine Initiates New Era in Holodomor Studies," Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, [www.huri.harvard.edu](http://www.huri.harvard.edu).

<sup>2</sup> Marie Fleming, "Genocide and the Body Politic in the Time of Modernity," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.97.

that resorted to such behaviour. After World War Two and the Holocaust, Lemkin is known to have voiced his concern about criminal mistreatment of 'social' groups, but after receiving pressure, the United Nations backed away from including 'political and other groups' in the list of potential victims of genocide.<sup>3</sup>

Lemkin describes genocide as 'the coordinated and planned annihilation of a national, religious or racial group by a variety of actions aimed at undermining the foundations essential to the survival of the group as a group'.<sup>4</sup> Thus a criminal intent with 'the emphasis on intention and on the individual or collective responsibility of a well defined set of actors (the perpetrators)'.<sup>5</sup> The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ratified by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260A (III) of 9 December 1948, was quoted in the latest publication issued by the Ukrainian World Congress during 2007:

Article 1: The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and punish.

Article 2: In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) killing members of the group;
- (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.<sup>6</sup>

Lemkin argues that in the modern era 'the dominant form of genocide was the destruction of a culture without an attempt to annihilate physically its bearers'.<sup>7</sup> Chalk and Jonassohn argue Lemkin and others did not then realize that twentieth-century genocide 'was increasingly becoming a case of the state physically liquidating a group of its own citizens', a form of genocide experienced in Armenia and, later in the Nazi Holocaust.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> F Chalk, "Redefining Genocide," in *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, ed. G J Andreopoulos (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 47-48.

<sup>5</sup> Andreopoulos, ed. *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, p.2.

<sup>6</sup> Alekseyenko et al., "Holodomor : Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930's ".

<sup>7</sup> Chalk and Jonassohn, "Conceptualizations of Genocide and Ethnocide," p.183.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.184.

Daily media regularly feature stories of genocide or mass violence. This trend has helped promote research by scholars on the past and ongoing cases of mass murder. New evidence about past atrocities, such as that emerging from the formerly secret Soviet archives, has brought many events to public attention including those listed below. The concern regarding recent genocides and denial of earlier ones, has led to the creation of centres for Holocaust and genocide studies and University courses on genocide.

One such center that has focused on the twentieth century genocides is the Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the University of New South Wales. Their information booklet notes specific population losses to genocide between 1915 and 2000 as being:

1915-1925	Armenians	1,500,000
1932-1933	Ukrainians	10,000,000
1939-1945	Jews	6,000,000
1965-1973	Hutu	160,000
1972	Burundis	100,000-200,000
1975-1979	Cambodians	1,500,000-3,000,000
1987-1988	Iraq	100,000 kurds
1983-	Sudanese	2,000,000 ongoing
1975-1999	East Timorese	150,000
1992-1994	Bosnian Muslims	150,000
1994	Tutsi	1,000,000
1999	kosovar Albanians	c. 6,000
2000	Congolese	3,500,000 ongoing. <sup>9</sup>

Sociologists such as Leo kuper, Irving Horowitz, Helen Fein and Kurt Jonassohn in teaming up with the historian Frank Chalk, discuss the emergence of comparative genocide studies. Genocide has come under close scrutiny from social scientists around the world. One area for debate has been the precise meaning of the intent clause, or the way by which intent of the perpetrator can be shown, as opposed to the motive.<sup>10</sup> Chalk, in defining a field of research discusses the different needs of social scientists and historians from international legal authorities. He with his colleague and sociologist Jonassohn, prefers a broader definition of

<sup>9</sup> Australian Institute for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, "Information [Booklet]."

<sup>10</sup> Andreopoulos, ed. *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, p.4.



genocide where the role of the social scientist is seen as one of 'examining the history of mass killings and identifying any underlying patterns and common elements' that might reveal some process occurring.<sup>11</sup>

The two sociologists disagree with the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide because it excludes political and social groups from the definition. They criticize the acceptance of the UN definition which they believe implies a continuation of silence on different victimized social groups in the past, including the '15 to 20 million Soviet civilians liquidated as 'class enemies' and 'enemies of the people' between 1920 and 1939'.<sup>12</sup> Chalk also notes the other groups similarly ignored, such as the mentally impaired and homosexuals murdered by the Nazis of Germany, as well as the Cambodian atrocities that defined classifications within their societies.

Chalk and Jonassohn emphasize that 'a genocidal society exists when a government and its citizens persistently pursue policies which they know will lead to the annihilation of the aboriginal inhabitants of their country'. Intentionality is demonstrated by persistence in such policies, whether or not the intent to destroy the group is verbalized.<sup>13</sup> Chalk states that Armenians, Ukrainians, Jews, Gypsies and Khmer know better than anyone, how the policies and ideas of a government can be lethal in its pursuit of a perfect utopia.

Helen Fein also discusses the difficulty of demonstrating 'intent to destroy [a] ... group, as such'. She too agrees with the pattern of purposeful action, which she believes is the bridge that parallels the legal concept of intent.<sup>14</sup> Fein specifically notes the destruction of the Ukrainians in 1932-1933. They were, in her words, decimated by a man-made famine that fits the Convention definition of genocide.<sup>15</sup> She was especially concerned as a social scientist, in what she was able to do to track and scale such events, which she noted resulted not only in genocide but also resulted in death, disappearance, torture, maiming, numbing and degradation.

Lyman Legters in a study of the applicability of the UN definition of genocide to what was termed as 'Soviet mass killing', found it too narrow with the exclusion of socioeconomic

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<sup>11</sup> Chalk, "Redefining Genocide," p.50.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.53.

<sup>14</sup> Helen Fein, "Genocide, Terror, Life Integrity, and War Crimes: The Case for Discrimination," in *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*, ed. George J Andreopoulos (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1994), p.97.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p.99.

classes. Legters argues that the elimination of the so called wealthy kurkul class and their families 'was a clear case of genocide'.<sup>16</sup>

A common complaint concerning the discussion of genocide amongst scholars is the term has faced an overuse, with other terms such as 'ethnocide' and 'linguicide', according to authors Gellately, Professor of History (Florida State University) and Kiernan, Professor of History and Director of Genocide Studies (Yale University).<sup>17</sup> They believe the UN Convention provides the best tool to distinguish the different historical cases. Their publication was a collection of essays by scholars such as Eric D. Weitz, Director of the Centre for German and European Studies and Arsham and Charlotte Ohanessian Chair (University of Minnesota), discussing the modernity of genocides in the twentieth century; Jay Winter, Professor of History (Yale University), covering the Armenian genocide; Robert Melson, Professor of Political Science and Coordinator of the Jewish Studies Program (Purdue University), outlining the genocide in Rwanda, and, Jacques Semelin, Professor Institute d'Études Politiques and Senior Researcher (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris), discussing ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. All authors discuss their own particular focus relating to the concept of genocide. Genocide per se was given a generous outline as would be expected from such scholars.

The discussion in the above publication devoted to genocide covers issues such as the predilections in human society or individual human beings, on the potential to become a serial killer under certain circumstances, and, the potential for all human societies to debate genocidal trends. Generally it was noted by the authors that one of the crucial issues, was that of survivor recognition. They also noted that scholars had a responsibility to the victims of any such crime, as their advocates, to be extremely careful when delineating legal rights and jurisdictions, for any contesting and categorizing of genocide, which may deny the victims of that genocide their legal and legitimate remedy.<sup>18</sup>

Fleming devotes some discussion to what she refers to as the 'new unprecedented aspect of state-planned and state-sponsored mass killings of civilian populations'. Fleming states that genocide was not a new crime and that 'genocidal acts against helpless populations have been

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<sup>16</sup> Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*, p.21.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, "Investigating Genocide," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.377.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.379-80.

going on for centuries'.<sup>19</sup> She discusses the nature and involvement of people in the crimes committed, where ordinary people have been mobilized to support the genocidal regimes and participated in the crimes. She discusses the need for modern regimes to mobilize their people, alongside the sovereign status of the participating politic. This she believes, delineates the recent cases of genocide against what might have taken place in earlier times. This aspect of 'the nature of sovereignty and law' was something that Fleming believes could assist us to understand modern genocides.<sup>20</sup>

### **Genocide Internationally**

Eric Weitz provides an historical account for the rise in genocides in the twentieth century. He focuses upon Nazi Holocaust, the Soviet Union under Lenin and Stalin, Cambodia under the khmer Rouge and the former Yugoslavia. Weitz focuses on the four listed, because he believes that they are some of the most important cases, and they have common factors that apply to each case. He delineates the 'ideologies of race and nation, revolutionary regimes with vast utopian ambitions, moments of crisis generated by war and domestic upheaval', which he believes serve as a guide to other cases of genocide, and to be a warning for future violations that may constitute genocide.<sup>21</sup>

Weitz discusses the compliance attained by fear in Stalin's policies, which deliberately caused fear and disorientation, for example, by rousing victims in the middle of the night and the use of the Black Marias – the NKVD's motorcars to collect them. Prisoners were not informed of the charges against them and were completely powerless to affect the outcome of their life. The Soviet power sought to 'reshape the behaviour, the thought patterns, and the very composition of the population' in a systematic purge of its citizens.<sup>22</sup> One very critical element common to all examples used by Weitz was the fact that the different regimes used people to do the work of what he called 'population politics'. He discusses the jailers, the guards, torturers and killers, along with the very large force of military and security personnel, whose main job involved the purges.<sup>23</sup>

The victims of genocide face a deadly outcome with the corruptive psychological impact affecting them throughout their lives. The legacy of mass violence, on the scale witnessed by the above communities, is inescapable by those who have survived it. Weitz discusses the

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<sup>19</sup> Fleming, "Genocide and the Body Politic in the Time of Modernity," p.97.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.98.

<sup>21</sup> Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*, p.15.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.96.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.242.

issue of the nation-state being problematic, and the belief that the state should be the representative of one single people, with only those people living within its territory. He notes that such situations, where the modern state has been linked to the nation's ideologies of nation and race, have been the source of many tragedies, such as those discussed in his publication.<sup>24</sup>

Chalk and Jonassohn state that Kuper has made more contribution to the study of genocide than anyone since Lemkin. They note that Kuper's publications on genocide have been useful contributions to the literature on genocide, but are critical of his inclusion of some cases, whereby there was not intent to annihilate a certain people as whole group. Kuper's arguments analyze the genocidal processes and motivations confronting the methodology of defining genocide. Chalk and Jonassohn note that he was increasingly concerned about the frequency of genocide in modern history, and he defines them as occurring 'within nation-states that have the character of plural societies, the creation of new multiethnic states during the period of colonization and decolonization'.<sup>25</sup>

Kuper lists three categories around which the perpetrators motives can be classified: the first one relates to genocides that are designed to settle religious, racial and ethnic differences; the second relates to genocides that intend to terrorize a people conquered by a colonizing empire and finally, genocides that are used to enforce or fulfill a political ideology.<sup>26</sup> In a later publication, Kuper discusses the need for international pressure groups, as one approach to curtail the development of genocide and the major obstacles to the implementation of the UN Convention. Kuper believes discussion should focus on the interrelationships between state interests and values.<sup>27</sup>

Chalk and Jonassohn outline the typology presented by Roger W. Smith, that was based on the 'motives of the perpetrator'. His fifth category related to ideological genocide, that he stated was motivated by the desire 'to impose a particular notion of salvation or purification on an entire society'. This form of genocide, he said, was commonly found in the twentieth century, and he cited the examples of the Armenians, the Soviet Union, the Holocaust, and Cambodia.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.254.

<sup>25</sup> Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*, p.17.

<sup>26</sup> Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), pp.11-18.

<sup>27</sup> Leo Kuper, *The Prevention of Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

<sup>28</sup> Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*, p.22.

Stéphane Courtois, Director of Research at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) (France), editor of *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*, stated that ‘communist regimes...turned mass crime into a full-blown system of government’. He cites an unofficial death toll of 94 million, in communist regimes, which did not include what he classified as the ‘excess deaths’ (decrease of the population due to lower than the expected birth rate). Courtois’ count (the order is his) is outlined as:

20 million in the Soviet Union

65 million in the People's Republic of China

1 million in Vietnam

2 million in North Korea

2 million in Cambodia

1 million in the Communist states of Eastern Europe

150,000 in Latin America

1.7 million in Africa

1.5 million in Afghanistan

10,000 deaths ‘resulting from actions of the international communist movement and communist parties not in power’.<sup>29</sup>

Chalk and Jonasson deem the genocide of the Soviet citizens was not unlike the Nazi system, whereby people were exterminated because they were ‘part of humanity unworthy of existence’.<sup>30</sup> The publication, authored by European specialists Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panne, Andrzej Paczkowski and Karel Bartosek, evoked much criticism as well as great support when originally published in French in 1997. It has however, become a scholarly work, in conveying the scale of Communist policies and their tragic outcomes.

## **Famine**

The aspect of famine resulting in starvation being used as a political tool to annihilate Ukrainian people during the Holodomor of 1932-1933 was a major consideration. In examining famines and their history accompanying the subsequent human rights abuses, Alex de Waal, Co-director African Rights and the International African Institute, states that human rights abuses are invariably an intimate part of famine creation. The violations of residence and property rights with the repression of freedoms of expression and association, have,

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<sup>29</sup> Stéphane Courtois, ed. *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

according to de Waal, 'encouraged the abusive forces that create famine'.<sup>31</sup> He notes the work of Amartya Sen, an Indian economist, philosopher and also winner of the Nobel memorial Prize in Economic Science in 1988. Sen worked on aspects of famine, human development theory, welfare economics, the underlying mechanisms of poverty and political liberalism. He states that liberal democracies do not suffer famine:

The diverse political freedoms that are available in a democratic state, including regular elections, free newspapers and freedom of speech, must be seen as the real force behind the elimination of famines. Here again, it appears that one set of freedoms – to criticize, publish and vote – are usually linked with other types of freedoms, such as the freedom to escape starvation and famine mortality.<sup>32</sup>

De Waal writes about the Geneva Conventions that contain strong provisions prohibiting the use of starvation as weapon of warfare. He states that for such war famines, the challenge is to find a way to deter those who would cause them. De Waal discusses the use of methods used by the Ethiopian Government creating a war famine in Eritrea in the 1960s, as well as Hareghe and Bale in 1979-84 and Tigray during 1980 and 1985. He outlines the use of 'scorched earth tactics, requisitioning of food by armies, blockades of food and people in sieges, the imposition of restrictions on movement and trade, forcible relocation of the civilian population and enforced rationing of food'.<sup>33</sup> These were the same tactics outlined in the Ukrainian famine of 1932-1933.

It was interesting to note de Waal's comment on the famine that ultimately 'a culprit had to be found'. This culprit had to be a convenient one for the government of the day and any donors of aid, which eventually occurred in this case. The culprit was named as the natural environment, drought. The debate regarding the Ukrainian famine whether an environmental or man made disaster also took on a similar notion by authors such as Wheatcroft. Although many soldiers were said to be fed by some relief measures, few rural people were and therefore de Waal stated, 'the humanitarian effort prolonged the war, and with it, human suffering'.<sup>34</sup>

So far it can be said that no-one has been charged with the war crime of starvation. In fact prosecution is seen as a 'post hoc' response which doesn't help the victims at the time. However if such a perspective were to be applied to criminal justice then there would be no courts. De Waal takes a long term view of such famines and discusses the need to create

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<sup>31</sup> Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (Oxford, Bloomington & Indianapolis: African Rights and the African Institute & Indiana University Press, 1997), p.2.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p.117.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.127.

‘effective deterrents’ with criminal liability being the most effective option. He firmly believes that the laws of war and human rights laws provide a strong legal foundation for protecting people from famine.<sup>35</sup> Some countries such as the United States have imposed sanctions, in an attempt to challenge errant countries such as Iraq, Haiti and Serbia. This is the middle ground between human rights law and what De Waal called ‘de facto humanitarian principles’.

Although he focuses predominantly on the African continent famine genocides, de Waal’s final comment was that ‘The right to be free from famine is socially and historically determined and politically negotiated ... guarantees of liberal civil and political rights assist freedom from famine’.<sup>36</sup>

Original discussions relating to genocide were the domain of international lawyers. Recent decades has seen social scientists and historians entering the debate. Their work focusses on the limitations of the United Nations Convention on Genocide and its internationally accepted statutes on genocide as a crime. Such debates have been the focus of recent failed efforts by Ukraine to classify the 1932-1933 Holodomor as genocide. The country faces the task of bringing this event to the attention of the world’s governments, by unearthing as much evidence both archival and historic and presenting a complete case before the United Nations. The question of whether the Holodomor was genocide was the last research question of this study, aimed at assessing whether this event was such an experience.

### **Ukraine’s Holodomor as genocide**

Over the last half decade the Ukrainian diaspora has been mobilized to bring about their version of the truth of this tragic event in Ukraine’s history. Historians have been working to bring the Ukrainian genocide to the attention of the world, and, to ensure that people understand the Holodomor Ukrainians were forced to endure during 1932-1933. The West is still hardly aware of it having occurred. It has been denied for many years by Soviet authorities until 1991 and correspondents from the West who knew otherwise. Chalk and Jonassohn’s research led them to the conclusion that ‘until very recently, scholars participated in a process of pervasive and self-imposed denial... it was the visitors who wrote the history of their conquests, and even the victims of mass exterminations accepted their fate as a natural

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.152.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.214.

outcome of defeat'.<sup>37</sup> The famine engineered by Stalin and his Soviet regime had three major objectives that were noted by the U.S. Ukraine Famine Commission in the 1980s:

1. To exterminate a significant portion of the segment of the Ukrainian population which had vociferously and openly resisted increasingly oppressive Soviet rule.
2. To terrorize the surviving Ukrainian population into submission to Soviet totalitarianism
3. To provide monies for Soviet industrial expansion from the sale of expropriated Ukrainian wheat and other foodstuffs.<sup>38</sup>

The famine, the Holodomor, was classified by the US Commission as being genocide, it was perpetrated by a Communist regime which, while calling itself internationalist, was contaminated by Soviet chauvinism.<sup>39</sup>

Just as knowledge about Ukraine and the suffering of its people has gone largely unnoticed throughout the world for many years, so too has this has been the case in Western Australia.

Recording of the testimonies of the Western Australian Ukrainian migrant refugees was the beginning of the search to gain an understanding of the effects of this Holodomor upon its survivors who had begun new lives in Australia. It was felt that as many interviews as possible would provide a more comprehensive and rich collection of data. Much of what we have come to know of previous Ukrainian communities' experience of genocide, has been through stories or interviews.<sup>40</sup> The interviewees shared narratives that provide much insight into their plight within Soviet Ukraine, during the years of the Holodomor. The research uncovered and answered the questions that it sought to address and more, with the inclusion of the sections on the Forced Labour in Germany for example. The research also uncovered evidence that this was indeed a crime against humanity and genocide.

The stories discovered through this study told of deaths faced by peasant and kurkul families that began in 1927. This was the period of dekulakization, the time before famine that unleashed its devastating effects upon Ukrainians. Dekulakization and repressions faced by so called 'wealthier peasants', was remembered by the interviewees. The migrants recalled parents being taken away never to return. Ella, katerina and Mykola remember the terrifying evictions from their homes and beloved fathers being forcibly taken, jailed, exiled or executed

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<sup>37</sup> Chalk and Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*, p.7.

<sup>38</sup> Myron Kuropas and United States Ukraine Famine Commission, "The Famine in Ukraine: A Teacher's Guide," League of Ukrainian Canadians.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> A. Dunar, "Oral History Review," 2003, no. September 4th (2003). ;Andreopoulos, ed. *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions*.



for unknown crimes.<sup>41</sup> Bohdan's father was sent to Siberia where he died and Irka and Halena remember similar outcomes with fathers facing the repressive policies of Stalin.<sup>42</sup> The families of these Ukrainians faced the removal of everything they possessed and being thrown out of the homes that were often destroyed.

Sixteen interviewees remember Communist activists sent to conduct terrifying house searches and removing any food or item that could be traded for food. These people were noted in Chapter Three. Valya, Olena and Hanka described the actions of the activists and the searches conducted, often when a parent was not present.<sup>43</sup> The actions of the activists were specifically to cause the greatest distress, trauma and ultimately death by hunger. Taking everything away from the Ukrainian families was to further cause unbelievable hardship with collectivization from 1929.

Collectivization was to weaken any independence of households, who had everything removed to a local collective farm and requisitioning instigated. Only the house was left to stay in, but nothing else. People did not want to join the collective farms but had no other option but to starve to death or be at the mercy of the authorities.<sup>44</sup> Interviewees state that 'the collective farms were set up to destroy the Ukrainian people'.<sup>45</sup>

The ensuing famine was to take the greatest toll, if dekulakization and refusing to join the collective farms did not. Chapter Four provides a clear picture of the devastation caused by Stalin's policies that caused death by starvation, the Holodomor. Tonia, Marko, Halena, Josep, Petro, Mila, Darka, Stefka and the other migrant refugees interviewed for this study, were eyewitnesses to deaths of family and friends from forced starvation. The extreme starvation effected swollen bodies that were distressing enough, without the subsequent deaths faced by many people.<sup>46</sup> The migrants remember disturbing images of death by

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<sup>41</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>42</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #24 "Irka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

<sup>43</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>44</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>45</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #40 "Zirka"."

<sup>46</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #10 "Bohdan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

starvation and the fear of being considered ‘enemies of the state’ at the same time. Children learnt to keep silent about the events and human destruction around them.<sup>47</sup>

Ukrainian migrant refugee Nina, remembers the teachers, the priests and the highly educated being sent into exile or certain death to Siberia.<sup>48</sup> There were memories of dead and dying being further brutalized by militia police, as they lay dying.<sup>49</sup> The villages and towns lost their Ukrainian inhabitants through dekulakization, collectivization or death by starvation. The blame was placed with the Communists, by migrant refugees such as Hanka who experienced the Holodomor.<sup>50</sup> The empty places were resettled by Russians under the December 1933 Resettlement Policy by Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR.<sup>51</sup>

Starvation, a total lack of food or the unreachable available food (food kept in storage under guard) made up the bulk of the memories shared by the migrant refugees. The lack of bread was a constant, accompanying every discussion related to the memories of the famine.<sup>52</sup> Stories outlined the lengths to which people, including young children, went to in order to find bread to eat, bread that was forbidden to them in so many different ways. Yet there were also reports of a ‘really good harvest’ and stockpiles of grain that children attempted to steal from.<sup>53</sup> Effects of the period of famine, such a disease and cannibalism, were part of the horrifying stories divulged by these people. The stories of the Holodomor provide a clear picture of the horror and hardship inflicted upon the Ukrainian people by the policies of Stalin and the Soviet regime over a period of years but especially during the Famine of 1932-1933.

If one was to reflect back to the major objectives of the Soviet engineered famine, noted by kuropas and the US Ukrainian Famine Commission in the 1980’s, one is able to agree, that it was intended to exterminate a significant portion of the Ukrainian population which resisted Soviet policies and rule; people were terrorized into submission to Soviet totalitarianism; and monies were gained from the sale of expropriated Ukrainian wheat and other foodstuffs, that would have been directed into Soviet industrial expansion.

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<sup>47</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."

<sup>48</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>49</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

<sup>50</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."

<sup>51</sup> Moroziuk, "Consequences of Famine Genocide."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #2 "Ivan"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #4 "Olena"."

<sup>52</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #34 "Zoya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #15 "Darka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #21 "Marko"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

<sup>53</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #14 "Luba"."

The data collected for this study brings together the past and present scholarly research, the latest archival data that has only recently been released, witness testimony of what life was like during that Soviet period and also the long term effect of an event perpetrated by the Soviet regime upon its own Ukrainian citizens, who now live in Western Australia.

History has failed to both inform the world about the Holodomor, as well as condemn the perpetrators. German diplomats now honour the victims of the Holocaust, but the Russians have long resisted the call at the United Nations, to label the Holodomor genocide and honour Ukraine's victims.<sup>54</sup> In response to this denialism the call has only grown stronger. The All-Ukrainian Council of Churches petitioned to declare the Holodomor an 'act of genocide'. The council included Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish and Muslim leaders and it presented their petition to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2003.<sup>55</sup> Past President Yushenko adopted the 2007 Bill declaring the Holodomor genocide and hoped that this would be formally adopted by the United Nations.<sup>56</sup> As yet this has not happened.

Historian Oleh Gerus of the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies at the University of Manitoba states that Hitler, in witnessing a 'general indifference to Stalin's engineered mass starvation of Ukrainians', was 'certainly encouraged to launch his planned extermination of the Jewish population'.<sup>57</sup> The ramifications of such a concept are grave indeed. Dietsch cites Hryshko who states that 'only the Jewish victims of Nazi genocide in World War II can be compared to the Ukrainian victims of Soviet genocide... but even this cannot eclipse the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933'.<sup>58</sup>

Two writers of Jewish descent living in Ukraine were able to provide eyewitness accounts of the Holodomor in their publications. Grossman, who had worked in the Donbas region in the early 1930s, and Kopelev, who had been a Communist activist during those years.<sup>59</sup> These authors have added to our understanding of the history of the human loss of this period with eyewitness accounts of the persecution from a very different quarter.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Luciuk, ed. *Not Worthy. Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and the New York Times*, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Soloviy and Shumeyko, eds., *The Golgotha of Ukraine. Eyewitness Accounts of the Famine in Ukraine Instigated and Fostered by the Kremlin in an Attempt to Quell Ukrainian Resistance to Soviet Russian National and Social Enslavement of the Ukrainian People*, p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> Cited in Volkovetska, "Foreign Minister Tarasiuk Attributes Russia's Position on Severe Famine in Ukraine in 1932-1933 to Its Reluctance to Give Appraisal to Crimes of Communist Regime."

<sup>57</sup> Gerus, "The Great Ukrainian Famine - Genocide."

<sup>58</sup> Dietsch, *Making Sense of Suffering. Holocaust and Holodomor in Ukrainian Historical Culture*, p. 124.

<sup>59</sup> Grossman, *Forever Flowing.*; Kopelev, *The Education of a True Believer*.

<sup>60</sup> Kopelev, *The Education of a True Believer*.

Mazurkevich in her closing statement of the US Commission on the Ukrainian Famine noted that although millions of lives had been lost:

We can in some small way ensure the small measure of justice, justice that derives from setting the record straight, by seeing to it that this story becomes part of the consciousness of future generations.<sup>61</sup>

The head of the SBU (Security Service of Ukraine) Nalyvaichenko, stated at a roundtable debate on the Holodomor with the recently released SBU archive documents related to the Holodomor, that there should be no secrets, cover-ups or distortions. He invites researchers and historians to co-operate and work together in uncovering the details about this event. He remarks that these recent documents confirm that there was no doubt about the Holodomor being genocide of the Ukrainian people. He states that it was pre-planned and pre-conceived. His task he said, was 'to map out a strategy for reviving the Ukrainian people's national memory' with the assistance of the hoped for Institute of National Memory, to be built in Kyiv.<sup>62</sup>

It is important to note, as Emeritus Professor Serbyn of the University of Quebec in Montreal did in 2007, that scholars who have re-examined the question of the genocidal nature of Stalin's forced starvation in the light of new documents available for research, are concluding that it was legitimate to qualify it thus. Serbyn in his 'smoking gun' paper quoted the statement of Nicolas Werth, who deduced that the cluster of actions undertaken by the Stalinist regime were to clearly to punish the Ukrainian peasantry by famine and terror. Werth has now classified this event as genocide.<sup>63</sup>

Serbyn places the locus of this crime against the Ukrainian SSR. He states that it was focused upon the 'predominantly Ukrainian Kuban and other regions of the RSFSR with sizeable Ukrainian populations'. He believes that the destruction of the Ukrainian national elites, especially the academic, cultural and political leaders was a major part of the destruction of the Ukrainian nation. Serbyn believes that Stalin's motive was to 'break the backbone of the nation by executing a sizable percentage of the people and reducing the rest to servile obedience'. He did this through famine, executions, exhausting forced labour and sheer terror tactics.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Mace and Heretz, eds., *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933. Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine*, p.1732.

<sup>62</sup> Siundiukov, "In the Merciless Light of Memory."

<sup>63</sup> Serbyn, "Is There a "Smoking Gun" for the Holodomor?."

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Serbyn notes the assessment of the Holodomor by Prokopenko, a member of the Communist Party who stated to a group of collective farmers that 'starvation in Ukraine was brought about in order to reduce the number of Ukrainians, resettle in their place people from another part of Russia, and in this way kill all thought of independence'. Serbyn states that Prokopenko's assessment reflected the definition of the crime of genocide in the UN Convention. His statement fulfils the requirement of intent to destroy and the identity of the victim group and it leaves no doubt that the perpetrator was Stalin and the Communist regime.<sup>65</sup>

Serbyn brings to light Lemkin's 1953 address at the Manhattan Center, regarding the extermination of Ukrainians by the Soviet regime. This address was originally referenced by Conquest in 1986. Lemkin's address was located in the Rare Books and Manuscripts division of the New York Public Library. *The Raphael Lemkin Papers, 1947-1959, ZL-273, Reel 3*, was located by scholars working separately, Steven Jacobs, Roman Serbyn and Marko Suprun.<sup>66</sup> In the address Lemkin analyzes the attack on the Ukrainian nation. The last chapter of a *History of Genocide*, written by Lemkin in the 1950's (as yet an unpublished monograph), discusses genocide and applies it to the destruction of the Ukrainian nation. Lemkin states that 'the classic example of Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment [was] the destruction of the Ukrainian nation'.<sup>67</sup>

Lemkin notes that the first blow in the destruction was aimed at liquidating the intelligentsia which he called 'the national brain'. These were the Ukrainian teachers, writers, artists, thinkers and political leaders. Lemkin noted the 51,713 intellectuals that were sent to Siberia in 1931. 'The soul of Ukraine', the Ukrainian church was liquidated with the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church, its Metropolitan Lypkivsky and 10,000 clergy targeted. 'The national spirit' of Ukraine that was embodied in the large number of independent peasants was eliminated by starvation. Lemkin notes these people as being the repository of tradition, folklore, music, language and literature. The fourth step in the process of eliminating any semblance of Ukrainian nationalism was to fragment the Ukrainian people by dispersing them to other parts of Eastern Europe and to resettle what he called 'foreign people' from the RSFSR in their place. Serbyn strongly believes that Lemkin's perception of

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<sup>65</sup> Morgan, "The Holodomor: Reflections on the Ukrainian Genocide. 16th Annual J.B. Rudnyckyj Distinguished Lecture. Friday, November 7."

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Jacobs, "Raphael Lemkin and the Holodomor: Was It Genocide?," *In Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, p. 163.

the Ukrainian genocide is a solid recommendation to the UN Assembly to recognize the Holodomor as genocide, the destruction of the Ukrainian Nation.<sup>68</sup>

Chalk and Jonassohn, in their discussion regarding the Ukrainian genocide, speak of Stalin crushing the two most hostile elements to his regime: 'the peasantry as a whole and the Ukrainian nation'. They as many historians and studies such as this one, discuss all the elements that have been raised throughout this thesis. Stalin's policies and directives and the outcomes for the people are noted. The initial purging, the grain procurements, the starvation, the punishments and penalties for 'taking' state property to feed families have been discussed.

The activist's brigades with their campaigns of removing everything from peasantry and the treatment of them have been outlined. Children being left without family, homelessness, religious persecution, the spiritual destruction of children and the sometimes appalling plight of women desperate to feed their families are all included. The authors include discussion regarding the collection of the dead and the dying being buried in mass graves, with some lying there alive for some days. Withholding the distribution of grain for work completed on collective farms was included as was the arrest, sentencing or execution for looting rotting grain in warehouses.

The two authors further raise the issue of suicides, cannibalism, people swelling from starvation, the vermin that they caught for food and other foodstuffs, already mentioned throughout Chapter 5 of this thesis and the earlier historiography of Chapter 2. Begging for food, trying to cross the borders out of Ukraine to search for food, political deceptions, russifying Ukraine – replacing the language (14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> December 1933) and the people, and the forced code of silence have all been included.

Serbyn believes that Stalin's directive of 22 January 1933 (noted in the section border closure in Chapters 2 and 4) which saw the closing of all border crossings (although we have stories of some people overcoming this development with train travel) between Ukraine, the north Caucasus and the rest of the USSR was the best available evidence of the dictator's genocidal intent against Ukrainians.<sup>69</sup> People would be arrested for purchasing train tickets and leaving Ukraine without permission. Serbyn also notes the earlier decrees such as the Five Ears of Corn Law which entailed punishment for stealing collective farm grain; the November-

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<sup>68</sup> Serbyn, "The Holodomor: Reflections on the Ukrainian Genocide. 16th Annual J.B. Rudnyckyj Distinguished Lecture. Friday, November 7."

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

December enforcement of grain deliveries by Kaganovich and Molotov and Stalin's 1<sup>st</sup> January 1933 decree that 'stolen grain' be surrendered. Serbyn believes the most intense period of time for Ukrainians was from late fall of 1932 to spring of 1933.<sup>70</sup>

Chalk and Jonassohn speak of Stalin's policy, of trying to persuade the west that no famine was taking place. It was illegal to use the term; those who did could face arrest, forced labour in the Soviet labour camps or even death. Famine related topics were only to be discussed verbally among the oblast GPU chiefs.<sup>71</sup> The code of silence had been enacted with severe penalties. This code of silence has pervaded with some survivors for 75 years.

These have been the themes that emerged from this particular research and also from the oral testimonies collected by this research and others.<sup>72</sup> Everything that has been exposed by this research, the data collected from Ukrainian and Russian archives, Western Diplomatic dispatches and eyewitness reports including those of this study, outline the events as we know of them during the period of the Holodomor. The latest archival data does not alter the data as we know it, but enhances what is already known, with new evidence. There is no argument with evidence indicating 14 December Stalin and Molotov signed a decree resulting in the Ukrainian language being 'forbidden in all organizations, local administration, the press and schools in the Northern Caucasus Territory', with the rest of the RSFSR included in the decree the next day. '1 January 1933, Stalin addressed the Ukrainian farmers with instructions to surrender all hidden grain and threatened them with punishment if they did not comply'. Everything was seized by communist activists leaving the farmers to starve. The 22 January 1933 secret directive saw the arrest of all farmers trying to leave not only Ukraine but their own villages in search of food without permission from the authorities.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Roman Serbyn, "Holodomor - the Ukrainian Genocide (Notes for Discussion)," (Public Forum: The University of Melbourne: Holodomor - Genocide Or Not? March 21, 2009).

<sup>71</sup> Serbyn, "The Holodomor: Reflections on the Ukrainian Genocide. 16th Annual J.B. Rudnyckyj Distinguished Lecture. Friday, November 7."

<sup>72</sup> Mace and Heretz, eds., *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933. Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine United States. The Commission on the Ukrainian Famine, "Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933: First Interim Report of Meetings and Hearings of and before the Commission on the Ukrainian Famine Held in 1986: Organizational Meeting, Washington, D.C., April 23, 1986: Meeting and Hearing, Washington, D.C., October 8, 1986: Hearing, Glen Spey, New York, October 26, 1986: Hearing, Chicago, Illinois, November 7, 1986: Hearing, Warren, Michigan, November."*; Pidhainy, ed. *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin. A White Book. Vol. 1. Book of Testimonies*; J Masanauskas, "Stalin's Terror Famine. Ukrainians Remember," *Herald Sun*, April 30th 2003; Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*.

<sup>73</sup> Serbyn, "The Holodomor: Genocide against the Ukrainians," pp.66-67.

### **Aims of thesis**

This thesis has achieved the aims originally set. It provides an understanding of what happened in Ukraine during the famine of 1932-1933, the Holodomor, and recovers the memories of some refugees from Soviet Ukraine, who arrived in Australia as migrants and who remember this famine. It also uncovers the effects of the Holodomor upon the lives of the Western Australian Ukrainian refugee migrants. The study raises the findings of this research, with other international ones, and provides evidence regarding the way Western Australian memories and findings add to and compliment the understanding of the Ukrainian Holodomor. This chapter assesses the experience as one of genocide, based on the findings of this research, as well as that of existing literature.

The study provides a clear understanding about people who have faced traumatic events in their lives, and who have also migrated to Australia. Ukrainians who survived, who remembered or experienced the Holodomor and who lived in Western Australia during the study were contacted and interviewed about this event in their lives.

The central themes that have emerged from the literature on the Holodomor over the last two decades were outlined in the thesis, as well as the debates related to it. The memories of the Western Australian Ukrainians were outlined and their interviews provide an understanding of how the repressions, dekulakization and collectivization affected them and their families. This study aimed to discover what happened in Ukraine during the famine of 1932-1933. The research outlined those aspects related to the history of the period. The themes not only discovered what led to collectivization, dekulakization and the beginning of the famine of 1932-1933, but also what occurred during and after that event in Ukraine, with the resulting policies instigated by Stalin and the Soviet regime. The study followed the events through to the end of grain requisitioning, the discovery of mass graves and the ensuing 'code of silence'. The Ukrainians also indicated, as noted, that they believed Stalin and his Soviet regime were responsible for their plight.

The thesis includes the details of migration to Australia, and the early life of those migrants in Western Australia. The effect of the Holodomor on the Ukrainian migrants and their lives was a unique inclusion of the study. The migrants also discuss what they hope to expect from such a work. Finally, the study sought to determine whether the Holodomor, in light of the current research and this study was genocide.



Early memories such as those of Ella and Mykola for example, in remembering the arrival of Soviet authorities who took their parents and left them, as very young children, out in the freezing cold weather have provided harrowing accounts of the early period before the famine.<sup>74</sup> Families being dekulakized and classed as ‘public enemies of the state’ were remembered by Djenia and Larissa.<sup>75</sup> Halena, an interviewee, spoke of a frightening childhood during such events and never wishing to return home after migration.<sup>76</sup> Hers was a common theme.

The memories of the famine of 1932-1933 were exposed by the Ukrainian migrants, who as children, experienced loss of families, watched the disintegration of humanity, learnt of cannibalism, saw the emergence of diseases related to hunger, faced border closure policies restricting families from gathering lifesaving foodstuffs and gained an insight into the Soviet penal system. Theodora’s account of the period surrounding the Holodomor and exile to Siberia spoke of a frightening ordeal faced by a young child, whose family was dispossessed and separated, to face a tragic and frightening life in Siberia during the height of the Holodomor.<sup>77</sup>

The migrants spoke of how they escaped death by starvation, what food they were able to procure and by whatever method they could as well as the Torgsin stores that seemed to have stripped people of any last valuable item that could be exchanged for bread.<sup>78</sup> Their memories also outlined the work of the Communist activists who confiscated foodstuffs that may have been scavenged as well as the mistreatment by these people.<sup>79</sup> The migrants remembered children resorting to stealing from collective farms to survive, and incurring the wrath and possible beating or death from the militia guarding the fields.<sup>80</sup> Beggars became part of their lives – surrounding the villages, looking for anything to ease their hunger or their plight, having been left without food, clothes or shelter.<sup>81</sup>

The collection of the dead bodies of those having died of hunger also featured in the themes of this era. It was a source of great suffering for the migrants, as children, to see how little grace and respect could be given the dead in such circumstances. Family members could be

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<sup>74</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #28 "Ella"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."

<sup>75</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #23 "Djenia"."

<sup>76</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #25 "Halena"."

<sup>77</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."

<sup>78</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>79</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #3 "Josep"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #30 "Katerina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #33 "Petro"."

<sup>80</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #8 "Orysia"."

<sup>81</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #27 "Marika"."

removed and their burial location lost, with a lack of social order ensuing from the great number of deaths occurring daily.<sup>82</sup> People were removed for burial even if it was possible that they might soon be dead.<sup>83</sup>

The memories did not stop with the famine but continued with life after the Holodomor. Chapter 6 outlined the memories of the Great Terror and the German invasion with the resulting forced labour.<sup>84</sup> Twenty one of the interviewees were transported as forced labour to Germany. The migrants outlined life in the post World War Two Displaced Persons camps, migration to Australia and those events that centered on camp life in Western Australia.<sup>85</sup> Their stories throughout the study were often focused around a single ‘technicolour event’ that had never left their consciousness, and had a long term effect on their lives.

Figes, a researcher of the Soviet period, also speaks of ‘technicolour memories’ that have been burned deeply into memory, and notes those found in the archives of the Memorial Society.<sup>86</sup> Hanka, Nina, Halina, Tonia, Lesia and Suzanna as others, related such clear technicolour memories.<sup>87</sup> We must remember however that he does not agree with a genocidal interpretation.

An understanding of the immediate and long term impact of the Holodomor on the lives of the Western Australian migrants was outlined in Chapter 7. It included issues such as abandonment, the burden of loss, a fear of authority, the loss of family, a stolen childhood and even loss of identity. Some Ukrainians have been living with a dual reality. The migrants also discussed being misunderstood by their families, by nursing home and hospital staff, as a result of the trauma they faced during the years surrounding the Holodomor of 1932-1933. They had become emotionally spent, and even in old age, still focused on food provision for their families.

One of the most common effects noted by the Ukrainian migrants was the hatred of Communists. It was believed by the interviewees that the Communists were totally

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<sup>82</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

<sup>83</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview # 31 "Danylo"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #9 "Janina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #19 "Fania"."

<sup>84</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #18 "Stefka"."

<sup>85</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #26 "Valya"."

<sup>86</sup> Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Lives in Stalin's Russia*, p.634.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid; Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #1 "Hanka"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #7 "Halina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #16 "Tonia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #20 "Lesia"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #32 "Suzanna"."

responsible for the Holodomor and the suffering endured by the Ukrainian people.<sup>88</sup> They spoke of the communists being responsible for their stolen childhood, the loss of an extended family, the fear and loss of religious worship during their most vulnerable years and, many years of a lack of being validated as being Ukrainian. From the years under Soviet control, different labels had been assigned them, except their own Ukrainian identity. They had often been classified as Russian and many still carried that label in Western Australia.

The questions set for this study have clearly been answered. The historiography has been reviewed and the memories of those having experienced those years in Soviet Ukraine have provided substantially, in uncovering the events of the Holodomor of 1932-1933. This study can take its place alongside existing research regarding the Holodomor. It will contribute to existing primary and secondary sources of information about this event in history. More and more archival data is being released that confirms and enhances that which already exists.

In providing an outline of what is faced by migrants who have experienced traumatic events in their lives, including those of the Ukrainian migrants in Western Australia, this study uncovered details of what occurs to people in such circumstances. A key outcome of the study was the effects of the Holodomor on the lives of the Ukrainians post 1932-1933, and, migration to Western Australia. The central themes initially identified from existing literature, other studies and testimonies, were identified and corresponded with those of this study.

The Ukrainian migrants expressed their desire that history understood their experience at the hands of Stalin and the Soviet regime. They spoke of the silence they were forced to comply with during their young lives and their current need to remain anonymous. In speaking of out of hunger and starvation, they would have jeopardized their lives and those of family members. The desire that their children could read their stories and understand what trauma and hardships their parents had to endure, was foremost in the consciousness of the Western Australian Ukrainians.

Although this study specifically investigated the memories of the Holodomor and the effects that it might have had on the lives on post-war Ukrainian migrant refugees in Western Australia, the major related issue very much part of the current debate about this event in Ukraine's history, was whether the Holodomor could be classified as genocide.

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<sup>88</sup> Morgan, "Translated Interview #17 "Volodya"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #35 "Mykola"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #41 "Mila"."

It was valuable to investigate two issues. One being the current understanding of the concept of genocide already outlined, alongside the current understanding and debate about whether the Ukrainian Holodomor was genocide. The international agreement and understanding of genocide was outlined and in particular how it is related to famine as a cause. Discussion of the Ukrainian famine, the Holodomor, followed.

The initial literature review identified the current debate over whether it was genocide, as it related to the Holodomor, and the question of whether the Holodomor could be classified as genocide. This chapter delved deeper into the concept and outlined current information and understanding that exists regarding genocide, including famine being used as 'a weapon of mass destruction'.

Based on the evidence of both the scholarly and political debate from past and present research, and the interview data from the Western Australia Ukrainian migrant refugees who experienced the event in Ukraine's Soviet era history, it is clear that the Holodomor was an act of genocide. The participants of this study reported consistent evidence of crimes against humanity throughout this study, as was evidenced in the chapters discussing the events that they had witnessed or experienced themselves.

Shapoval stated there were clear signs of genocide and these were noted by the interviewees from their memories of the Holodomor.<sup>89</sup> The oral histories reflected the same outcomes.<sup>90</sup>

Historian Borisenko, attending the roundtable debate with the head of the SBU, Nalyvaichenko, spoke of the importance of oral testimonies in Holodomor studies.<sup>91</sup> She notes their value, especially when coming from children 'who can memorize even the minutest details'. The 'technicolour memories' (Chapter Six: Memories of life after the Holodomor) attested to such an aspect of the memories of the Western Australian survivors, and it is clear that this study and that aspect was of most importance in the study of the Holodomor. Stalin's actions and policies can be classed as 'crimes against humanity', and the recent announcement of the Armenian tragedy being recognized as genocide by the United States Congress, provides some hope for validation of these crimes of Ukraine's Holodomor.

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<sup>89</sup> Shapoval, "The Struggle for History: Recognizing the *Holodomor*," pp. 80-82.

<sup>90</sup> Kardash, *Genocide in Ukraine*; Maniak and Kovalenko, eds., *Famine 33: People's Memorial Book*.

<sup>91</sup> Siundiukov, "In the Merciless Light of Memory."

If we focus upon Lemkin's definition of genocide and reflect upon the material that has been exposed by this study with the Western Australian Ukrainian refugee migrants, then we can agree with scholars like Borisenko. Her argument and that of others such as Conquest, Serbyn, kulchytsky, Mace, Shapoval, Kordan, Graziosi, Magocsi, Davies, Luciuk, Chalk and Jonassohn already noted throughout this thesis, point to the conclusion that the Holodomor was genocide against the Ukrainian people.

If we reflect upon Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, we are able to state that yes, members of a group were killed, millions of them; serious bodily or mental harm was inflicted upon members of a group evidenced by the repressions, executions, the deliberate creation of appalling living conditions, removal of grain and foodstuffs with ensuing issues such as swollen bodies, disease and suicide; deliberate conditions of starvation were inflicted on a group that brought about their physical destruction; the prevention of births took place with the again the deliberate repressions, executions, prevention of food aid, starvation, cannibalism and deaths obliterating a large proportion of possible child bearing Ukrainians. Children became orphans as a result of Stalin's policies. Lemkin noted that 18,000 children were abandoned in the face of the starvation in kharkiv.<sup>92</sup> They were left without support or transferred to survive with members of another group in orphanages or with other families (Polish or Russian) through adoption or less formally simply being handed over.

Slaughter houses for children discovered by the GPU in Poltava have already been noted.<sup>93</sup> The 'lucky' children who might have survived were placed in orphanages but, when faced with overcrowding these orphans were transferred to an open 'children's town' where they were not fed and were starved to death away from public scrutiny.<sup>94</sup> Such were Stalin's solutions to a problem and they point to genocide.

The material exposed by the research, and more importantly remembered by those eyewitnesses who were there at the time, clearly indicate that genocide occurred. The long term impact of the Holodomor genocide has yet to be fully explored, but we have noted and understand that feelings of abandonment by family and government, the burden of loss, lack of a moral compass for many years, emotional and economic hardship that have emerged

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<sup>92</sup> Raphael Lemkin, "Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine: Speech to the Ukrainian American Congress Committee (Appendix a)," in *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine*, ed. Lubomyr Y. Luciuk (Ontario: The Kashtan Press, 2008), p.239.

<sup>93</sup> Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.288.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.288-90.

from this research are a beginning. Fear of authority, hatred of communism, loss of identity, stolen childhoods and displacement many times over, have left the Western Australian Ukrainian migrants with deep seated feelings that have never been addressed nor erased.

Time has not eased or validated the identification of being Ukrainian, but left the migrant refugees with complications for hospitals, nursing homes and families caring for them in their old age. Their fears still impact on their daily existence and even more so as they become frail, vulnerable, lose the English language skills and strength to stand up for themselves and their needs. To have admitted as a DP that you survived the Holodomor would mean acknowledgement that you were a Soviet citizen at the time. This would have resulted in repatriation, according to the Yalta agreement. They lied to live, as Luciuk notes. For some the falsification to secure citizenship was a lifelong concern. Fear of denaturalization was real, deportation was an outcome. Thus to admit to the story and denounce what the Soviets had done to Ukrainians and their own families may have seen a return to the place of trauma. Few had the courage to do that.<sup>95</sup> It must be noted that the size of the thesis unfortunately barred more stories and further inclusion of material from the interviews that will need to be included in a separate publication in the future.

Luciuk recently noted that the final number of victims who perished during the Holodomor may never be fully estimated. They may only number 2.6 million he said, however, he as most historians, estimates that the figure is higher. There is no longer the doubt regarding the event having occurred and it was clearly a crime against humanity 'without parallel in European history'.<sup>96</sup>

## Conclusion

Having examined the literature, listened to and read many first hand memories of the period in question, it is the belief of this scholar that there have emerged many different motivations, purposes and even moral stances in the genocide debate. There is agreement with W. Charny whose experience and 'moral authority' on the subject of genocide comes with his position of Executive Director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide in Jerusalem and editor of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide*. Charny, in a chapter of Grabowicz's publication titled, *Holodomor and Memory*, believes that the reality of the subject being discussed, is no longer

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<sup>95</sup> Luciuk, "Ukraine Must Pursue Perpetrators of *Holodomor*," p.209; Sverstiuk, "Prayer and Memory...The Church and Denying the Famine. A Fact Hard to Grasp: The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) Is Still in the Thrall of Stalin's Policy of Silence.."; Colley, "A Curtain of Silence: An Essay of Comparison."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #12 "Nina"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #6 "Theodora"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #22 "Larissa"."; Morgan, "Translated Interview #38 "Maria"."

<sup>96</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk, "Opinion: Holodomor: A Crime against Humanity," Holodomor Working Group.

experienced emotionally by scholars in this debate. He states 'the real enormity of the subject no longer guides or impacts on the deliberations'. Charny further notes the discussions are 'often emotionless, argumentative, and superrational' with the motivations and meta-meanings of the discussion often based on 'intellectual competition and the claim to scholarly fame of the speakers, rather than genuine concern for the victims'.<sup>97</sup> This researcher would agree with those sentiments.

The above situation was evident recently, at the public forum at the University of Melbourne, in March 2009, on the topic *Holodomor – Genocide or not?* Two professors for the Russian perspective were not able to answer three questions posed by this researcher related to the issue of genocide during the Holodomor:

1. Why would Stalin send 51,713 Ukrainian intellectuals to Siberia in 1932?
2. Why would Stalin send a secret directive on 22 January 1933 that ordered the closure of all border crossings between Ukraine, the North Caucasus and the rest of the USSR to Ukrainian peasants?
3. In Lemkin's address about genocide, why did he say that the classic example of a Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment, was the destruction of the Ukrainian nation?

The questions were not answered, rather after some consultation with Professor Wheatcroft, Russian Professor Kondrashin finally offered a reply to the second question. He suggested that the borders were merely closed to prevent disease spreading. This researcher believes those important issues to be markers, as with others noted throughout the study, that point to genocide, and a lack of concern for the victims. Professor Wheatcroft preferred to accuse those involved in the debate, of 'engaging in propaganda' relating to a pamphlet citing the figure of '7-10 million' deaths from the Holodomor. What Professor Wheatcroft did not elucidate to the audience, was the fact that the figures in the document had been released as a joint statement by 65 UN member states, and adopted by the 58<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly on 7 November 2003.<sup>98</sup>

The internet revolution has made access to information about such crimes against humanity significantly easier to uncover. Sverstiuk, a Ukrainian writer, states that 'the truth about one of the century's greatest tragedies' has been uncovered 'only in the epoch of the information

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<sup>97</sup> George G. Grabowicz, "The Holodomor and Memory," in *Hunger by Design: The Great Ukrainian Famine and Its Soviet Context*, ed. Halyna Hryn (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press for the Ukrainian Research Institute Harvard University, 2008), p. 141.

<sup>98</sup> Anna Alekseyenko et al., *Holodomor: Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930s* (The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, 2007), p.3.

explosion', more than seventy years after the fact.<sup>99</sup> It is remarkable that a crime involving the death of millions of people excites little more than a mention in many history books of the period between the wars.<sup>100</sup> This however is changing, and the researcher, as with others, believes that the Holodomor will eventually be known for the crime that it was. The testimonies and research from long-sealed archival evidence, from repositories about the Holodomor and its perpetrators, will be part of a world awakening. The Western Australian migrant refugees, with this study, will contribute to that awakening regarding the Holodomor genocide.

Graziosi argues that it is necessary to explore what happened after the Holodomor. He suggests that we examine the consequences, the trauma, as historical rather than political debate. He believes that this kind of research is of great importance in understanding the history of each country and its people.<sup>101</sup> Further study already noted, focusing upon the psychological effects of the Holodomor and children of survivors would also further add to our understanding of this era of Ukraine's history and her people.

This study has been designed in such a way as to determine what occurred to a small community of Ukrainian migrant refugees, having lived through the Holodomor and finally settling in Western Australia. It follows their lives from the development of events leading up to the Holodomor, to the present day. The reader is provided with a better understanding of the history of Ukraine, the Holodomor, and the effect of the history on the nation's people.

### **Further research**

There are a number of projects that have emerged as a result of this research and all would provide another dimension or addition to the material already investigated in this study. Again there is the question of time and the age of respondents and it would be prudent to pursue these studies as soon as possible.

The 1989 famine project that was conducted by the Australian National University's Dr. Elizabeth Waters, mentioned earlier, needs completion. Once that data has been collated, analyzed and documented, it would be of great interest and value to compare the two studies. The differences could be noted regarding the extent of the memories arising from

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<sup>99</sup> Sverstiuk, "Prayer and Memory...The Church and Denying the Famine. A Fact Hard to Grasp: The Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) Is Still in the Thrall of Stalin's Policy of Silence.."

<sup>100</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *A Short History of the Twentieth Century* (Victoria: Penguin Books, 2005), p.120.

<sup>101</sup> Harvard University Ukrainian Research Institute (HURI), "

Huri News: Huri Conference on the Great Ukrainian Famine Initiates New Era in Holodomor Studies, New Book Published," Harvard University, .



the original very structured method of interviewing. The survivors were also much younger then and their memories may have been clearer and perhaps more comprehensive. What kind of data evolved from the first study that was not presented in this one and vice versa?

The testimonies of Ukrainians taken within Ukraine where they remained facing the long term effects of the Holodomor as they tried to recover and rebuild lives, may also uncover different effects from those who eventually found their way to Australia. It could be said that those in Australia eventually faced a better economic future for themselves and their children than those left in Ukraine.

The Soviet historiography of the problem of the Ukrainian Ostarbeiters of the third Reich is said by Grinchenko to be quite poor.<sup>102</sup> Her study used the open ended interview technique for this problem and with the data that she collected, much material relating to the Holodomor was revealed as a matter of course. This Western Australian study on the Holodomor was the reverse, with data relating to the German forced labour/Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich being part of the open ended interviews. This material is contained in the interviews and can be easily retrieved using NVivo for a completely new study. This was one specific reason for using an electronic qualitative data software analysis tool to access the rich data from the technique used in collecting material for this study. Grinchenko's project could also be studied for information of what memories Ukrainians – who had returned to Ukraine after the war - had of the Holodomor.

The issue of the role of Ukrainian women during the Holodomor is also a neglected topic. There is evidence of women's rebellions being used to retrieve items of necessity when local authorities refused and in some cases specific women were singled out in the published documents as heroines.<sup>103</sup>

Sakharov, in *Conquest*, also spoke of the 'almost irreversible' destruction of rural farm life after the Holodomor.<sup>104</sup> The village which was the centre of Ukrainian life and culture for centuries was said to have disappeared. With people moving to cities for work and food, how did the collective farms change the farming landscape?

Moreover, now that there has been established contact with the survivors – the children of the survivors would be an interesting cohort of people to investigate through interview.

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<sup>102</sup> Grinchenko, "Ostarbeiters of the Third Reich: Remembering and Forgetting as the Strategies of Survival."

<sup>103</sup> *Conquest, The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine.*, p.166.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p.343.

What effects did they perceive their parents had of the Holodomor? Do they believe that this event might have had some influence over the way that they were raised and their relationships with their parent(s)? Are there any lasting legacies of having been raised by a Holodomor survivor?

### **Other outcomes of this research**

This study has raised issues relating to different aspects of education and society in Western Australia. These are issues that need to be addressed through our local Ukrainian Association in Perth (as they have been in Canada, for example). In other countries, high school curriculum content has been addressed and monuments erected to acknowledge this era of Soviet Ukrainian history.

In line with developments in Ukraine, Canada, the U.S.A. and the U.K. regarding the inclusion of this Holodomor history into the history curriculum of schools, it would be appropriate to pursue that direction here in Australia beginning with the Curriculum Council in Perth. Hayes tells us that only by understanding ‘what it means to be human in an inhuman society’ will we understand ‘what humanity is all about’.<sup>105</sup>

### **‘Read! know!’ Project**

The ‘Read! know!’ Project was begun by Ukrainian University students but has gone abroad to put the Holodomor on Ukraine’s agenda. The belief is that a large percentage of the Ukrainian population is actually indifferent to the tragedy and they wish to raise the consciousness to remember their ancestors and the unborn generations. The students distribute a pamphlet that contains Malaniuk’s essay, ‘Cornflower Eyes’ to every mailbox in the major cities of Ukraine. With this pamphlet are eyewitness accounts from the Holodomor. Thus people will be able to read and learn the historical truth about the Holodomor .

The project is repeated four times a year on St. Thomas Sunday; Memorial Day; Commemoration of the Victims of the Famine Day (last Saturday of November) and Ukrainian Independence Day (August 24<sup>th</sup>). Their focus since 2004 is mainly on eastern Ukraine where there was much resettlement once the population of Ukrainians died out and Russian people were moved in. This project can be adapted to suit the inclusion in our schools.

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<sup>105</sup> Hayes, ed. *Lessons and Legacies III Memory, Memorialization, and Denial.*, p.13.

## **Archiving testimonies**

It would be a priority to have the testimonies published and the translated interview transcripts housed for scholarly access in the Western Australian State Reference library. The interviews themselves will also become part of the historical collection in Kyiv Ukraine where the Ukraine 3000 Foundation, an initiative of the current President Yuschenko, is developing a collection of materials related to the Holodomor and other acts of repressions in Ukraine. These interviews will become part of an historical archive that Stalin tried to suppress by his harsh policies that terrorized the Ukrainian Nation and that silenced survivors.

The tapes have been copied onto long life CDs for storage purposes. In this way the interviews and demographic material will form part of the collection of this study. The consent forms will be archived securely in a facility at the University of Notre Dame specifically designed for such material. They will need to be carefully housed for they contain details about the survivors with signatures requesting that they remain anonymous.

## **Database of survivors in Australia**

As with the Holocaust survivors so too it is important to establish a database of survivors living in Australia. This can be a national project that has already been suggested to the National Association of Ukrainians in Australia.

An African saying comes to mind with the age of the survivors in Western Australia: 'Every time an old person dies a library burns down'.<sup>106</sup> This has engendered a resolve to continue the work of raising Holodomor awareness beyond this current thesis topic. The Western Australian Holodomor survivors have completed their remarkable journey that began as very young children and the hope is that this work has enabled them some semblance of closure, peace, and the knowledge that their story will be told. Perhaps the words of Paul Hlushanytsja therefore serve as a fitting postscript to this project. He urges everyone to write while their minds are still active and to tell the stories for the future of Ukraine. He states that although the facts are located in the archives, the atmosphere of that time can only be expressed by those who were there.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Bill Schneider, "No Hedgehog," *The Wall Street Journal*, Tuesday, January 8th 2007, p.A18.

<sup>107</sup> Hlushanytsja, *A War without Shots Fired*.

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