

Focusing on the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33

Jaroslav Bilocerkowycz

MIRON DOLOT. *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust*. New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1985.

ROBERT CONQUEST. *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1986.

EWALD AMMENDE. *Human Life in Russia*. London, Allen & Unwin, 1936, reprinted by John Zubal, Cleveland, OH, 1984.

THE COMMISSION ON THE UKRAINE FAMINE. *Report to*

A PROFOUND human tragedy involving the loss of millions of lives, the Ukrainian famine of 1932-33 had until recently received little scholarly or popular attention. As Robert Conquest argues in *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*, it had failed to register in Western consciousness. Similarly, George Orwell wrote several decades ago

Jaroslav Bilocerkowycz is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Dayton, Ohio, and author of *Soviet Ukrainian Dissent: A Study of Political Alienation* (1988).

Congress. *Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine, 1932-1933*. Washington, DC, 1988.

MARCO CARYNNYK, LUBOMYR LUCIUK, and BOHDAN KORDAN, Eds. *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*. Kingston, Ontario, Limestone Press, 1988.

JAMES MACE. *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine, 1918-1933*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1983.

that "huge events like the Ukraine famine of 1933, involving the death of millions of people, have actually escaped the attention of the majority of English russophiles."¹ Since Soviet authorities had persistently denied the very occurrence of a famine, not to speak of it being brought about by a deliberate policy, many Westerners doubted the historicity of this event.

Today, however, the famine is an acknowledged fact, and has received much attention. There have been a number of books written about it—as attested to by the six

books under review here.² The recent attention given to the famine can be attributed to several factors. Commemorations in 1983 of the 50th anniversary of the famine by Ukrainian communities in the United States, Canada, and other Western countries received wide media coverage and sparked the interest of Sovietologists and elected officials. For example, the US Congress passed legislation in 1984 to establish a commission to study the famine—what caused it and how Americans responded to it. Also, the declassification of US and European governmental documents—particularly diplomatic reports concerning the famine—offered scholars a wealth of new material to peruse and analyze. The resurgence of interest—both in the West and the Soviet Union—in the Stalin period, as well as the tragedy of a famine in Africa, generated addi-

²Two other useful books on the Ukrainian famine are: Roman Serbyn and Bohdan Krawchenko, Eds., *Famine in Ukraine*, Edmonton, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1986; and Wasyl Hryshko, *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933*, translated by Marco Carynnyk, Toronto, Bahriany Foundation, 1983. There have also been a number of shorter monographs published: for example, Olexa Woropay, *The Ninth Circle*, Harvard University Ukrainian Studies Fund, 1983; and Roma Hadzewycz, George Zarycky, and Marta Kolomayets, Eds., *The Great Famine in Ukraine: The Unknown Holocaust*, Jersey City, NJ, Ukrainian National Association, 1983.

¹Quoted in Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 321.

tional concern with the subject.

THE BOOKS under review here fall into five categories: (1) a memoir (Dolot); (2) two detailed studies of the Ukrainian famine (Conquest; Ammende); (3) a congressional report (The Commission on the Ukraine Famine); (4) an annotated collection of documents from the British Foreign Service archives concerning the famine (Carynnyk, Luciuk, and Kordan, Eds.); and (5) an examination of historical and political developments—including the famine—in Ukraine, during the 1920's and early 1930's (Mace).

Miron Dolot's *Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust* is a poignant personal account of the impact that forced collectivization and the famine had on the author's family, which had lived in a village of some 4,000 people located 100 miles south of Kiev. The author writes under a pen name, which suggests he feared retaliation by the authorities against members of his family still living in the Soviet Union. Dolot had written the first 24 chapters of his memoir back in 1953, but he did not complete the book's final six chapters until 1983. Perhaps the emotional difficulty of reliving such a personal trauma played a large part in delaying his completion of the manuscript. To the author's credit, he writes in a straightforward and unassuming style, without excessive emotionalism. This only heightens the poignancy of his story about the devastating and horrific experiences of his family. "Looking back to those events now," writes Dolot, "it seems to me that I lived in some kind of a wicked fantasy world. . . . It is simply too difficult to associate all those happenings with real life in a normal human society" (p. 140).

Robert Conquest's *The Harvest of Sorrow* is a very thorough and well-documented study of the fam-

ine by a prominent Sovietologist. It is a seminal work on the topic. Conquest provides a first-rate analysis of political and historical events leading to the famine. In addition, he presents an eminently lucid discussion of the various economic factors behind the famine, factors once deemed by experts to be the sole causes of the tragedy. When discussing the famine's causes and consequences, Conquest rejects a posture of "moral neutrality" (p. 10), and advocates instead that a scholar's objective analysis of historical events need not preclude his expression of personal views of, and moral objections to, those events.

Ewald Ammende's *Human Life in Russia*, first published in 1936 and reprinted in 1984, is written from the viewpoint of an international relief official and activist, who had long been involved in national minority issues. For 10 years, Ammende served as secretary general of the European Congress of Nationalities, a body that monitored fulfillment of post-World War I treaty obligations affecting national minorities. A Baltic German by background, Ammende had gone to the Soviet Union in 1934—after the famine had already run its course—in the capacity of secretary of the Interconfessional and International Relief Committee. His discussion of the difficulties he encountered when trying to render international humanitarian assistance to Ukraine through the League of Nations is particularly enlightening. However, Ammende is imprecise at times, for example when he describes Ukraine "as a purely agricultural region" (p. 113) or refers to a "Russian" famine. Also, the book's translation is problematic in certain places.

The book-length report of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine (CUF), entitled *Report to Congress: Investigation of the Ukrainian Fam-*

ine, 1932–1933, was undertaken for the purpose of increasing "the world's knowledge of the famine," examining contemporary US reaction to it, and disseminating information and findings concerning the famine to US governmental bodies, universities and libraries, the media, and the general public. James Mace, author of one of the books under review here, served as the commission's staff director.³ The CUF held public hearings in six American cities to gather testimony from famine eyewitnesses, most of whom were 7–15 years of age at the time of the tragic event.

The CUF report provides documentation on the response of the US government to the famine in detail not found elsewhere. It concludes that "the American government had ample and timely information about the Famine but failed to take any steps which might have ameliorated the situation" (p. xxiii). The commission's conclusion is of considerable importance because it represents an official acknowledgment of the famine tragedy and of US inaction.

The report also provides an excellent review of literature on the famine, including academic and journalistic works. However, the book is especially valuable in providing a thorough review of Soviet literature on the famine. The review begins with the post-Stalin period, when references to the famine were oblique, Aesopian, or defensive, and ends in early 1988, by which time the Soviet press, under the stimulus of *glasnost'*, was no longer denying the famine, even if it still was not placing blame for this tragedy squarely on party policies.

The CUF report notes that the

³Mace is also author of "Famine and Nationalism in Soviet Ukraine," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), May-June 1984, pp. 37–50.

growth of Western scholarship on the subject has played a positive role in stimulating greater Soviet coverage of the tragedy. Still, Soviet publications have not as yet fully and candidly addressed the famine, its causes, and its geographic scope. The report does well, therefore, to include the often neglected Ukrainian-language émigré literature on the subject, such as Mykola Kovalevs'kyi's *Ukrayina pid chervonym yarmom: dokumenty i fakty* (Ukraine under the Red Yoke: Documents and Facts, Warsaw-Lviv, "Skhid," 1937) and Semen Pidhaynyi's *Ukrayins'ka inteligentsiya na Solovkakh* (The Ukrainian Intelligentsia in the Solovky, n.c., Prometei, 1947). Finally, the appendices to the report provide 10 detailed oral histories by famine survivors and eyewitnesses (whose accounts are part of a larger effort involving some 200 oral histories), as well as accounts by various Italian diplomatic and consular reports dealing with the famine.

The compendium of documents, *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, edited by Marco Carynnyk, Lubomyr Luciuk, and Bohdan Kordan, provides contemporary British Foreign Office reports concerning the famine. These reports include analyses by British embassy and consular officials stationed in Moscow and elsewhere in the USSR, and accounts sent to the British Embassy in the Soviet Union or passed on to the British Foreign Office by trade experts, journalists, non-British diplomats, and relief organizations.

The materials are particularly enlightening on the impact of international politics on the famine, and especially on the United Kingdom's diplomatic and trade relations with the USSR (Britain was one of the first to establish such relations). The reports by Canadian wheat expert

Andrew Cairns in particular reveal how aware British officials were of famine conditions in Ukraine, and how keen they were on suppressing public knowledge of these conditions in order to preserve British trade with the USSR.

The British government's lack of support for and discouragement of organized relief activities by private groups is also well-documented in the volume. Furthermore, several documents provide insightful commentary on such controversial public figures as Walter Duranty, correspondent of *The New York Times*, and French statesman Edouard Herriot—two men who played a major role in shaping Western opinion on the famine. Duranty and Herriot denied and dismissed the existence of famine in Ukraine (more on this below). The compendium is preceded by an extensive and useful introduction by the editors and a detailed map showing famine mortality by region.

James Mace's *Communism and the Dilemmas of National Liberation: National Communism in Soviet Ukraine* is a very readable and solid study of events in Ukraine during the 1920's and early 1930's. A revised dissertation, this book examines Ukrainian efforts at national self-assertion in the political, economic, and social-cultural spheres during the Ukrainization period of the 1920's, and the response of Soviet authorities to these challenges. The coverage given to collectivization and the famine itself is modest. The famine is treated in the context of Soviet attempts to extirpate Ukrainian national consciousness.

A NUMBER of important issues surround the subject of the famine in Ukraine. What were the causes of this human tragedy? Was it due to a drought, a sub par grain crop, and kulak sabotage as Soviet authorities have variously maintained? Or,

was it a man-made famine stemming from policy decisions and their implementation? If the famine was the result of policy decisions, what were the authorities' motives? And what role did economic, political, and ethnic factors play in those decisions? Was the famine directed at peasants in general, or were certain non-Russian peasants—the Ukrainians in particular—singled out? Was there geographic specificity to the famine, and how can that be explained? How many lives were lost in the famine? Was Stalin aware of the horrific conditions in the countryside, and does he bear personal responsibility for the Ukrainian famine? How did the international community and media respond to the famine, and why? Finally, has *glasnost'* changed the official Soviet position on the famine, and what, if anything, are Ukrainian intellectuals doing about this issue?

The authors of the reviewed volumes show a marked degree of intellectual consensus on many of these major issues, although their works have different emphases. Foremost, they agree that the famine was linked to changes in the Soviet nationality policy. Their conclusions challenge those of scholars who subscribe to a more purely socio-economic interpretation and maintain that massive famine was not a deliberate objective of Stalinist policy, nor was it directed at select nationalities as such.⁴

The importance of both ethno-political and economic considerations is weighed heavily by Conquest in his book. He concludes that the

⁴Two examples of scholars whose approach to the famine might be said to emphasize a socio-economic interpretation are Alec Nove and Stephen Wheatcroft. See Nove, *Stalinism and After: The Road to Gorbachev*, 3rd ed., Boston, Unwin Hyman, 1989, pp. 45-46; and Wheatcroft, "Correspondence: Ukrainian Famine," *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1985, pp. 132-34.

famine "was accompanied by a wide-ranging attack on all Ukrainian cultural and intellectual centers and leaders, and on the Ukrainian churches" (p. 4). Thus he views the tragedy as part of Stalin's concerted assault on the large and unsubmitive Ukrainian nation.

According to Conquest, Soviet agricultural policy during the 1920's and early 1930's consisted of three phases—namely, dekulakization, collectivization, and "the terror-famine." While the first two phases were set into motion throughout the Soviet Union, the last one was aimed particularly at Ukraine.

The official rationale for the first phase, dekulakization, was to eliminate the prosperous peasants known as "kulaks" because they were "exploiters." The Soviet regime needed the bogey of kulaks in the countryside to better mobilize its party activists into class warfare. Moreover, this group of peasants presented a threat to the regime, since it was assumed correctly that the kulaks could mobilize a peasant resistance to collectivization. By 1929, however, the term kulak (*kurkul* in Ukrainian) had lost all meaning. Anyone owning a cow, a horse, or a few acres could be labeled a kulak and therefore a class enemy. Ironically, "the average kulak's income was lower than that of the average rural official who was persecuting him as a representative of a wealthy class" (Conquest, p. 118). Any peasant who displayed religious convictions or opposed Soviet rule—regardless of how poor he was—could also be singled out as a kulak, and thus be subject to arrest, deportation, and confiscation of property.

Rapid and forcible collectivization of agriculture, the second phase, was begun in 1929. It served the regime's ideological goal of building a socialist economy with its presumed economies of

scale and ability to make better use of mechanization. According to Conquest, even more important for the Soviet leadership was that collectivization allowed the state to quickly gain effective control over agricultural output.

Collectivization was opposed by the peasants, a fact that is well illustrated in Dolot's book. Describing the feelings of one Ukrainian peasant family, Dolot writes: "The Shosts had survived many wars and foreign occupations on the same piece of land. They had grown up on the land. . . . they always thought of this farm as their home. Asking farmer Shost for his land was like asking for his very life" (p. 134).

Resistance to collectivization took many forms—from militant to passive. Some farmers used axes or clubs to physically resist collectivization. In several cases entire villages or districts rebelled en masse; in those instances, the authorities called on regular military troops to put down the peasant unrest. Often, peasants chose to slaughter their livestock rather than to surrender it to the collective farm. This caused severe shortages of horses, cows, and other animals in the USSR for some time.⁵ There occurred the so-called women's rebellions (*babski bunty*), in which peasant women armed with clubs resisted collectivization measures, and at times had temporary success. It was hoped that by using women to resist collectivization, military intervention could be avoided.

Governmental pressure on and intimidation of peasants to join collective farms or else face arrest, deportation, and exorbitant taxes ulti-

mately proved decisive. According to Conquest, by mid-1932, 70 percent of Ukrainian peasants were collectivized (p. 220).

The third phase, the terror-famine, merged Soviet economic interests with Soviet ethno-political interests. Exorbitant extractions of grain from Ukrainian peasants were already giving Soviet authorities much of the necessary food supplies to feed industrial workers and the urban population. They were also providing grain for export to generate foreign currency to help the concurrent industrialization drive. The Soviets were using this currency to acquire from the West much-needed industrial machinery. In 1932, Soviet authorities decided to go a step further in Ukraine, beyond grain requisitions and on to extraction of all foodstuffs. They hoped thereby to decimate the independent-minded Ukrainian peasantry, cow it into submission, and thus weaken this important social base of Ukrainian nationhood.

Agents of the regime searched peasant homes and dug up gardens, looking for hidden caches of food. According to Dolot, they even shot domestic pets and birds nesting on rooftops (p. 152–53). People began dying in large numbers. In some cases whole villages perished. As Conquest comments ironically, "it aroused suspicion not to be in a starving state" (p. 231).

As the famine raged, people began in desperation to eat whatever they could find—even other human beings. Dolot explains that his family survived by hiding food where authorities would be unlikely to look: in sand dunes located on government land that lay adjacent to their property, in roof thatching, and in tree hollows. He observes that "this hoard was our only means of existence. . . . Those potatoes and that grain were the greatest treasure that was ever hidden" (p. 170).

⁵For statistics on the sharp decline in numbers of horses and livestock in the Soviet Union during the 1928–33 period, see Zhores Medvedev, *Soviet Agriculture*, New York, W. W. Norton, 1987, p. 85.

Ukraine was not the sole region to be affected by the famine; the North Caucasus and the lower Volga suffered as well. However, as the CUF report notes, the grain quotas and measures Stalin introduced in Ukraine in the fall of 1932 and January 1933 were particularly harsh (see below). The invasiveness of these interventions were "paralleled only in the ethnically Ukrainian Kuban region of the North Caucasus" (p. xix). It is worth noting that all three regions were populated primarily by non-Russians who refused to fully subordinate themselves to the Soviet regime. The famine did not affect the agricultural areas of central Russia, and indeed, Russian villages across the border from Ukrainian settlements had adequate food supplies. As Conquest notes, Stalin believed "the nationality problem is, in its very essence, a problem of the peasantry" (p. 219). He thereby targeted the nationally conscious non-Russian peasants for starvation.

Mace argues that Stalin's assault on the Ukrainian peasantry was part of a wider campaign against the Ukrainian nation, including the intelligentsia and nationally conscious communists. The arrest in late 1929 of several thousand people alleged to belong to the nonexistent Union for the Liberation of Ukraine (SVU) initiated this assault. Implicated as leaders were 45 Ukrainians, mostly intellectuals, who were put on trial in 1930. They "were charged with treason and were accused of having links to various organizations such as the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences." The charge that important Ukrainian cultural and academic institutions harbored enemies of the state led to the repression of these organizations and "laid the groundwork for massive purges of Ukrainians in various organizations during the

mid- and late 1930's."⁶

According to Mace, "the SVU trial was in part a response to rural resistance to collectivization of agriculture in Ukraine, a way of preventing nation-wide organization of such resistance, by cowing the sole group capable of leading it, the national intelligentsia" (pp. 275-76). Mace argues that the Ukrainization policy of the 1920's led to "a national cultural rebirth of unprecedented depth and breadth." It legitimized national consciousness within the Ukrainian Communist Party, causing the key leaders to demand "that Ukrainization lead to real national liberation, and that meant ending Russian domination" (p. 304). Stalin opposed these demands through centralization and Russification. Through the famine he was able to subordinate the Ukrainian party to Moscow's control: leaders of the Ukrainian party were criticized and purged on the pretext of not fulfilling grain quotas and/or being lax in fighting "hostile elements."

In the midst of famine and the cultural attack against Ukrainians in 1933, demoralized Ukrainian leaders such as Mykola Skrypnyk, the Commissar of Education and de facto party leader of Ukraine, and Mykola Khvylovyi, a prominent writer, committed suicide. Skrypnyk had been demoted and denounced in the aftermath of Stalin's assignment in January 1933 of Pavel Postyshev, a Russian, to be Ukraine's de facto party ruler.

It is interesting to note that even Ammende discerned a link between the famine and the Soviet nationality policy toward Ukraine. However, he failed to understand the true nature of that relationship. Thus, at one point he wrote: "a determined fight against the national-

ities, their rights and their cultural individuality, has been carried on for some time. This struggle, too, may be regarded as, to a certain extent, a consequence of the famine" (p. 104). Ammende thus confused cause and effect; rather than seeing the famine as a Soviet response to the national liberation struggle, he viewed it more as a cause of that struggle.

THE DESTRUCTION in terms of human lives wrought by the famine was enormous. Lacking full access to Soviet archives, Western scholars and Soviet citizens are not able to calculate definitively the number of famine (or other Stalin-era) victims. Informed estimates of human losses, however, are both possible and necessary to convey the scale of this tragedy. These estimates derive from numerous demographic sources—available official and unofficial census data, assumptions and projections of "normal" mortality and fertility rates, calculations of ethnic assimilation—as well as from general estimates of famine mortality provided by Soviet officials or dissidents.⁷

The CUF report cites a range of scholarly estimates of famine deaths at between 3 and 8 million, although the commission itself opted not to undertake an independent demographic analysis of famine mortality, given the inherent problems and limitations of calculating such an estimate (p. ix). Conquest estimates that 7 million people died in the famine, including 3 million

⁶Jaroslav Bilocerkowycz, *Soviet Ukrainian Dissent: A Study of Political Alienation*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO, 1988, p. 19.

⁷For a discussion and debate on calculating famine and other mortality figures, see the exchanges between Stephen Wheatcroft and James Mace, "Correspondence: Ukrainian Famine," *Problems of Communism*, March-April 1985, pp. 132-38; and the ongoing discussion involving Stephen Wheatcroft, Stephen Rosefield, Barbara Anderson, Brian Silver, and Robert Conquest in *Slavic Review* (Austin, TX), Fall 1985, pp. 505-36, and Summer 1986, pp. 295-313.

children, mostly young infants (pp. 297, 306). His territorial and ethnic breakdown of famine mortality is as follows: 5 million Ukrainians from Ukraine, 1 million Ukrainians living in the North Caucasus, and another 1 million non-Ukrainians. According to Conquest, the Ukrainian republic lost at the time 18.8 percent of its population. (p. 306).

Given the extent of the decimation of the Ukrainian population, a number of the authors conclude that Stalin's actions against the Ukrainians qualify as genocide. Mace, for example, writes: "Genocide is not too strong a word for what was done to the Ukrainians. . . . the attempt was made to break them, to destroy their culture, to decimate them through famine" (p. 300). The CUF argues that: "One or more of the actions specified in the Genocide Convention was taken against the Ukrainians in order to destroy a substantial part of the Ukrainian people and thus to neutralize them politically in the Soviet Union" (p. xxiii). Conquest states: "It certainly appears that a charge of genocide lies against the Soviet Union for its actions in the Ukraine" (p. 272).

DID STALIN knowingly and deliberately instigate the famine in Ukraine, and should he be held personally responsible for the crime? There are scholars who question whether the Soviet leader really knew what was going on in the countryside and doubt that he deliberately used mass starvation as a political tool. For example, British economic historian Alec Nove writes:

It is sometimes said that Stalin deliberately starved the peasants into submission. This would not be quite fair. He faced resistance from the peasants, he thought that they were deliberately withholding supplies, the needs of the towns and of export

*were pressing. So he pressed. . . . Perhaps he thought the peasants had secret stocks and would survive. . . . After 1928 Stalin never visited villages, and may not have known the horrors that were being inflicted on peasants in certain areas.*⁸

Nevertheless, Nove states that Stalin is personally responsible for "those millions of deaths" which "were the consequences of his policy, and it was on his orders that ruthlessness became standard procedure."⁹

By contrast, Conquest, Mace, and the Commission on the Ukraine Famine hold that Stalin knew of the famine, used it as an ethno-political instrument to weaken the Ukrainians, and should be held personally accountable for it. Complaints concerning excess grain seizures from Ukrainian officials were common, and party and military officials—for example, Roman Terekhov, party chief of the Kharkiv oblast—informed Stalin about famine conditions in Ukraine. The Soviet leader also had a powerful secret police that reported to the dictator on major problems throughout society. Certainly the fact that Stalin instituted an official ban on travel by Western reporters to the famine areas indicates that he felt that there was something there to hide.

Not only was Stalin fully cognizant of a famine in Ukraine, but he refused to alleviate famine conditions and even intensified them by mandating "actions which worsened the situation and maximized the loss of life (CUF, p. xvi). No food aid from other areas of the USSR was allowed to be organized; international assistance was refused, and the authorities angrily denied

the very existence of a famine in Ukraine. Peasants were prevented by means of a blockade from going for relief to the Russian Republic. Additionally, a new passport system was instituted in late 1932 to limit peasant mobility. Those who managed to reach Russia clandestinely had any food they brought back with them to Ukraine confiscated at the border. A decree "On Safeguarding State Property," drafted by Stalin, made the stealing of grain a capital offense, and guards were placed in watchtowers to "protect" collective farm fields from peasant raiders. Clearly, beyond the economics of excess grain seizures, Stalin used the terror-famine as an ethno-political weapon. That he used this weapon against the Ukrainians is not surprising given Stalin's Ukrainophobia, which has been noted by, among others, Andrey Sakharov (Conquest, p. 217) and Nikita Khrushchev.¹⁰

MOST of the authors agree that the media's generally poor coverage of the famine left the West largely unaware of it. Several reporters, such as Malcolm Muggeridge of the *Manchester Guardian* and W. H. Chamberlain of *The Christian Science Monitor*, reported the famine despite such obstacles as official restrictions on travel to the famine areas, the threat of loss of Soviet authorities' favor, and disbelief and controversy in the West over the accuracy of their reportage. Others, such as Walter Duranty of *The New*

¹⁰According to Khrushchev, Stalin considered a mass deportation of the Ukrainian nation to Soviet Asia as punishment for the anti-Soviet orientation of much of the Ukrainian populace during World War II. "The Ukrainians avoided meeting this fate only because there were too many of them and there was no place to deport them." See Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers*, Introduction by Edward Crankshaw, trans. and ed. by Strobe Talbott, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., 1970, p. 596.

⁸Alec Nove, *Stalinism and After* . . . , p. 45.

⁹Ibid.

York Times, denied the famine's existence and sought to downplay and minimize it by using euphemisms like "food shortages." Yet, according to Carynnyk et al., Duranty privately informed a British diplomat that "as many as 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union . . ." (p. 313). Duranty's career ambitions, which were advanced by currying the favor of Soviet authorities, and his strong support for US diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union help explain his biased reporting. In return for his positive coverage of the USSR, Duranty received various forms of preferential treatment from Soviet authorities. He was granted a rare interview with Stalin; was the first Western reporter allowed into the famine areas after the ban on official travel there was lifted; and was an honored guest at celebrations of the establishment of US-Soviet ties.

After one series of more objective reports about the famine, Duranty was reproached by Soviet officials for his "unfaithfulness" and warned about serious consequences for himself—such as expulsion from the Soviet Union (Carynnyk et al., pp. 209–10). Thereafter, Duranty reverted to his more compliant and uncritical approach to the USSR. Ironically, as Conquest points out, Duranty won a Pulitzer Prize in 1932 for his "dispassionate, interpretative reporting of news from Russia" (p. 320). The Pulitzer awards committee praised Duranty for his "scholarship, profundity, impartiality, sound judgment, and exceptional clarity . . ." ¹¹

As a result of the media's mixed reports, there was much uncertainty about the famine. This fueled a long-term debate in the West as to

whether there ever was a famine in Ukraine.

Also contributing to the general ignorance of the famine was the unwillingness or inability of Western statesmen to explore and objectively report on the events unfolding in the Soviet Union. For example, Carynnyk et al. describe how Edouard Herriot, a parliamentary leader and former Prime Minister of France, visited Ukraine in August 1933 and was given a Potemkin-village-style tour, with which he was satisfied. Herriot spent five days in Ukraine attending "banquets, receptions, and inspections arranged in his honour," all "in exact accordance with a time-table worked out by the authorities beforehand" (Ammende, pp. 252, 224). The cities he visited received extra food rations, people were issued clothes, and "undesirable" elements were removed from view (Carynnyk et al., p. 301). Subsequently, Herriot asserted that "reports of famine in the Ukraine were gross libels" (ibid., p. 302) and "denounced all talk of famine as Nazi propaganda" (ibid., p. xxxiii). British diplomats found Herriot to be "surprisingly gullible" (ibid. p. 302).

Yet, for their part, British officials and diplomats sought to downplay the Ukrainian famine publicly for political and economic reasons. As one diplomat stated: ". . . we have a certain amount of information about famine conditions in the south of Russia. . . . We do not want to make it public, however, because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced" (ibid., p. 397). Carynnyk et al. argue that the British Government's silence was primarily due to its desire to ensure the continuation of its trade relations with the USSR. In the early 1930's, Britain was buying nearly 40 percent of all Soviet grain exports (ibid., p. xlvii).

Of equal or greater consequence in minimizing the famine was Adolf

Hilter's coming to power in Germany in January 1933. The perceived threat from Nazi Germany and the fear of fascism played a key role in shaping a more positive perception of the Soviet Union in the Western states than might otherwise have been the case.

As the CUF reports makes evident, US officials also proved unwilling to publicize the famine. When US citizens with relatives in the Soviet Union pleaded for relief assistance, they were told that "there do not appear to be any measures which this Government may appropriately take at this time in order to alleviate the sufferings of these unhappy people" (p. 162). According to Conquest, US intercession was deemed impractical by American officials given "the absence of any American state interest" (p. 311). More significant, the United States was in the process of establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and thus American officials were disinclined to deal with the famine issue.

Ammende argues that political considerations also obstructed efforts to provide Ukraine with much-needed famine relief through the League of Nations. The member countries of the League placed political, economic, and security considerations, namely, friendly relations with the USSR, above moral duty or obligation to assist the famine victims. Despite the best efforts of the President of the League Council, the Norwegian representative, the famine topic was not even discussed at an official League of Nations meeting. Subsequently, in September 1934, the USSR joined the League. In Ammende's view, the League's inaction reflected that body's "severe moral crisis" (p. 300). Had it undertaken stronger action, the League could have helped many famine victims, and, in the process, raised its own pres-

¹¹Marco Carynnyk, "The Famine the 'Times' Couldn't Find," *Commentary* (New York), November 1983, p. 32.

tige. Already by 1933, many had become disillusioned with the performance of the League of Nations. As Ammende observes, there was a conspicuous gap between the League's principles and its practices. As rhetoric replaced action, supranational cooperation was limited. And little progress could be cited in assisting national minorities, reducing tariff barriers, or ensuring international security.

TODAY, in an era of *glasnost*, the increasingly assertive intelligentsia of Ukraine is pushing for the filling-in of "blank spots" in Soviet-Ukrainian history. Among them is the Ukrainian famine, which has become a focal point of attention. Boris Oliynyk, a secretary of the board of both the Ukrainian and USSR writers' unions, had this to say when speaking about Stalinism at the 19th CPSU Conference:

*And since the persecutions began in our republic long before 1937, we should also make public the reasons for the famine of 1933, which took the lives of millions of Ukrainians, and also identify by name those who were responsible for this tragedy.*¹²

Members of the Ukrainian Writers' Union, as well as of newly founded

¹²*Pravda* (Moscow), July 2, 1988, trans. in *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (Columbus, OH), Sept. 21, 1988, p. 12.

organizations such as the Ukrainian "Memorial" Society, have begun to press for official commemoration of—and the erection of a monument to—the victims of Stalin's man-made famine.¹³ Even Volodymyr Shcherbyts'kyi, the hard-line leader of the Ukrainian Communist Party, has referred several times to famine conditions in Ukraine in the early 1930's (CUF report, p. 62).

Official Soviet publications such as *News from Ukraine*, published for Ukrainians living abroad, have provided some coverage of the famine, although the coverage is not always forthright. And the new *History of Ukraine*, scheduled to be published in 1990, apparently will include "a more definitive analysis of the famine."¹⁴ More significant, Volodymyr Manyak, a writer, and Li-diya Kovalenko, a journalist, have recently completed a book on the Ukrainian famine entitled *1933 Holod* (The 1933 Famine) and have submitted it for publication to the Radians'kyi Pys'mennyk publishers in Kiev. Speaking before the Kiev regional constituent conference of the Popular Movement of Ukraine for Perebudova (*Perestroyka*) on July 1, 1989, Manyak indicated that the book was based on the "testi-

¹³See Bohdan Nahaylo, "Ukrainian 'Memorial' Society Confronts Stalinist Heritage in Ukraine," *Radio Free Europe-Radio Liberty, Report on the USSR* (Munich), Mar. 17, 1989, pp. 15–18.

¹⁴David Marples, "Some Interviews in the USSR," *ibid.*, Jan. 6, 1989, p. 20.

mony of thousands of eyewitnesses and heretofore secret archives" He summarized his book's conclusions as follows:

*In 1933, there was an action, carefully planned beforehand, with regard to pacifying the Ukrainian people, which has entered history under the name "famine." The main strategist, the formulator, was Stalin, and those who implemented it were the representatives of the party and soviet apparatus in the local areas.*¹⁵

Hopefully, in the not too distant future, additional light can be shed on the subject of the famine and responsibility for it can be determined. Much will depend on whether Soviet officials will agree to open their archives more fully to scholars.¹⁶ Certainly, recent developments in the USSR make it appear that fuller revelations concerning the famine are not entirely improbable. Until this happens, however, the famine will remain, in the words of Conquest, "in no sense part of the past but, on the contrary, a living issue . . ." (p. 347).

¹⁵*The Ukrainian Weekly* (Jersey City, NJ), July 23, 1989, p. 2.

¹⁶The Ukrainian "Memorial" Society's public pressure to investigate Stalin-era repression even led the deputy head of the Kiev city party organization, Stanislav Martynyuk, to support "calls for the opening of the NKVD archives. . . ." See Nahaylo, *loc. cit.*, p. 18.

Problems of Communism

SUBSCRIPTIONS

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS or copies of recent (the last three) issues of *Problems of Communism* may be obtained by writing to the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402-9371 (USA). Subscription blanks for one-year and single issue requests are provided on the facing page. For further information, see the inside front cover.

CURRENT PRICES: Annual subscriptions, US mailing address, \$9.00 each; outside the US, \$11.25 each. Single copies, US mailing address, \$4.25 each; outside the US \$5.31 each. A 25 percent discount is allowed on orders for 100 or more subscriptions or single copies mailed to a single address.

ENCLOSE CHECK OR MONEY ORDER, payable to "Superintendent of Documents, USGPO," or if paying by VISA or Master Charge, please indicate credit card number in the space provided on the subscription blank.

Problems of Communism

REPRINTS, MICROFILM, REPRODUCTION

A variety of services, ranging from reprints, through microfilm and microcard editions, to reproduction of individual issues or articles are commercially available. Those firms which offer one or more such services and which have come to the Editors' attention are, in alphabetical order:

Bell & Howell Micro Photo Div.
Old Mansfield Road
Wooster, OH 44691

J. S. Canner & Co.
49-65 Lansdowne Street
Boston, MA 02215

Infordata International, Inc.
175 East Delaware Place
Chicago, IL 60611

Inst. for Scientific Information
3501 Market St.
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Johnson Reprint Corporation
111 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10003

Microforms International Mktg. Co.
Fairview Park
Elmsford, NY 10523

University Microfilms
300 Zeeb Road
Ann Arbor, MI 48106

John T. Zuba, Inc.
2969 West 25th Street
Cleveland, OH 44113

Annual indices for Volumes IV-to-date appear in the November-December issue (No. 6) for each year. A combined index to the first three volumes is contained in Vol. III, No. 6 (November-December 1954).