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THE UKRAINIAN HOLOCAUST OF 1933

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**Edited and translated by
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PREFACE

This book appears at a time when millions of Ukrainians in the diaspora are freely commemorating—and many more millions of Ukrainians are doing so secretly—the fiftieth anniversary of the genocide perpetrated by the Communist regime in Ukraine in 1933. This act of genocide was accomplished in the form of a great famine, artificially created by the Soviet government and accompanied by anti-Ukrainian terror under the slogan of the “struggle against Ukrainian nationalism.” More than six million Ukrainians perished as victims of this unprecedented crime.

On the anniversary of this great crime against humanity, thorough studies of this subject are being written. There is no doubt that they will be major contributions in revealing the truth that was so successfully concealed by the perpetrators. Before these books become available, interested readers will find the essential information in this book, written especially for the fiftieth anniversary of the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933.

Born and brought up in Soviet Ukraine, Wasył Hryshko was a student and a young writer at the time of the events described here. And it was the tragedy of 1933 that influenced his life, so that instead of the assured career of a successful Soviet writer, he chose to become a political opponent of the Soviet regime, spending four years of imprisonment in the Gulag, then taking part in the Ukrainian liberation

movement during the Second World War, and then fleeing as a political émigré to the West. The events of 1933 became the central subject of his various publications—from the memoir “My Attempt on Herriot’s Life in 1933” (1948) to *The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933* (1978). The latter is included in the present book, in a slightly revised form, as its second part.

The first part of this book deals with the hitherto almost untouched subject of the genetic connection between the anti-national and anti-peasant aspect of Marxism and the Soviet practice of genocide against the Ukrainian “peasant nation.” Thus this part provides a background to the events described in the second part, since they can be fully comprehended only in their ideological context and against their historical background. This is especially important for the reader who may be unfamiliar with the Soviet totalitarian system, which is based on a theory anti-human in its nature and in this respect essentially similar to that of Nazism.

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W.H.

1. Introduction

The subject of this book is Soviet genocide directed against Ukrainians as a nation within the borders of the Soviet Union. However, the genocidal aspect of the Communist Party general policy is directed in varying degree against all the nations under its totalitarian rule and is universal in its ideological motives and political goals. Because of this it is necessary at the outset to review briefly the nature of Soviet genocide against the background of the internationally recognized definition of genocide.

The concept of genocide attracted world-wide attention when the United Nations General Assembly declared in its resolution of 11 December 1946, that genocide is "a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world." Subsequently, a special committee of the United Nations Economic and Social Council drafted a convention on the subject, and it was unanimously approved by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948. The Convention defined genocide in Article II as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." This general definition was also detailed in five paragraphs, two of which were: "a) killing members of the group," and "c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part." ¹

This Convention on genocide was ratified by the Soviet Union in 1954, and was then published in the official bulletin of the Supreme Soviet.² It is noteworthy that in discussions at the General Assembly Soviet representatives proposed an even more detailed definition of genocide, emphasizing its nationality aspect and pointing in particular to linguistic, cultural, religious and racial forms of genocide. This included the following supplement: "Genocide also means any deliberate act committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national, racial or religious group on grounds of national or racial origin, or religious belief."³ Also in Soviet official publications, especially in reference books of the encyclopedic type, the concept of genocide, while described as an "offshoot of decaying imperialism," is presented in such terms as the "extermination of a people" and "the creation of conditions leading to the premature death of members of nationalities concerned" or, in the words of the Soviet *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, as "extermination of individual groups in a population on the basis of racial and national identity."⁴

The essential feature of both the United Nations and the Soviet definitions of genocide is that the act is directed against a certain *group* of people rather than against individuals. As to the group, it may be an ethnic, racial or religious group, or a certain nationality, or any other group identified by certain common traits, including those of a socio-political nature. In other words, it can be summarized as follows: an act of genocide involves the *partial or complete extermination or an attempt at extermination applied to a group of people as a group, regardless of the nature of the group.*

What is most significant is that all of the above definitions of genocide, and especially those supplementary definitions offered by the Soviets, correspond precisely to those acts that typify the genocidal policies practiced by the totalitarian partocracy in the Soviet Union. Of course, the nature of the ideology and theory on which Communist political practice is based has made it possible for the Soviet rulers to camouflage their genocidal policy in such a way that it is not as obvious to external observers as the simple Nazi genocide that was the concern of the authors of the United Nations Convention on genocide.

A policy of genocide is implicit in the very goals proclaimed by the Communist ideological conception of "building a new world of socialism and then communism" by means of revolutionary destruction of the "old world" and the elimination of private property and

certain classes and social groups of people connected with it, considered by Communist theory as "bourgeois" or "petty bourgeois." The latter are regarded as an obstacle on the path toward the "classless socialist society." Inasmuch as this also means the "creation of a new man," which involves the destruction and elimination of the "old bourgeois and petty bourgeois" culture based on nationality and religious consciousness and traditions, it requires Communists to wage permanent war against those national and religious forces which, being embodied in certain groups of people, are considered to be inimical to Communist goals. In fact, since the ultimate goal in Communist theory is a unified world with centralized economic and political power and without national and religious divisions, the Communist struggle for this goal must assume an anti-national and anti-religious character and also call for the destruction of certain social groups.

In an imperial state such as the Soviet Union, which consists of various nations with different languages, cultures and religious and national traditions—nations that constitutionally are "sovereign" in their fifteen "union republics" which comprise the U.S.S.R.—Communist totalitarianism, with its ideologically required centralist unification policy, inevitably led the central government to apply genocidal methods to strike down any forces within the "union of republics" which might even potentially threaten the Communist goal of centralist uniformity. The main target for the Soviet partocracy in this struggle was the so-called "bourgeois nationalism" of all nations under its rule except one: the Russians. The reason for this exception is that Russian nationalism is traditionally related to Russian imperialism and by its nature is centralist in respect to the nations conquered by the Russians and incorporated into the Russian Empire which, after its disintegration in the revolutionary period of 1917-1921, was restored by the Communists in the form of the Soviet Union. Thus Russian nationalism is in harmony with Soviet imperialism and centralism, and it is used by the Communist partocracy as an essential element in the concept of "Soviet patriotism."

From this, of course, it does not follow that Russians themselves do not suffer from totalitarianism in the Soviet Union. They certainly do, as far as the socio-political aspects of Communist genocidal policy are concerned, since in this respect all peoples under Soviet rule are treated more or less in the same way. However, the non-Russian "nationals" are victimized by Soviet genocide to an incomparably greater degree than the Russians for an obvious reason: Russians in the Soviet Union

are not oppressed as a nation, i.e. they are not subjected to those acts which even in the Soviet *Encyclopedic Dictionary* are described as "deliberate acts committed with the intent to destroy the language, religion or culture of a national group...on grounds of national or racial origin." Yet many other nationalities under Soviet rule are the victims of precisely such acts. Although such Communist acts of mass terror as the "liquidation" of various groups of "bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes," and the especially notorious "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" in the 1930s, were applied to all nations of the Soviet Union, including the Russians, there was nonetheless a difference. As applied to the Russians, these genocidal actions were limited to the named social groups as such, without being directed against Russians as a nationality—"with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical group." In the case of some of the non-Russian nations these genocidal actions were not only intended to inflict a crushing blow to their national substance, but were also directly connected with the officially proclaimed and simultaneously conducted campaign of mass terror against "local nationalism" and "separatist tendencies" perceived in the normal cultivation by "nationals" of their national consciousness and their native language and culture.

It was precisely the combination of these social, national and cultural elements that made this Soviet elimination of certain class groups within the non-Russian nations especially severe and damaging to the vitality of these nations. Such acts contributed to the partial destruction of these nations and could be regarded as a step toward their total destruction. This was all the more so when certain social groups of these nations, as for example, the peasantry and the national intelligentsia, were the main preservers of native traditions. And it was this that made the difference between that aspect of Soviet Communist genocide which was directed against the Russians and the more lethal policies directed against other nations in the Soviet Union.

The nationality aspect of Soviet genocide has as its aim the virtual "liquidation" of the non-Russian nations, their forced fusion into a single supranational entity named the "Soviet people" with one common language—Russian—and a common culture based on this language, with one historical and political tradition—Russian—and at times even identified with the name "Russian" which, in fact, is used officially in Soviet Russia with greater frequency as synonymous with the adjective "Soviet." In practice this means the attempted total

Russification of the non-Russian "nationals." This is an integral part of Soviet genocidal policy toward non-Russians which includes linguicide and ethnocide, accompanied by official propaganda regarding the superiority of the "great Russian people" ("the Elder Brother" of all the other peoples of the Soviet Union) and the patriotic duty of all these peoples to revere everything Russian and follow the lead of the Russians as the "first among equals." Of course, this does not mean that Russians have in the Soviet Union any special material privileges in their daily life, but the political and cultural privileges enjoyed by Russians as a nation are obvious and undeniable. There is no significant evidence that Russians disapprove of this kind of discrimination in Soviet nationality policy, while evidence to the contrary is plentiful. Because of this it is quite natural that non-Russian "nationals" generally accept the Russian imperialistic character of the Soviet genocide directed against them.

What has been stated on the nature of Soviet genocide as directed against the non-Russian nations under Soviet rule pertains first and foremost to the Ukrainians. As the most economically self-sufficient of the fourteen non-Russian republics, and therefore most capable of aspiring to independent statehood, Ukraine became the principal target of Soviet genocide. Thus it is the Ukrainian nation that suffered most from that deadly combination of social, national and cultural elements of Soviet genocide in which the "liquidation" of such a social group as the so-called *kurkuls* (the officially used Ukrainian translation of the Russian word *kulak*), i.e. the independent peasantry, was meant to destroy the very core of the mainly peasant Ukrainian nation. The Ukrainian peasantry, historically, was the prime force in preserving the national tradition, language and identity through centuries of foreign occupations. It was the prime source for the emergence of the national intelligentsia, and because of this—the basic force in the national revival in the nineteenth century, in the national revolution of 1917-1918, in the rebirth of independent statehood in 1918-1921, and in the cultural renaissance during the post-revolutionary period of "Ukrainization."

In sum total all these elements of genocidal policy, rooted in both Communist ideology and in Russian imperialist "anti-Ukrainianism," were in the early 1930s developed into a series of terrible acts of Soviet genocide against the Ukrainians as a nation. The culmination of these acts of genocide in Ukraine (and in the Ukrainian areas of the Kuban and Don Cossack territories) was reached in 1933 when, after three

years of a special expropriatory policy against the peasantry, an artificially created famine was used to eliminate millions of people, mainly peasants who opposed the total collectivization of agriculture. At the same time mass terror was used against the Ukrainian intelligentsia and nationally conscious Ukrainians in general under the pretext of "combatting Ukrainian nationalism as the main danger to the Soviet state in Ukraine," while "Ukrainian nationalism" was found in the cultivation of the Ukrainian language and in the development of Ukrainian culture in general. It was at this time that the official policy of Russification replaced the ill-fated "Ukrainization" of the 1920s, and one of its results was the policy of linguicide directed against the Ukrainian language followed by mass repressions and even executions of Ukrainian writers, philologists, historians, educators and others.

These actions of the Soviet government correspond exactly to those forms of genocide as defined in the United Nations convention ("acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnical... group as such," and particularly "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part") and supplemented by the Soviets ("creation of conditions leading to premature death of members of the nationality concerned," and also "deliberate acts committed with intent to destroy the language and culture of a national group"). Thus we have a clear case of "classical" genocide which in terms of the number of its victims, counted in the millions, and in its magnitude can be compared to Hitler's attempt to destroy the Jewish nationality in Europe during World War II.

Since the Holocaust has become a symbol of the horrors of totalitarian genocide (although genocide was a state policy in the Soviet Union in peacetime a decade earlier), the fateful chain of tragic events in Ukraine in 1933 has come to be called the "Ukrainian Holocaust." It is treated as such in this book.

In order to understand the real nature of the Soviet genocide applied against Ukrainians as a nation and against the Ukrainian peasantry in particular, it is necessary first to look at its ideological and historical background and to examine the sources of Communist theory and practice.

PART 1
THE ORIGINS OF SOVIET GENOCIDE

2. The Anti-National and Anti-Peasant Bias of Marxism

The ideological grounds for Soviet genocidal policy against those national and social groups which from the Communist point of view are adverse to "progressive" Communist goals, and are therefore "reactionary" and "counterrevolutionary," have been present in the theory of "scientific Communism" from its beginnings in the early writings of its creators, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. In fact, in the very first pronouncements of the "fathers of scientific Communism," and especially in their *Communist Manifesto* (written in 1847 and published in 1848) the Communist ideological position regarding nationalities and the peasantry was expressed in such a way that there was hardly any doubt left as to their *anti-national* and *anti-peasant* bias.

Thus in 1845, when Marx and Engels commenced their collaboration in formulating Communist principles and endeavoring to form an international proletarian movement on the basis of these principles, Engels wrote in his critical review of the "Festival of Nations" in London:

The proletarians in all countries have one and the same interest, one and the same enemy, one and the same struggle. The great mass of proletarians are, by their nature, free from national prejudices, and their whole disposition

and movement is essentially humanitarian, anti-nationalist. Only the proletarians can destroy nationality....¹

What was behind Engels's significant equation between "anti-nationalism" and "destruction of nationality" was clarified by him in his draft program discussed at the First Congress of the Communist League in London in 1847. This draft, which constituted a preliminary version of the Communist Manifesto, was presented in the form of questions and answers. The question of nationality was set forth as follows:

Question: Will nationalities continue to exist under Communism? Answer: The nationalities of the peoples who join together according to the principle of community will be just as much compelled by this union to merge with one another and thereby supersede themselves as the various differences between estates and classes disappear through the superseding of their base—private property.²

Thus the fate of nationality in the Communist conception was connected with and subordinated to the way the problem of private property and social classes of private property owners was projected to be solved in the process of creating the Communist society. Since the proclaimed goal of the Communist movement from its inception has been the abolition of private property and the liquidation of classes based on it, the "merging of nationalities" and their "superseding themselves," as a world-wide Communist international goal, could not mean anything but liquidation of many nationalities by way of their amalgamation and transformation into a few large supranational complexes. The latter were theoretically supposed to be "nationless," but in practice they could be only the products of assimilation on the base of the language and culture of a certain "great" ("first among equals") imperial nation—on the road to the so-called "internationally united" Communist world. This supposedly "new" idea, called by Communists "proletarian internationalism," was, in fact, just another ideological version of the old bourgeois cosmopolitanism for preparing the ground on which its antagonist historical successor—the "proletariat" (i.e. Communist "proletarian vanguard" after establishing itself as a ruling power under the name of "proletarian dictatorship")—could easily eliminate all "national differences" or, in

Engels' words, to accomplish the mission of "destroying nationality." Here is what the "fathers of scientific Communism" said on this matter in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*:

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.... The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in all countries.... To the great chagrin of reactionaries, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground.... In place of the old local and national apartness and self-sufficiency we have thorough interconnection and interdependence of nations.... National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness became more and more impossible....

The proletarians have no fatherland.... National differences and contradictions are daily more and more vanishing, owing to the development of the bourgeoisie.... The supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster. ³

Marx and Engels in their *Manifesto* also praised bourgeois achievements in the ruin and subsequent "proletarianization" of the peasantry as well as in the destruction of the traditional rural way of life (contemptuously called in the *Manifesto* "idiocy of rural life"). In general, in this inaugural program of the Communist movement there was expressed a definite aversion to the peasantry as a part of the "petty bourgeoisie," a "middle class" of small proprietors considered to be a "conservative" and "reactionary" social force.

Accordingly, while lauding bourgeois progress in urbanization and in subordinating the countryside to the dominance of the town, the *Manifesto* also hailed the dependence of entire "nations of peasants" (termed "peasant nations" in subsequent writings of Marx and Engels) on bourgeois nations likening this to the dependence of "barbarian and semi-barbarian countries" on civilized ones. And consequently, this generally anti-peasant attitude was applied to the evaluation of ideas in such a way that even those currents of thought within the socialist movement which, while supporting the industrial proletariat in the general fight of labor against capital, regarded peasants as working people as much as the industrial laborers and reflected the peasants' interests in their socialist conceptions, were proclaimed in the *Manifesto* as being "petty bourgeois" and therefore "reactionary."

Thus in continuation of their appreciation of "the most revolutionary part" of the bourgeoisie in preparing the ground for the next revolutionary step by its successor, the Communist-minded proletariat, Marx and Engels wrote:

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to rule of the town. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois.... The necessary consequence of this was political centralization.

The medieval burgesses and the small peasant proprietors were precursors of the modern bourgeoisie. In those countries which are but little developed, industrially and commercially, these two classes still vegetate side by side with the rising bourgeoisie. In countries where modern civilization has become fully developed, a new class of petty bourgeoisie has been formed [out of this], fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie and ever renewing itself as a supplementary part of bourgeois society. The individual members of this class, however, are being constantly hurled down into the proletariat.... They even see the moment approaching when, with development of industry, they will completely disappear as an independent section of modern society. ⁴

It was against this historical background that the following political evaluation of social classes was made:

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.... The lower middle class, the small manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the artisan, the peasant—all these fight against the bourgeoisie to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class. They are therefore not revolutionary, but conservative. Nay more, they are reactionary, for they try to roll back the wheel of history....

In countries... where the peasants constitute far more than half of the population it was natural that [political]

writers who sided with the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, should use, in their criticism of bourgeois regime, the standard of the peasant and petty bourgeois.... Thus arose petty bourgeois Socialism.... It is both reactionary and utopian. ⁵

Finally, while outlining the concrete features of the future Communist revolution in the name of the industrial proletariat, the authors of the Manifesto described some measures and methods that the victorious proletariat, in its position as the ruling class, will use to liquidate those social classes which are based on private property ownership, including the measures directly related to the future fate of the peasantry as a class of small land owners. The following are excerpts from the Manifesto on this matter:

The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: abolition of private property.... The Communist revolution is the most radical rupture with traditional property relations.... The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralize all means of production in the hands of the State, i.e. of the proletariat organized as the ruling class... of course, in the beginning, this cannot be effected except by means of despotic inroads on the right of property... i.e. by means of measures which... are inevitable as a means of entirely revolutionizing the mode of production. These measures...: 1) Expropriation of property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes.... Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolishing of the distinction between town and country....

Political power, properly so-called, is merely the organized violence of one class for oppressing another.... Proletariat... by means of revolution will make itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the condition for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally.... ⁶

In the above quotations there were, in fact, already outlined in general terms the essence of those "despotic measures" through which later in the Soviet Union the "expropriation of property in land" of the whole peasantry was accomplished in the course of "sweeping

away by force the old conditions of production” and the actual liquidation of the “petty bourgeois” class of peasantry as such in the form of “liquidation of the *kulak* as a class” and “total collectivization” (“combination of agriculture with manufacturing industry”).

The anti-peasant attitude of the “fathers of scientific Communism” is revealed unmistakably in their treatment of the Central European peasantry as a social-political force in the ferment that developed into the revolution of 1848. In this respect especially significant were the writings of Engels at that time, which also represented the opinion of Marx. Here are some excerpts from Engels’ writings on that subject:

The peasants (among whom we include here only the small peasant proprietors)... form a helpless group of petty bourgeois... incapable of all historical initiative. Where the absence of nobility and bourgeoisie allows them to rule, as in the mountain cantons of Switzerland and in Norway, pre-feudal barbarism, local narrow-mindedness, and dull, fanatical bigotry, loyalty and rectitude rule with them.... Rule by the peasants is also, therefore, fortunately unthinkable....

All progressive movements have been issued exclusively from the town... the independent democratic movements of country people were firstly always reactionary manifestations and were secondly always crushed...

So far as peasants are concerned, they will play the same part towards the bourgeoisie as they played for so long towards the petty bourgeoisie... What else can they do? They are owners, like the bourgeoisie, and for the moment their interests are almost identical with those of the bourgeoisie....

The peasant in France, as in Germany, is a barbarian in the midst of civilization.... The present attitude of the peasant toward revolution is not the consequence of any mistakes or chance blunder; it is based upon the conditions of life, the social position of the small landowner. The French proletariat, before it enforces its demands, will first have to put down a general peasant war.... ⁷

As the subjugated Slavs of Austria awakened during the revolution of 1848 and became a perceptible force in the historical process, Marx and Engels openly revealed their animosity and aversion to these “small backward nations,” because they did not fit into their scheme of “bourgeois revolution” as a necessary step toward the “proletarian

revolution.” The ideological motivation of Marx and Engels’s negative attitude toward the Austrian Slavs (the Czechs, Slovaks, Croats, Serbs, Slovenes and Western Ukrainians or “Ruthenians,” as they were called) entirely coincided with the great-state nationalism of the Germans, Hungarians and Poles—the nations whose dominance over the Slavs in the Austrian Empire was endangered by the latter’s striving for national self-determination. Thus Marx and Engels sided with dominant “big nations” against awakened subjugated nations and ideologically rationalized this as siding with the “progressive” and therefore “revolutionary” nations against those that were “conservative” and “counterrevolutionary.”

This division of nations into “revolutionary” and “counter-revolutionary” categories was persistently propagated by Marx and Engels in their *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, which was the official organ of the newly born Communist movement (Marx, editor-in-chief, and Engels, co-owner and chief commentator). It was here that Engels, as the spokesman for the Marx-Engels editorial team, in a series of articles expressed their views on the political situation in Europe during the revolution of 1848-1849 in such a way that both Communist ideology and German great-power nationalism were combined.⁸ This strikingly resembled the way Lenin and Stalin and subsequent Soviet leaders combined Communist and Russian chauvinistic argumentation. The following excerpts from Engels’s writings speak for themselves:

Among all the large and small nations of Austria, only three standard-bearers of progress took an active part in history, and still retain their vitality—the Germans, the Poles and the Magyars. Hence they are now revolutionary. All the other large and small nationalities and peoples are destined to perish before long in the revolutionary world storm. For that reason they are now counter-revolutionary....

The class that was the driving force and standard-bearer of the movement [for progress], the bourgeoisie, was everywhere German or Magyar. The Slavs could only with difficulty give rise to a national bourgeoisie.... And with the bourgeoisie, industrial power and capital were in the hands of the Germans and Magyars, German culture developed, and intellectually too, the Slavs became subordinated to the Germans....

The Austrian Slavs founded a pan-Slavism... the union

of all the small Slav nations and nationalities of Austria and secondarily of Turkey, for struggle against Austrian Germans, the Magyars, and eventually Turks.... The pan-Slavism immediately gave proof of its reactionary tendency... its petty national narrowmindedness... the only Slav nation which acted in a revolutionary manner—the Poles....⁹

And then, while commending the Poles for their alliance with the Germans and Magyars in Austria during the revolution, Engels sharply reproached the Western Ukrainians (Ruthenians) of Galicia for their militant opposition to the attempts of the Poles to secure their dominant position on Ukrainian territory, ignoring the national aspirations of Galician Ukrainians whose revival movement was developing at that time. In writing ironically about the “Ruthenian nationality” and the national movement of “Ruthenian peasants” as being merely the product of political intrigues by the Austrian conservative leader and diplomat C. Metternich, Engels presented his biased interpretation of this matter as follows:

...The democratic Polish movement which began in the interests of the peasants was crushed by Metternich by means of the Ruthenian peasants themselves who were animated by religious and national fanaticism.... In order to curb the revolutionary spirit of the Poles, Metternich had appealed to the Ruthenians, a nationality differed from the Poles by its somewhat different dialect and especially by its Greek Orthodox religion. The Ruthenians had belonged to Poland for a long time and learned only from Metternich that the Poles were their oppressors.¹⁰

In further developing the anti-Slav great-state-nationalist aspect of his (and Marx's) Communist conception of “internationalism” in revolutionary practice, Engels employed the familiar arguments that have been used by all apologists for aggressive expansionism and even racism, including German and Russian imperialism and, later, German Nazism and Russian Communism. It is the right of force, not the force of right, that determines the fate of nations; therefore the rule of strong “great” nations over weak ones is a historically justified condition of progress, which makes successful nations “historic” and those that are unsuccessful “unhistoric.” Moreover, the rule of the “historic” nations over the “unhistoric” nations is in the interests of

the latter as it enables them to join the historical process on the side of progress, since otherwise they would simply cease to exist. Engels pursued this distinction in the following argument regarding the division of nations into "revolutionary" and "counterrevolutionary" groups:

This division is in accordance with the previous history of the nations in question.... Is there a single one of these races (i.e. Slavs, except Poles), not excluding the Czechs and Serbs, that possessed a national historical tradition which is kept alive among the people and stands above the pettiest local struggle?... If they were unable to achieve independence and form a stable state even when both their enemies, the Germans and Magyars, were tearing each other to pieces, how will they be able to achieve it today, after a thousand years of subjection and loss of their national character?

There is no country in Europe which does not have in some corner or other one or several ruined fragments of peoples, the remnants of former population that was suppressed and held in bondage by the nation which later became the main vehicle of historical developments. The relics of a nation mercilessly trampled under foot in the course of history, as Hegel says... these residual fragments of peoples always become fanatical standard-bearers of counterrevolution and remain so until their complete extirpation or loss of their national character, just as their whole existence in general is still a protest against a great historical revolution.¹¹

There were even more fervent and cynical expressions of contempt for the nations enslaved by the aggressive force of conquerors whose violence Engels applauded. There was a near-hysterical outburst of anti-Slav and anti-"small nations" rage in Marx and Engels' *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* on the occasion of the Slav Congress in Prague in 1848 when an Appeal to the Slavs appeared, written by a member of the Congress—the Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin. In this document (called by Engels a "democratic pan-Slavist manifesto") the most democratic goals of the revolution were proclaimed on behalf of Slavic peoples including "the final liberation of all peoples," so that "the Slavs will have their place in the world as great and free and independent"; there was also a call to all participants in the revolution to declare as its ultimate goal "that despotic states be dissolved:

Prussia... Austria... the Turkish Empire... and, finally, the last hope of the despots—the Russian Empire!”

In their campaign against the national movements of the Slavs under Austrian rule, Marx and Engels especially exploited the fact that among the Austrian (but more so among the Turkish) Slavs there was some hope that the Russian Empire would help them achieve their national goals. Since autocratic Russia had its political interests in the Slav movement in South-Eastern Europe and therefore was feared and hated by the Germans (and for this and ideological reasons also by Marx and Engels), the suspected Russian involvement in this movement was the main theme of the anti-Slav propaganda that Marx and Engels conducted in their *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*.

Although Bakunin's Appeal to the Slavs called for the dissolution of the Russian “despotic empire,” it was sharply attacked by Marx and Engels, because it was also directed against German and Magyar domination over “their” Slavs. And in this attack the Russians (as an imperial nation that suppressed many other nations, including the Slavs) were named as another (besides the Poles) Slavic nation that belongs to the ranks of those chosen nations that deserve to be independent and to have other nations under their rule. As to the other Slavs (with possible mercy for those under Turkey) Marx and Engels' reaction to their “counterrevolutionary” desire for independence so extremely harsh, that, besides repeated arguments justifying the violence of aggressive “great nations” in forcing their rule upon them, also savage hatred and direct threat of “annihilating fight and ruthless terror” against them by “revolutionary nations” were expressed. Thus in his article “Democratic Pan-Slavism” in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, of 14-15 February 1849, Engels wrote:

Apart from the Poles, the Russians, and at most the Turkish Slavs, no Slav people has a future, for the simple reason that all the other Slavs lack the primary historical, geographical, political, and industrial conditions for independence and viability. Peoples which have never had a history of their own, which from the time when they achieve the first, most elementary stage of civilization already came under foreign sway, or which were forced to attain the first stage of civilization only by means of a foreign yoke, are not viable and will never be able to achieve any kind of independence.... And these historically absolutely non-existent “nations” put forward claims to

independence?... At a time when in Europe in general big monarchies had become a "historical necessity," the Germans and Magyars united all these small, stunted and impotent little nations into a single big state and thereby enabled them to take part in a historical development from which, left to themselves, they would have remained completely aloof! Of course, matters of this kind cannot be accomplished without many a tender national blossom being forcibly broken. But in history nothing is achieved without violence and implacable ruthlessness....

Now, however, as a result of the powerful progress of industry, trade and communications, political centralization has become a much more urgent need.... What still has to be centralized is being centralized. And now the pan-Slavists come forward and demand that we should "set free" these half-Germanized Slavs, and that we should abolish a centralization which is being forced on these Slavs by all their material interests!...

We have no intention of doing that. To the sentimental phrases about brotherhood which we are being offered here on behalf of the most counter-revolutionary nations of Europe, we reply that hatred of Russians was and still is the primary passion among Germans; that since the revolution hatred of Czechs and Croats has been added, and that only by the most determined use of terror against these Slav peoples can we, jointly with the Poles and Magyars safeguard the revolution... and no fine phrases, no allusions to an undefined democratic future for these countries can deter us from treating our enemies as enemies.... There will be a struggle, and "inexorable life-and-death struggle" against those Slavs who betray the revolution; an annihilating fight and ruthless terror—not in the interests of Germany, but in the interests of the revolution! ¹²

It should be noted that Engel's repeated references to "absolutely non-existent" Slavic nations "without a history of their own" and therefore "without a future" pertained in particular to the Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, i.e. to the nations that subsequently proved their "absolutely unquestionable existence," as well as the fact that they were and remain very much "historical" nations as they achieved their independence in the form of the federated states of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. This is also proof of the complete

failure of Marx and Engels's pro-imperialistic position on the nationality question. There is additional proof of this in the fact that Marx and Engels, in spite of their "revolutionary hatred" of Russia as that reactionary force which allegedly was behind the "counter-revolutionary" behavior of the Austrian Slavs, completely ignored the problem of the oppressed nations under Russian rule. In particular they ignored the Slavic nations—the Ukrainians and Byelorussians—which were apparently "non-existent" (although, as is evident from their notes on materials on Russia that they studied, Marx and Engels were familiar with the situation of these nations under Russian rule).

It should be noted here as we offer conclusions from the above quoted writings of Engels (which represented both his and Marx's position) that the co-author of the *Communist Manifesto*, who in his first drafts of this Communist "gospel" proclaimed the mission of the proletariat "to destroy nationality" by building a Communism in which the "merging of nationalities and superseding themselves" will be inevitable, finally, in his collaboration with Marx in the practice of Communist revolutionary politics became a spokesman of German supernationalism, as their "proletarian internationalism" actually "merged" with it and they "superseded themselves." It was the hybrid product of this merging and supersedure that Engels actually represented as he proclaimed "annihilating fight and ruthless terror" against the nations subjugated by the Germans, because they strived for their full national life in independence and equality with Germans and other nations.

This convergence of Communist "proletarian internationalism" with the supernationalism of a dominant "great nation" was not accidental or unusual; on the contrary, it was a logical development in the practical application of Marxist theory. The Communist theoretical orientation on a large centralized state as a vehicle for spreading industrial civilization to "backward," "barbarian" or simply "peasant" nations and assimilating them by dominant "great nations" has inevitably led to coincidence of interests of great-power-nationalist expansionism and equally expansionist Communist "internationalism." Since the resistance of those nations striving for independent state life is also inevitable, the crushing of this resistance by "annihilating ruthless terror" should follow in both nationalist and "internationalist" forms of expansion—as was most convincingly demonstrated later, after both Communist and nationalist forms of expansionism developed into the two modern forms of Soviet and

Nazi totalitarianism. The seeds of this genocide were also sown in the writings of the "fathers of scientific Communism."

There is one aspect of genocide that was inherently Communist from the beginning of Marxist theory and that subsequently became a specific feature of Communist practice: the campaign directed against the peasantry as a "petty bourgeois" class of private property owners and as a bearer of national traditions and the basic elements of nationality itself. As was demonstrated by Engel's anti-peasant diatribes his aversion to the peasantry was a natural reflection of the Communist doctrine of the abolition of private property and the liquidation of social classes based on it. The means by which this doctrine was to be realized were stated in the Manifesto with unmistakable clarity: the "means of despotic inroads on the right of property," the "expropriation of property in land"—by exercising "political power as merely the organized violence of one class for oppression of another." That this referred not to big landowners alone, but also, and most specifically, to small peasant proprietors was clear enough both in the *Manifesto* and in Engels' writings. This was quite understandable because the class of small peasant proprietors has represented the sector of private property owners who are most numerous and deeply rooted in society, an organic part of the entire nation, and has been the principal obstacle to the creation of a Communist society.

It is self-evident that the elimination of this obstacle should inevitably lead Communists to use acts of violence, in the name of the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat," which eventually develop into acts of genocide. Moreover, this obstacle in many instances may be the majority of the nation defined by Marx and Engels as a "peasant nation," in which cases the acts of violence become genocide of both a social and national character. It was the seeds of this genocide that were sown in the teachings of the "fathers of scientific Communism" as they openly advocated the use of force as the decisive factor of progress in history (one of the main works of Engels was *The Role of Force in History*) as reflected in the maxims quoted above and in Engels's statement, "In history nothing is achieved without violence and implacable ruthlessness," and in Marx's aphorism, "Violence is the midwife of history."

To be sure, among the numerous writings of Marx and Engels there were also some of the later period in which their views concerning nationalities and the peasantry were presented in a somewhat different manner. These writings were elaborations on the subject of Com-

munist political *tactics* in dealing with the countries in which oppressed nationalities and the peasantry were the most explosive force in a possible future revolution that could be used in the interests of Communist strategic plans. Bearing in mind their fiasco in the revolution of 1848, Marx wrote of the necessity to convince the peasants that "they have a natural ally and leader in the person of the urban proletariat,"¹³ and Engels even began to persuade his own party that "in order to conquer political power this party must first go from town to the country, must become a power in the countryside."¹⁴ Also, in the nationality question, at least in defining their position in respect to the Irish and Polish national-liberation movements, they coined such generally known slogans as "no nation can be free if it oppressed other nations."

But such tactical statements did not modify the principal goals of the Communist movement as it was shaped by the *Communist Manifesto*—abolishing private property, eliminating the peasantry as a class tied to it by its very nature, and destroying nationalities in the name of an "internationalism" that would unite all nations into one unified Communist world. As such, this tactical element in the later writings of Marx and Engels can only be regarded as the means to enable the Communist movement to maneuver on the way to its ultimate goals, which were so simply and boldly stated in the *Manifesto*. And it was the *Manifesto* that became and never ceased to be the programmatic document of Communism.

It was these goals and the guidance provided by this Communist document that were taken over as an inheritance from the "fathers of scientific Communism" by Vladimir Lenin—the leader of the Bolshevik faction of the Russian Marxist movement, who made it his life mission to carry into practice the theoretical scheme of Marx and Engels in the country they considered to be the least appropriate place for this.

3. The Dual Nature of Lenin's Anti-National and Anti-Peasant Policies

It was a historical paradox that Lenin's *bol'shevik* (in rough translation—"majority") faction of the Russian Marxist movement should have ventured to take upon itself the mission of realizing the Communist idea in an underdeveloped country where the industrial proletariat was a small minority within the overwhelmingly peasant population (from which the "petty bourgeois" originated). This meant that this minority could rely only on force, coercion and deceptive tactics. This was even more so the case in view of another extraordinary fact: in the multinational Russian Empire the majority of the population was *non-Russian* ("no less than 57 percent,"¹ according to Lenin in 1916) and consisted mostly of the wholly subjugated "peasant nations," which were inner colonies under Russian domination, having economies of a colonial character with a Russified upper stratum of society as well as Russified administrative and industrial centers, including the industrial proletariat. Because of this, Lenin's Marxist organization of the proletarian minority in the Russian Empire, with its orientation on the use of force and coercion, was inevitably set off against the non-Russian nations and their peasant-oriented national movements that were historically on the order of the day. These circumstances made Lenin's movement an exclusively Russian centralist, and consequently great-power-nationalist, political force that had to camouflage its true nature behind an especially

hypocritical version of “proletarian internationalism”—an extremely intricate double-faced “nationality policy” which, in combination with the same kind of artful policy with respect to the peasantry, became one of the most important elements in Lenin’s tactical arsenal.

The main feature of Lenin’s “nationality policy,” which determined for all subsequent periods the general direction of Russian Communist policies toward the nations subjugated by Russia, consisted of the following dialectical “unity of opposites”: on the one hand, the proclamation of the general recognition of the “right of every nation to self-determination and even to secession,” and on the other hand, the openly declared denial of this right as opposed to the “international” interests of the proletariat and the employment of every political practice in order not to allow any of the nations under Russian rule to exercise this right.

Significantly enough, the duplicity of this utterly insincere policy was cynically emphasized by Lenin himself in his explanation to his own party of the constrained motives and the real meaning of this policy. The following assemblage of excerpts from his writings on this matter in his party’s pre-revolutionary publications will speak for itself (the excerpts are arranged not in chronological, but logical order):

In Russia, where the oppressed nations account for 57 percent of the population, where they occupy mostly the border regions, where some of them are more highly cultured than the Great Russians... there, in Russia, recognition of the right of nations oppressed by Tsarism to free secession from Russia is absolutely obligatory for Russian Social-Democrats, for the furtherance of their democratic and socialist aims.

The article of our program on self-determination... i.e. the right to secede and form a separate state... most certainly does not mean that Social-Democrats reject an independent appraisal of the advisability of the state secession of any nation in each separate case. Social-Democracy should, on the contrary, give its independent appraisal, taking into consideration... first of all and most of all the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism.

The right to self-determination is one thing, of course, and the expedience of self-determination, the secession of a given nation under given circumstances, is another. This is elementary.

We are in favor of the right to secession (and not in favour of everyone's seceding!).... Secession is not what we plan at all. We do not advocate secession. In general we are opposed to secession. But we stand for the right to secede.... Sometime close ties will be established after free secession!

The right to self-determination is an exception in our general premise of centralism. This exception is absolutely essential in view of reactionary Great Russian nationalism... but exception must not be too broadly interpreted. In this case there is not, and must not be anything more than the right to secede.

The several demands of democracy, including self-determination, are not an absolute, but only a small part of the general-democratic (now: general-socialist) world movement. In individual concrete cases, the party may contradict the whole; if so, it must be rejected.

We demand freedom of self-determination, i.e. independence, i.e. freedom of secession for the oppressed nations, not because we have dreamt of splitting up the country economically, or of the ideal of small states, but on the contrary, because we want large states and the close unity and even fusion of nations. ²

What followed from Lenin's casuistry (which was an integral part of the Bolshevik's official program—*Theses on the National Question*, adopted in 1913 and effective up to the revolution of 1917) was that recognition of the "right of all nations to self-determination and even secession" combined with the simultaneous denial of it reduced all this to a nullity. Behind this nullity was the familiar "great-state" complex of all spokesmen for imperial supernationalism of both versions—the open one and that disguised in the phraseology of "internationalism" (the latter being represented by the Communist teaching of Marx and Engels). It was the latter, in particular Engel's thesis about the mission of the proletariat "to destroy nationality" through their "merging with one another and superseding themselves" within a large multinational "community" that Lenin adopted and adjusted to the specific conditions of the Russian empire and to the specific form of Russian imperial supernationalism.

Thus, proceeding from the Marxist theoretical conception of "pro-

letarian internationalism” and speaking about the “international interests of the proletariat,” Lenin even more than his German teachers of “scientific Communism” became, in fact, a spokesman of the “proletarian” version of Russian great-power nationalism, which did not differ much from the official version preached and practiced in the Tsarist Empire.

Indeed, such things as the “merging” (or “fusion”) of nations within a single “large state” guided by a policy of centralism, promoted by Lenin as being in the “international interests of the proletariat,” actually were more in the interests of the bourgeois or any other kind of Russian great-power nationalism—including, of course, the interests of the *Russian* proletariat, for it was not an “international” abstraction, but a very concrete Russian, nationally minded working class (and this social class, after all, is nationally minded everywhere in the world, with its socialist movement not excluded). Moreover, this also coincided with the aims of the Tsarist goal of “fusing” (“merging”) the nations under Russian rule by means of Russification for the purpose of keeping the Russian Empire a centralized “single and indivisible” state.

Lenin, while using Marxist “internationalist” political language, virtually endorsed assimilation, and implicitly, Russification, as he emphatically advanced in his writings the idea of centralism and even a “single and indivisible” large state. Some excerpts from Lenin’s writings will illustrate how Marxist argumentation in his reasoning on the subject of a “large state,” centralism and assimilation led him to “merge” his views with those of Russian great-power nationalism in general:

What is left is capitalism’s world-historical tendency to break down national barriers, obliterate national distinctions, and to assimilate nations—a tendency which manifests itself more and more powerfully with every passing decade, and is one of the greatest driving forces transforming capitalism into socialism.... No one unobsessed by nationalist prejudices can fail to perceive that this process of assimilation of nations by capitalism means the greatest historical progress, the breakdown of hidebound national conservatism in the various backwoods, especially in backward countries like Russia....

The development of nationality in general is the principle of bourgeois nationalism.... The proletariat, however, far from undertaking to uphold the national development of every nation, on the contrary, warns the masses against such illusion, stands for the fullest freedom of capitalist intercourse and welcomes every kind of assimilation, except that which is founded on force or privilege.... The proletariat... supports everything that helps to obliterate national distinctions and remove national barriers; it supports everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer and closer, or tends to merge nations....

Marxists are, of course, opposed to federation and decentralization, for the simple reason that capitalism requires for its development the largest and most centralized possible states. Other conditions being equal, the class conscious proletariat will always stand for the largest state. It will always fight against medieval particularism, and will always welcome the closest possible economic amalgamation of large territories.... While, and insofar as, different nations constitute a single state, Marxists will never, under any circumstances advocate either the federal principle or decentralization. The great centralized state is a tremendous historical step forward from medieval disunity to the socialist unity of the whole world, and only via such a state (inseparably connected with capitalism) can there be any road to socialism.

Approaching the matter from the point of view of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, upheld democratic centralism, the republic—one and indivisible. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transitional form from monarchy to a centralized republic.... There is not the slightest hint of Engels abandoning the criticism of the shortcomings of a federal republic or that he abandoned the most determined propaganda and struggle for a unified and centralized democratic republic.

We are certainly in favor of democratic centralism. We are opposed to federation.... Federation means the association of equals, an association that demands common agreement.... We are opposed to federation in princi-

ple, it loosens economic ties and is unsuitable for a single state. ³

Neither Lenin nor his disciples ever clearly defined what they meant by "democratic centralism". However, it is generally known that the Soviet regime established by the Russian Communist party was defined by Lenin himself as a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and even as the dictatorship of the "proletarian vanguard"—the Communist party; this fact has been affirmed by sixty-five years of this party's totalitarian rule in the Soviet Union—totally centralized without any trace of democracy in its real meaning. But the "dictatorship of the proletariat" will be discussed elsewhere, and now let us take a closer look at the real meaning of Lenin's emphatic endorsement of assimilation and the "merging" of nations within an "indivisible" centralized "large state" and its relation to Lenin's view on assimilation through Russification as a way of "merging" the nations under Russian rule.

Although Lenin's statement that the "proletariat welcomes every kind of assimilation" was accompanied by the remark "except that which is founded on force or privilege," this reservation was meaningless in view of the fact that, as far as assimilation of *nations* (not individuals or groups of immigrants) is concerned, there is no such thing as a "voluntary assimilation" of a free, independent nation with another one, for it always involves supremacy of one nation over another. In the case of Russia the "force and privilege" of the dominant nation in both direct and indirect forms was obvious, and Lenin himself frequently mentioned this in his writings. Nevertheless, he welcomed the process of assimilation in Ukraine as a "progressive" factor, unquestionably "founded on force and privilege," since this assimilation was taking place at the time when the Ukrainian language had been officially forbidden by the Russian government (from 1863 to 1905) in schools, in the press, and in public life, and even after the revolution of 1905 its use remained severely restricted. Moreover, Lenin specifically welcomed this process of assimilation as a consequence of Russian economic colonization of Ukraine, and he pictured this as a natural and mutual process of "getting together" of Russians and Ukrainians, whereas this was a one-sided process of Russification of Ukraine in a typically colonial way. Here is how Lenin interpreted it:

For several decades a well defined process of accelerated economic development has been going on in the South, i.e.

Ukraine, attracting hundreds of thousands of peasants and workers from Great Russia to capitalist farms, mines and cities. The “assimilation” [quotation marks by Lenin]—within this limits—of Great Russian and Ukrainian proletariat is an indisputable fact. And this fact is undoubtedly progressive. Capitalism is replacing the ignorant, conservative, settled *muzhik* of the Great Russian or Ukrainian backwoods with a mobile proletariat whose conditions of life break down specifically national narrow-mindedness, both Great Russian and Ukrainian. ⁴

Thus Lenin's views on assimilation were just a part of his general conception of “amalgamation” and integration of all nationalities under Russian rule into one unity of peoples on the basically existing conditions favorable to this, including Russification. The indirect endorsement of Russification was quite obvious in his numerous writings on the subject of “national-cultural autonomy.” Although the demand for national-cultural autonomy by non-Russian “nationals” (such was the term used for all non-Russians in Russian political jargon) was an elementary form of their resistance to assimilatory Russification, as it meant simply the demand for the freedom to have schools with instruction in the native language, freedom to develop the native language and the national culture in the communities and organizations formed on the basis of nationality. Nevertheless, Lenin saw in it a special and, in his opinion, “refined” form of “bourgeois nationalism” which was most dangerous for the “international” unity of the proletariat in Russia. He was extremely aggressive in attacking it in the name of “proletarian internationalism,” going so far as to condemn even the idea of “national culture” itself and proclaiming instead an indefinite (and actually indefinable) concept of the “international culture of the proletariat.” It was evident from the outset, however, that behind all of this was Lenin's concern over the threat to his favorite idea of centralism embodied in the highly centralized “proletarian” Marxist party destined to seize power over the mighty Russian Empire. It was the idea of centralism that prompted Lenin to see in this multinational state the concrete base for the establishment of an “internationalist” great power, utilizing all means to keep it “one and indivisible,” including such an instrument of unification as assimilation through Russification substituted for “internationalization.” It was with this in mind that Lenin made in his various writings

on this matter the following series of statements:

We do not support “national culture” but international culture.... We are against national culture as one of the slogans of bourgeois nationalism.... We are in favor of the international culture of the fully democratic and socialist proletariat.... Down with the deceptive bourgeois, compromise slogan of “cultural-national autonomy”!... The slogan is incorrect, because already under capitalism all economic, political and spiritual life is becoming more and more international. Socialism will make it completely international.... The sum total of economic and political conditions in Russia therefore demands that Social-Democrats should unite unconditionally workers of all nationalities.... [Not] the perpetuating of nationalism, [but]—unification, rapprochement, the mingling of nations and the expression of the principles of a different, international culture.... Only the clericals and the bourgeoisie can speak of national culture in general....

The interests of the working class demand amalgamation of the workers of all nationalities in a given state in united proletarian organizations—political, trade union, co-operative, educational, etc.... The essence of the plan, or program, of what is called “cultural-national autonomy” is separate schools for each nationality.... This is absolutely impermissible! As long as different nations live in a single state they are bound to one another by millions and thousands of millions of economic, legal and social bonds. How can education be extricated from these bonds?... On the contrary, efforts should be made to unite the nations in educational matters, so that school should be a preparation for what is actually done in real life.... We must strive to secure the mixing of the children of all nationalities in uniform pursuit of proletarian educational policy... to preach the establishment of special schools for every “national culture” is reactionary.

The requirements of economic exchange will always compel the nationalities living in one state (as long as they wish to live together) to study the language of the majority.... Working class democracy counterposes to the na-

tionalist wrangling over the question of language, etc., its demand for the unconditional unity and complete amalgamation of workers of all nationalities in all working class organizations.... Only this type of unity and amalgamation can uphold democracy and defend the interests of the workers....⁵

There are many more such arguments in Lenin's writings expressing his adamant opposition to the struggle of "nationals" for the preservation and development of their languages and national cultures—at least within the limits of "national cultural autonomy." Even in those cases when Lenin objected to using the police "cudgel" to force the Russian language upon the non-Russian nations of the empire, he did so in such a way that he appeared to be arguing for a more effective way to achieve the same end:

The Russian language has undoubtedly been of progressive importance to the numerous small and backward nations. But surely it would have been of much greater progressive importance had there been no compulsion.... We do not think that the great and mighty Russian language needs anyone having to study it by sheer compulsion. We are convinced that the development of capitalism in Russia and the course of social life (within one state under Russian rule) in general, are tending to bring all nations closer together. Hundreds of thousands of people are moving from one end of Russia to another, the different national populations are intermingling; exclusiveness and national conservatism must disappear. People whose conditions of life and work make it necessary for them to know the Russian language will do it without being forced to do so.⁶

It is clear that Lenin was proposing to replace the outmoded and counter-productive police "cudgel" as a means of Russification with the more refined force of economic and social conditions created for the subjugated nations within the "single and indivisible" state under the rule of a dominant "great nation." Yet there was nothing new in this quite conventional way of assimilating conquered "small nations." Lenin associated this with the "development of capitalism in

Russia," but it should be remembered that he stated earlier that "already under capitalism all economic, political and spiritual life is becoming more and more international. Socialism will make it completely international."

It is only natural that Lenin's promotion of assimilation—and implicitly Russification—under the false banner of "proletarian internationalism" was immediately exposed by socialists of the oppressed nations under Russian rule, in particular by those organized in their national Marxist parties. Such were the Jewish Social-Democratic Bund and the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Labor Party—the parties that were to be the prime targets of Lenin's attacks on the ideas of "national-cultural autonomy" and "national culture" in general. The demand for national-cultural autonomy was at that time the prominent feature of the "program-minimum" of these parties. For the nations they represented national-cultural autonomy was the first life-saving necessity: for Jews—to keep their extraterritorial nationality alive under the pressure of assimilatory factors in the extremely hostile environment of the Russian state policy of anti-Semitism; and for Ukrainians—to obtain a legal basis for resistance to Russification and for organizing the national struggle for territorial political autonomy as the base for independent statehood.

Indeed, the very existence of these national parties which refused to accept Lenin's centralist conception of a "one and indivisible" *Russian* "party of the proletariat" of all nations under Russian rule evoked his special fury. In the attacks against these parties, whose leading spokesmen, H. Liebman and L. Yurkevych accused him of being an "assimilator," the true face of Lenin's false "internationalism" was clearly revealed. Especially significant was Lenin's polemic with Yurkevych, the leader of the Ukrainian Social-Democrats, whom Lenin called "nationalist-socialists." Lenin wrote:

A Marxist who heaps abuse upon a Marxist of another nation for being an "assimilator" is simply a nationalist philistine. In this unhandsome category of people are the Bundists and Ukrainian nationalist-socialists such as L. Yurkevych, D. Dontsov and Co.... It would be a downright betrayal of socialism, and a silly policy even from the standpoint of the bourgeois 'national aims' of the Ukrainians to weaken the ties and the alliance between the Ukrainian and Great Russian proletariat that now exist

within the confines of a single state.... Yurkevych acts like a real bourgeois... when he dismisses the benefits to be gained from the intercourse, amalgamation and assimilation of the proletariat of two nations, for the sake of the momentary success of the Ukrainian cause.... The Great Russian and Ukrainian workers must work together, and, as long as they live in a single state, act in the closest organizational unity and concert, toward a common or international culture of the proletarian movement, displaying absolute tolerance in the question of language.... This is the imperative demand of Marxism. All advocacy of the segregation of the workers of one nation from those of another, all attacks upon Marxist "assimilation," where the proletariat is concerned, to contrapose one national culture as a whole to another allegedly integral national culture, and so forth is bourgeois nationalism, against which it is essential to wage a ruthless struggle. ⁷

The call for a "ruthless struggle" against the "bourgeois nationalism" of Ukrainian Marxists—Lenin's response to their efforts to organize the Ukrainian proletariat free of the centralist dictate of Russian "comrades"—is reminiscent of Marx and Engel's threat to employ "ruthless terror" against those "counterrevolutionary nations" which refused to submit their national interests to the great-power interests of Germans, Magyars and Poles during the European revolution of 1848. Of course, in his conflict with the Ukrainian socialists Lenin—at that time a political refugee in Western Europe—could wage only a polemical war of words against his Ukrainian opponents. Shortly thereafter, while still in exile, Lenin hinted at another kind of war, referring directly to Marx and Engel's militant position on "counter-revolutionary nations." Here is how Lenin put it in 1916—one year before he, as the leader of the newly established Soviet Communist power in Russia, was to launch an aggressive war against the new-born Ukrainian National Republic under the leadership of Ukrainian socialists branded as "counterrevolutionary":

Marx and Engels (in 1848-1849) were opposed to the national movements of Czechs and South Slavs... and drew a clear definite *distinction* [italics by Lenin] between [those]"wholly reactionary nations" serving as "Russian

outposts" in Europe, and "revolutionary nations," namely the Germans, Poles and Magyars. This is a fact.... What is the lesson to be drawn from this concrete example?... Only this: 1) That the interests of the liberation of a number of big and very big nations in Europe rate higher than the interests of the movement for liberation of small nations.... If the concrete situation which confronted Marx (and Engels)... were to repeat itself, for instance, in the form of a few nations starting a socialist revolution (as a bourgeois-democratic revolution was started in Europe in 1848, and other nations serving as the chief bulwark for bourgeois reaction—then we too would have to be in favor of destroying all their outposts, no matter what small nations movement arose in them. ⁸

Yet when Lenin wrote this he was already preparing a sharp turn in his public presentation of his political position regarding the nations oppressed in the Russian Empire. To be sure, it was a purely tactical turn caused by the profound change in the political situation in which Russia found itself as a result of the First World War—a change that began to shake the foundations of the empire, shatter the autocratic regime, and rouse from their sleep revolutionary social and national forces. Lenin took note of the especially rapid growth of national revolutionary forces among the non-Russian peoples of the empire and their natural combination with social revolutionary forces of the peasantry of these mostly "peasant nations"; he sensed that it was time to employ his tactical card of the double-faced nationality policy in a different way, stressing the second part of his slogan regarding "the right of all nations to self-determination and even to secession."

This tactical change soon became especially evident in Lenin's treatment of the "Ukrainian question." (Lenin had during the war the opportunity to become more closely acquainted with the potentialities of the Ukrainian nationalist movement in Austro-Hungary and its ties with the Ukrainian separatist movement under Russia.) Moreover, this change in Lenin's tactics was part of the more complex political scheme of the so-called "bourgeois-democratic revolution" in which the industrial proletariat and its Communist "vanguard" should play the leading role in alliance with the peasantry and its "petty bourgeois" national-revolutionary intelligentsia. This, of course, was in Lenin's scheme only a temporary "first stage" in the development

of the proletarian socialist revolution against "bourgeois democracy" and against the peasantry.

It is here that we encounter Lenin's and Communism's double-faced and treacherous policy in the realm of the "peasant question," which was closely tied to the "nationality question." Lenin's position regarding the peasantry was always an orthodox Marxist one, i.e. hostile to the very nature of this "petty bourgeois" class of small proprietors whose social aspirations were adverse to the communist idea of abolishing private property. However, since the peasantry constituted the majority of the population in the industrially underdeveloped Russian Empire, Lenin took very seriously Marx's suggestion regarding the urban proletariat as a "natural leader of peasants" and Engels's thesis concerning the necessity for the socialist party of the urban proletariat "to become a power in the countryside." On this base Lenin developed a special tactical theory: the theory of seizing the leadership over a primarily peasant-agrarian "bourgeois-democratic" revolution against the semi-feudal, autocratic tsarist regime of Russia, dominated by former serf-owning landlords, in order to transform it into the "socialist revolution" of the proletariat. The essence of this theory was the plan to use the peasant struggle for equitable distribution of the land (which was still mostly held by landlords) as a force for destroying the autocracy and establishing a liberal ("bourgeois") democracy with all those freedoms which were necessary for the development of pure capitalism as the indispensable precondition for the next step—the struggle of the proletariat for its dictatorship as the only way to Socialism and Communism.

It was with this plan in mind that as the wave of peasant revolt was growing into the full-scale democratic revolution of 1905 under the slogan "for land and freedom," Lenin's party included in the resolutions of its Third Congress a special article which read as follows: "To carry on propaganda among the mass of the people that Social-Democracy aims at giving the most energetic support to all revolutionary measures taken by the peasantry and likely to improve their condition, measures up to and including confiscation of land belonging to the landlords, the state, the church, the monasteries, and the imperial family." ⁹ But, as it was stated even in the resolution itself, this seemingly "pro-peasant" article was intended *for propaganda purposes only*, i.e. it was calculated to be used merely as a means to win the peasants' trust and sympathy in order to harness their movement

“for land and freedom,” and to exploit it on behalf of Communist goals that directly opposed those of the peasantry. It was Lenin himself who explained with cynical frankness what really was behind this article of his party’s resolution.

The explanation was in Lenin’s answer to those party functionaries who, in the course of party discussions on the resolution, expressed doctrinal reservations as to the expediency of supporting the expropriation of landlord’s estates and the “transfer of such estates to petty-bourgeois proprietors.” Reacting to this, Lenin wrote in his article “Social-Democracy’s Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement”:

There is not a word in the resolution about the Party undertaking to support transfer of the confiscated land to petty-bourgeois proprietors. The resolution states: we support... ‘up to and including confiscation,’ i.e. including expropriation without compensation; however, the resolution does not in any way decide to whom the expropriated land is to be given. It was not by chance that the question was left open.... We must help the peasant uprising in every way, up to and including confiscation of the land, but certainly not including all sorts of petty-bourgeois schemes. We support the peasant movement to the extent that it is revolutionary-democratic. We are making ready (doing so now, at once) to fight it when, and to the extent that, it becomes reactionary and anti-proletarian. The essence of Marxism lies in that double task, which only those who do not understand Marxism can vulgarize or compress into a single and simple task. ¹⁰

As it is clear from this (as well as from Lenin’s many other articles on the same subject), what Lenin meant by the adjectives “reactionary” and “anti-proletarian” (as contrasted with “revolutionary-democratic”) in reference to what his party opposed in the peasant movement, was nothing more than the peasant striving to get all landlords’ land by way of equalitarian distribution—directly or through their local communities. This was the exact opposite of what the Bolsheviks wanted, because their plan was nationalization of all lands (including that already owned by peasants), i.e. making it the property of the state which after a successful revolution was supposed to be in the hands of the proletariat represented by its Party. To be

sure, the Bolsheviks were inclined to agree to temporary possession of the land by peasants of those categories that, according to Marxist-Leninist classification, do not belong to the "peasant bourgeoisie," but the final solution of the land problem should be in the hands of the "proletarian" state—and that was predetermined by Communist ideological doctrine unchanged since the *Communist Manifesto*.

In the meantime, however, Lenin wrote, "it was deemed unwise to decide this question in advance," and therefore his party "has not committed itself" on this question—but, nevertheless, for propaganda purposes it formulated its position in such a manner that even party members thought it was "for transfer of landlords' land to petty-bourgeois proprietors"—something that, in Lenin's words, "was not by chance." In discussing the party's "double task," Lenin actually confirmed the double-faced nature of his party's position in the "peasant question" as he also did in the case of the "nationality question." The advantage of such political "double talk" was that it made it easy to switch from "pro" to "contra" and vice versa at any given time, depending on tactical or propagandistic expediency.

In the case of the "peasant question" even more so than in the "nationality question," Lenin's political game was based first and foremost on carrying the "class struggle" into the given camp by splitting it and taking the side of one faction against another. In the "peasant question" Lenin's tactical plan of using the "class struggle" was presented by him in his party's press quite frankly—as in the following passage from his previously quoted article:

The same resolution of the Third Congress speaks of "purging the revolutionary-democratic content of the peasant movement of all reactionary admixtures" ... and, secondly, of the need "in all cases and under all circumstances for the independent organization of the rural proletariat." These are our directives. There will always be reactionary admixtures in the peasant movement, and we declare war on them in advance. Class antagonism between the rural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie is inevitable, and we disclose it in advance, explain it, and prepare for the struggle on the basis of that antagonism. One of the immediate causes of such a struggle may very likely be proved by the question: to whom shall the confiscated land be given and how? We do not gloss over that

question, nor do we promise equalitarian distribution, etc.... What we do say is that this question we shall fight out later on, fight again, on a new field and with other allies. There we shall certainly be with the rural proletariat, with the entire working class, against the peasant bourgeoisie... for from the democratic revolution we shall at once, and precisely in accordance with the measure of our strength, the strength of the class-conscious and organized proletariat, begin to pass to the socialist revolution.... If we do not now and immediately promise all sorts of 'socialization' (i.e., the distribution of confiscated land among peasants through their local communities), that is because we know the actual conditions for that task to be accomplished, and we do not gloss over the new class struggle burgeoning within the peasantry, but reveal that struggle. ¹¹

Here, in Lenin's words regarding his party's "declaring war" on "reactionary admixtures" in the peasant revolutionary-democratic movement and its waging a "class struggle" against the "peasant bourgeoisie" by "disclosing," organizing and supporting the "rural proletariat"—here one can already hear the sound of the future "class war" against the peasantry under the "proletarian dictatorship" of Lenin's party. It is a fact that Lenin's conception of "carrying the class struggle into the countryside" as the main task of his party's "assistance" to the peasant movement was meant to be a form of preparing that future war against the peasantry in general. ¹² Lenin himself confirmed this in his article "Social-Democracy's Attitude Towards the Peasant Movement." Thus, while elaborating his plan of a temporary alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry in the "bourgeois-democratic revolution," Lenin briefly outlined the following scheme:

At first we support the peasantry en masse [Lenin's italics] against the landlords, support it to the hilt and with all means, including confiscation, and then (it would be better to say, at the same time) we support the proletariat against the peasantry en masse. To try to calculate now what the combination of forces will be within the peasantry "on the day after" the revolution (the democratic

revolution) is empty utopianism.... We can, and do, assert only one thing: we shall bend every effort to help the entire peasantry achieve the democratic revolution, in order thereby to make it easier for us, the party of the proletariat, to pass on as quickly as possible to the new and higher task—the socialist revolution. We promise no harmony, no equalitarianism or ‘socialization’ following the victory of the present peasant uprising; on the contrary, we “promise” a new struggle, new inequality, the new revolution we are striving for. ¹³

Lenin’s conclusion regarding the imminent conflict of his “proletarian” party with the peasantry after the “bourgeois-democratic” revolution was repeated in various forms in several of his writings which suggest that in his view, the peasantry, as a class of small proprietors, was on the whole associated with the bourgeoisie in the very broad meaning of people tied to the private ownership of property. In another article he formulated his conclusion in the following terms:

Together with the peasant proprietors, against the landlords and landlords’ state, together with the urban proletariat, against the entire bourgeoisie and all the peasant proprietors. Such is the slogan of the class-conscious rural proletariat. And if the petty proprietors do not immediately accept this slogan, or even if they refuse to accept it altogether, it will, nevertheless, become the workers’ slogan, will inevitably be borne out by the entire course of the revolution, will rid us of petty-bourgeois illusions, and will clearly and definitely indicate to us our social goal. ¹⁴

But the “bourgeois-democratic” revolution of 1905 was not successful, and Lenin’s plan of using the peasant revolutionary potential for crushing tsarist autocracy and the existing order and thus opening the way for the “socialist revolution” and the “dictatorship of the proletariat” became even more urgent during the First World War. Lenin, in exile abroad, prepared for a new two-stage revolution in the Russian Empire. As in the case of the “nationality question,” he began to emphasize the seemingly “pro-peasant” propagandistic aspect of his party’s policy of “alliance of the proletariat and the

peasantry”—of course, “under the leadership of the urban proletariat,” i.e., under the leadership of Lenin’s Bolsheviks. Moreover, both the nationality and peasant problems became increasingly interwoven in Lenin’s theoretical and practical activities at that time, as he, working on his treatise *Imperialism—The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), became more familiar with the social substance of the national liberation movements of peoples living under the colonial oppression of imperialist states. His conclusion regarding the practical aspect of this matter was formulated later (as he instructed the Comintern in 1920) in the following theses:

It is beyond any doubt that any national movement can only be the bourgeois-democratic movement, since the overwhelming mass of the population of the backward countries consists of peasants who represent bourgeois-capitalist relationships.... We, as Communists, should, and will support bourgeois-democratic movements in colonial countries only when they are genuinely revolutionary and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organizing in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited.¹⁵

It was this approach to both the nationality and peasant problems of the peoples under colonial oppression in the Russian Empire that determined the attitude and political practice of Lenin’s Bolshevik party in the 1917 revolution and in the subsequent Bolshevik struggle of 1918-1921 for dictatorial rule over all these peoples—under the false pretense of being champions of the “right to self-determination and independence” of oppressed nations and of “land and freedom” for the peasantry.

4. Leninist-Stalinist Genocide and Its Anti-Ukrainian Aspect

It is beyond the scope of this work to present a complete review of the historical events that, commencing with the Bolshevik coup (called the "October Revolution") of 7 November 1917, lead from the development of genocidal elements in Bolshevik theory to the practice of genocide by the "dictatorship of the proletariat." It is particularly important to answer the question: what made it possible for a minority party, as the Bolsheviks were on the eve of the democratic February revolution, to seize power in Russia and even to force it upon the non-Russian nations of the empire?

There were, of course, many objective historical reasons, but as far as the role of the Leninist political technique is concerned, one of the main factors in the Bolsheviks' success was the treacherous Leninist tactics and unscrupulous propaganda and demagoguery based on the double-faced character of Lenin's nationality and peasant policies. These methods were effectively used by the Bolshevik party to disorient the poorly informed, mostly illiterate masses of all nationalities of the empire and to win or neutralize them at decisive moments in the course of the revolution. An important contributing factor was the inability of Russia's weak democracy to counteract Bolshevik demagoguery by adopting a clear and satisfactory program providing immediate solutions for the problems of the non-Russian nationalities and the peasantry. The weakness and poor organization

of the newly formed national-democratic forces of the non-Russian "peasant nations" was also a contributing factor.

Paradoxically, it was the Bolshevik party—the most centralist Russian party, hostile in principle to the idea of independence for the nations ruled by Russia, as well as the most anti-peasant and hostile to private land ownership—that during the period of its legal struggle against Russian democracy managed to give the impression of being the only Russian party that favored the "right to self-determination, secession and independence" for all nations of the defunct empire, and the land to the peasants. Indeed, the Bolsheviks so emphatically and persistently propagated one side of their double-faced nationality and peasant policies that the masses of people, completely unaware of their duplicity, believed that they really were ready to give them what they never intended to give.

These illusions of the masses (and to some extent of the intelligentsia) in the critical phase of what the Bolsheviks called the "bourgeois-democratic" revolution of 1917 were fatal to democracy in Russia and in the countries of the non-Russian peoples, to the cause of national independence of these peoples, and to the peasantry of all peoples of the former Russian Empire. It was inevitable that this fact would be realized by the majority of these peoples as soon as the difference between words and deeds of the Soviet regime would become apparent to the masses from their own bitter experience. Although this realization came quite soon, it was too late to reverse the course of events after the Bolsheviks became the masters of the mighty Russian imperial state and military machine which they used effectively against the national and social (especially peasant) forces that were obstacles to their centralist and dictatorial goals.

It was not by chance that the tragic experience of the Ukrainian people in general and the Ukrainian peasantry in particular provided the first and most significant example of what was concealed behind the double-faced mask of Lenin's nationality and peasant policies, and what these policies were to mean in political practice. The Russian Revolution and the fall of the Tsarist regime immediately gave rise to a spontaneous Ukrainian national revolution which, until the time of the Bolshevik upheaval in Russia, experienced two stages of development—from the proclamation of Ukrainian autonomy in June 1917 to the establishment of the Ukrainian National Republic in November 1917. The revolutionary process in Ukraine was thoroughly democratic and occurred under the leadership of the Ukrainian

democratic-socialist parties which constituted a majority in the revolutionary parliament—the Ukrainian Central *Rada* (Council). All of this was accomplished against the will of the Russian Provisional Government (also democratic and socialist), which proved to be no less centralist and imperialistic than the old regime. Thus a state of permanent conflict arose between the Provisional Government and the *Rada*. Ironically, it was Lenin and his party (which represented the most radical opposition to the Provisional Government) that most vigorously attacked the Russian government's policy on the "Ukrainian question," defending the Ukrainians' "right to self-determination and secession" and demanding that Russia officially recognize Ukraine's statehood.

As soon as the Provisional Government was overthrown and Lenin became the head of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" in Russia, his position regarding Ukrainian statehood drastically changed. Continuing to pay lip service to the principle of "self-determination," Lenin immediately set in motion measures to subvert the Ukrainian Central *Rada* and to make Ukraine a Soviet republic—in order to incorporate it (in accordance with the Communist principle of "democratic centralism") into a single unified state under the rule of the Russian center of the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

Initially, according to Lenin's plan, this task was to be carried out by the territorial branch of the Russian Bolshevik party in Ukraine by exploiting the democratic liberties that prevailed in Ukraine under the Central *Rada* (in which the territorial organization of Russian Bolsheviks was also for some time represented, as were all political organizations of non-Ukrainian nationalities). But an attempt by the Bolsheviks to stage a coup in Kiev on the pattern of the Russian October Revolution was a total failure. The reason was simple: a complete lack of support from the majority of the Ukrainian population, even the Ukrainian proletariat in urban centers like Kiev, as well as a thoroughly hostile attitude towards the Bolsheviks in the countryside. The only sector of the urban population receptive to Bolshevik influence was that which was intermixed with the Russians and the Russified proletariat of the industrial areas of the Donbas.

The Bolsheviks' weakness in Ukraine, because they were an alien element on Ukrainian soil and therefore isolated from the main body of the Ukrainian people, was clearly acknowledged even by N. Popov, the official Soviet historian of Bolshevism in Ukraine:

It remains an indubitable fact that our party in Ukraine

until a very short time ago, and to a large extent even now, has been and continues to be *mostly a party of Russian and Russified proletariat* [emphasis by Popov].... A historical peculiarity of our party in Ukraine was its weak hold on the masses.... The party's influence on the army in Ukraine was weak, its influence on the peasantry was almost nil.... After the October Revolution our party in Ukraine was very weak; it had to cope with the united front of the various Ukrainian socialist parties which had the widespread support of the Ukrainian peasants.¹

This general presentation of the situation by an official Soviet historian was fully confirmed by the descriptions of the same situation provided in eyewitness accounts of the events by those leaders of the Russian Bolshevik organization in Ukraine who were in charge of the unsuccessful attempt to subvert the Central *Rada*. Here is what three of those leaders offered in observation:

Bolsheviks in Ukraine... could not take the initiative against the Ukrainian Central *Rada*, because the Ukrainian units were nationalistically inclined, fully supporting the *Rada*. It was necessary first to subvert them from within.

Because there is as yet no split among the Ukrainians, we have to carry on the fight with the Ukrainian nation; and there is only a small group of Bolsheviks to do this.

The peasantry, unsympathetic to the Bolsheviks, remained passive.²

In view of this situation, Lenin had to abandon his hopes of taking over Ukraine by subverting the Ukrainian democratic governments as had been done in Russia, and therefore decided to take advantage of the military weakness of the newly-born Ukrainian National Republic and to take the country by sheer force. His decision was prompted not by ideological motives, but, in the first place, by simple imperialistic interests of Soviet Russia in seeking to recapture the economic riches of Ukraine (grain, coal, metals, etc.) and to regain its strategic position on the Black Sea. In order to justify this ideologically, Lenin initiated a malicious propaganda campaign against the Ukrainian Central *Rada*, calling it "bourgeois counter revolutionary" and accusing it of

hostile acts against Soviet Russia. These "hostile acts" actually were the usual acts of exercising state sovereignty and securing national self-protection: disarming of the Red Guard detachments organized by Bolshevik "Soviets" in Ukraine and guided from Russia to fight against the Ukrainian democratic government for "Soviet Power." The *Rada* had also not allowed Soviet troops from Russia to cross Ukrainian territory to fight the anti-Bolshevik forces in the Don Cossack region, which was independent from Russia and friendly to independent Ukraine at that time.

Finally, taking as a pretext these rightful acts of the government of a sovereign state, Lenin's government—the Council of People's Commissars—issued on December 17, 1917 an ultimatum to the Ukrainian Central *Rada*, a document that was in fact a declaration of war. Written personally by Lenin (and signed by him and Joseph Stalin as Commissar for nationalities affairs), this document was a classic example of the perfidious nature of the Leninist nationality policy. It is a striking illustration of what Lenin really meant by his combination in a single formula of two opposites: recognition of the right of any nation to self-determination and independence and denial of this right if it did not promote Communist goals as interpreted by Lenin.

It was in accordance with these two opposites that the document was divided into two parts, which was reflected even in the official title of the document: "Manifesto to the Ukrainian People with Ultimatum Demands to the Ukrainian *Rada*." The Manifesto part was pure propaganda with statements such as: "we, the Soviet People's Commissars of the Russian Soviet Republic, do recognize the Ukrainian National Republic and its right to complete separation from Russia or to enter into negotiations with the Russian Republic to establish federal or any other relations. All that pertains to the national rights and national independence of the Ukrainian people is recognized by us, the Soviet of People's Commissars, immediately, without any limitation and unconditionally." ³ This gave the appearance of official recognition of Ukrainian independence, but, strangely and significantly enough, it was addressed not to the government, but to the "people." This was followed by instigation of the "people" against their government—"the counter-revolutionary *Rada*." The ultimatum to the Central *Rada* followed containing the accusations mentioned above, and concluded with a demand for capitulation: "within forty-eight hours all hostile actions against the Soviet authority in Ukraine are to be suspended; all attempts to disarm

the Soviet troops and Red Guards are to cease." In short, the ultimatum demanded the Central *Rada* to sanction Soviet Russia's right to intervene in Ukrainian national affairs and to approve the *de facto* control of Ukraine by Russia. Finally, the ultimatum demanded a positive answer within forty-eight hours and announced that in the event of a negative reply, the government of Soviet Russia "would consider itself in a state of open war." ⁴

Naturally, the reply was negative. But aggressive war by Soviet Russia against the Ukrainian National Republic actually commenced at the time the ultimatum was issued, because Soviet troops on Lenin's order crossed the Russian-Ukrainian border even before the ultimatum became known in Kiev.

This war, which Soviet historiography calls a "civil war in Ukraine," was, in fact, Soviet Russia's war against Ukrainian independence, for possession of the territory and riches of Ukraine, and at that time in particular—for Ukrainian grain and other food products. Because of the latter, it was also a war against the Ukrainian peasantry, for it was the resistance of the Ukrainian peasantry to the Soviet Russian tax in kind, imposed food indemnities and various expropriatory social measures of the Communists (like the first experiments in "dekulakization," i.e., confiscation of property of well-to-do peasants, etc.) that made it possible for the small and weak Ukrainian army to prevent Soviet armed forces from occupying all of Ukraine and to wage war against the invaders between 1918 and 1921.

During these three years the Soviet Russian army was able to reach Kiev on three occasions and hold it for a while, but was forced to retreat and was unable to conquer the Ukrainian countryside, which was under the control of peasant insurgent forces loosely connected with the Ukrainian national government and its army. From the unoccupied area the Ukrainian army was able to push the occupiers back, recapture the capital and continue to fight. To be sure, there were also internal conflicts between Ukrainians themselves and there were changes of governments—from the socialist *Rada* to the conservative *Hetman* (monarchist) regime and back to the socialist *Directory*—as well as temporary military alliances with foreign forces. However, the general direction of fighting for Ukrainian independence remained unchanged.

Although this is not the place for an account of this war or of Ukrainian history of this period, it is necessary to take notice of element in these events that have a bearing upon the genocidal aspects of

Soviet nationality and peasant policies in Ukraine at that time.

To camouflage the occupational character of its invasion of Ukraine, the Russian Bolshevik center under Lenin's leadership arranged for the creation of a Ukrainian Soviet government in Kharkiv consisting mostly of Russian Bolsheviks of various nationalities, including a few of Ukrainian origin. This group proclaimed Ukraine a Soviet Republic united with Soviet Russia whose political system and laws were automatically extended to Ukraine. But this puppet government did not have any power in the occupied areas of Ukraine, because all power was in the hands of the military-political command of the Soviet Russian invading forces, and that command was directly subordinated to Lenin. Those in command—the commander-in-chief, V. Antonov-Ovsienko (the second part of the surname was added on Lenin's order to give the Russian surname a Ukrainian coloring) and the commander of the main army group, M. Muraviov—did not bother to camouflage the occupational character of their military force:

It was necessary to maintain the connection between Petrograd [at that time the capital of Russia] and the industrial and agricultural peripheral areas; an independent Ukraine would deny Soviet Russia access to the Caucasus and the oil of Baku and at the same time deprive the Soviet center of the coal of the Donbas, the manganese of Kryvyi Rih and the grain of Ukraine.⁵

Muraviov in his Order of the Day No. 14 stated: "We carry Soviet power from the far North on our bayonets. And wherever we impose it, without flinching we support it with our bayonets."⁶

But the main and the worst thing that Muraviov's bayonets brought from the North together with Soviet power was a savage anti-Ukrainian terror of unprecedented scale. This terror was related to the provocative anti-Ukrainian Soviet propaganda about the "bourgeois counter-revolutionary" character of the Ukrainian national movement, which was branded as anti-Russian merely for striving to establish Ukrainian independence. Thus when Muraviov's army captured Kiev in February 1918 a reign of terror was inflicted in the form of mass executions of people (especially those belonging to the intelligentsia) involved in any kind of Ukrainian activity or suspected of this, and also random murders, quite often simply for using the

“counterrevolutionary” Ukrainian language. This reign of anti-Ukrainian terror was vividly described in the recollections of one of the leaders of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine, himself a Ukrainian—V. Zatonsky. Here is his own account of what he experienced soon after Muraviov’s troops entered Kiev:

We marched into the city. Bodies, bodies and blood.... At that time anyone who had any connection with the Ukrainian Central *Rada* was simply shot on the streets.... I myself was nearly shot. I was arrested by a patrolman on the street, because I had a Ukrainian [i.e., written in Ukrainian] certificate although it really was a Soviet certificate. The word ‘Soviet’ had been translated as ‘rada.’ The Ukrainization of this term almost cost me my life. I was saved by mere chance. I found in my pocket a certificate signed by Lenin....

And Zatonsky writes further that a similar event occurred at the same time to another Bolshevik leader, also a Ukrainian, M. Skrypnyk. “Soviet Ukraine,” Zatonsky concluded, was created by those who killed people for speaking but a single Ukrainian word.”⁷ The real reason for such a cruel anti-Ukrainian terror was that the Soviet Russian invaders sought the complete subjugation of Ukraine in order to exploit it for the benefit of Russia, which needed Ukrainian food. Thus, in addition to massacring Ukrainians the Russian Bolsheviks speedily began to loot Ukraine. In his recollections about the first days of Soviet rule on occupied Ukrainian territory Antonov-Ovsienko wrote, “Immediately after the establishment of the Soviet authority in Ukraine, Moscow and Petrograd sent special emissaries to speed up the requisition of grain.”⁸

But the first Soviet Russian occupation of Ukraine was of short duration, and there was no time to complete the planned requisitions. As a result of separate peace treaties signed with the Central Powers by both Soviet Russia and the Ukrainian National Republic, the Soviet Russian army was forced to evacuate Ukraine. Only after the period of German occupation of Ukraine and internal changes in Ukrainian political life, when a general uprising under the leadership of the Directory of the Ukrainian National Republic restored democracy in Ukraine, did Soviet Russia renew its efforts to conquer Ukraine, launching a second war in January 1919. The seizure of Ukrainian

economic resources, especially grain and other food products, was once again the main goal of the Soviet Russian invasion. For this purpose the Red Army sent to conquer Ukraine had special military-political detachments which were instructed by Leon Trotsky, then Commander-in-Chief of Soviet armed forces, as follows:

By one way or another Ukraine must be returned to Russia.... Without Ukrainian coal, iron ore, grain, lard and the Black sea, Russia cannot exist.... In regard to the necessity of the Soviet government to export grain from Ukraine, all means can be considered legitimate. ⁹

Following the invasion of Ukraine, Moscow sent 2,700 special emissaries to organize the requisitioning of Ukrainian grain. ¹⁰ After the Red Army occupied a considerable part of Ukraine in 1919, *Pravda*, the organ of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party wrote:

After a bloody and difficult struggle, the Red Army opened a path to the grain, because it conquered Ukraine. It opened a path to coal, because it conquered two-thirds of the Donbas.... What Ukraine has given us already is only a small part of the produce on which Soviet Russia rightfully depends. Bread and meat must be brought from Ukraine as soon as possible and as much as possible. ¹¹

A. Shlikhter, the special commissar appointed by Moscow to collect provisions in Ukraine, expressed his predatory purpose in a speech to a special meeting of the Moscow Soviet:

Rich Ukraine, that granary is ours!...We have there four central army detachments for the express purpose of collecting provisions. Let us put our hopes in them! We have also sent many workers who will be able to take over Ukrainian villages. We should always remember that the eyes of the Russian proletariat are turned toward Ukraine. ¹²

And Lenin himself expressed most cogently the predatory character of the second Soviet Russian invasion of Ukraine. Soon after the Red

Army entered Kiev in February 1919, while speaking of the "conquest of Ukraine" (he used exactly these words in reference to the Soviet Russian military campaign in Ukraine), Lenin at first hypocritically criticized the policy of the Germans in Ukraine, pointing to their "imperialistic plans" to get 60 million poods* of wheat from Ukraine, of which they were actually able to take on 9 million poods. But at the same time he revealed what the conquest of Ukraine meant to Soviet Russia:

Now, with the conquest of Ukraine, our strength is growing. We can now say that we have the source of grain and food products and the possibility of securing fuel from the Donbas.... We should move at least three thousand railroad workers and also a number of peasants from starving northern Russia into Ukraine. The Ukrainian Soviet government has already issued a decree on the shipping of 100 million poods of available wheat. ¹³

Thus the Soviet Russian spoliation of Ukraine was much worse than that committed by the Germans. Naturally, the Ukrainian people, especially the peasantry, responded to this with wide-spread resistance—both in the active form of spontaneous partisan struggle and in the passive form of a boycott of the "building of Soviet power" in Ukraine by Communists sent from Russia and by very thin cells of their local "comrades." This fact was acknowledged by Lenin too, as he, speaking about difficulties of Soviet power in Ukraine, and mentioning also that "partisans are active everywhere there," said:

In Ukraine there are great supplies of grain, but it is very difficult to get them.... We sent our best forces into Ukraine to secure food supplies, and we heard them say in unison: "There are plenty of supplies, but we cannot get them immediately." From our comrades in Ukraine comes the cry: "There are no people to build the Soviet power in Ukraine!" ¹⁴

The "comrades in Ukraine" referred to by Lenin were those members of Lenin's Russian Bolshevik party who were born or resided

*A pood is 16.38 kg.

in Ukraine (a few of them were even Ukrainians by nationality and had gathered in Moscow in the summer of 1918 and were organized into a branch of the Russian Communist Party under the name "Communist Party of Ukraine." This puppet party was formally subordinated to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and officially proclaimed as its goal the "unification of Ukraine with Russia on the basis of proletarian centralism within the Russian Soviet republic." ¹⁵ Therefore it was quite understandable that it had "no people to build Soviet power in Ukraine."

This was the general situation in which the Soviet Russian regime in Ukraine found itself isolated because of the hostility of the Ukrainian masses to Soviet power brought to them from Russia "on bayonets." It was exactly this situation that was described by a Soviet historian of Bolshevism in Ukraine: "After the overthrow of the Directory, the Soviet government came into direct conflict with the masses of Ukrainian peasants. The Soviet government was surrounded by hostile elements on every hand." ¹⁶

Kommunist, the official organ of the Bolsheviks of Ukraine, reported on 9 January 1919: "A sporadic wave of large and small peasant uprisings has completely disorganized the first stages of the building of the Soviet system in Ukraine.... It is one of the most outstanding facts of the present singular situation in Ukraine."

The head of the Russian puppet government in Ukraine, Christian Rakovsky (a complete stranger to Ukraine—a Rumanian citizen of Bulgarian birth who became a Russian Communist), in his book, *The Struggle for the Liberation of the Village*, observed that between April 1, 1919 and June 20, 1919, there were 328 peasant uprisings and revolts in the territory held by the Bolsheviks. ¹⁷ The peasant uprisings were in response to the harsh measures taken by Bolshevik *prod-otriady* (detachments for requisitioning agricultural provisions). A vivid description of the way these requisitions were carried out was given by Shlikhter, the special commissar for collecting provisions in Ukraine, in this one line: "Blood was spilled for every pound of grain collected." ¹⁸

It is to be emphasized that the Ukrainian peasantry rose against Soviet Russian plunderers of Ukraine as a single and unified *national* political force. This was clearly stressed in a resolution of the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks of Ukraine in 1920 regarding "banditry" (as the Bolsheviks usually referred to any anti-Soviet resistance) in Ukraine: "Banditry in 1919 in Ukraine was an

uprising of the politically unified Ukrainian village against Soviet authority.”¹⁹

But the peasantry was not alone in opposing Soviet Russian rule in Ukraine. The above quoted Communist historian also pointed out (in the same source): “All things considered, the working class did not give the Soviet authority in Ukraine the support expected of it.”

Even a group of Ukrainian Communists expressed their opposition to Russian looting of Ukraine, stating at a meeting of leading workers of the CP(B)U in Homel that “Ukraine is regarded as an object to be exploited for the material resources” by “comrades from Russia.”²⁰

In fact, it was the phenomenon of Ukrainian Communist resistance to the plunderous and plainly colonialist policy of Soviet Russia that was the most striking and acute aspect of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict at that time (1919), and that resulted in a significant historical development: the birth of what later became known as “national communism.” Actually there were in Ukraine at that time two splinter groups of Ukrainian left-wing socialists who seceded from the Ukrainian Social-Democratic and Social-Revolutionary parties and formed a Ukrainian Communist Party—in contrast to the Communist Party of Ukraine. These Ukrainian Communists advanced the idea of an independent Soviet Ukraine with its own independent Communist party, government, army, etc.—in contrast to the Communists (Bolsheviks) “of Ukraine” who were (and still are) merely a territorial branch of the Russian (later Soviet) Communist Party promoting a unified Soviet state.

Although these national-minded groups of Ukrainian Communists cooperated with the Russian Bolsheviks in the “revolutionary war” against the world bourgeoisie that supported the forces seeking restoration of the ‘one and indivisible’ Russian Empire, they also offered resistance to the Russian Bolsheviks in Ukraine under the slogan: “For an independent Soviet Ukraine!” Moreover, there was in 1919 even such a critical moment in their conflict with the Russian Bolsheviks that led to the formation of the “All-Ukrainian Revolutionary Committee,” which intended to organize an uprising against Rakovsky’s puppet government and to issue an ultimatum to it to “get out of Ukraine.”²¹ However, the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian counterrevolutionary “White Guard” movement forced both Russian Bolsheviks and Ukrainian national Communists to find a compromise based on Lenin’s tactical maneuvering on the “nationality question.”

Under the pressure of the advancing Ukrainian army supported by peasant uprisings and of Russian White Guards moving through Ukraine toward Moscow, Soviet Russian forces left Ukraine. But at the same time Ukraine found itself at war with the White Guards, and this war brought to naught Ukrainian liberation efforts. The Ukrainian situation was made even more complicated by the aggressive actions of the newly reborn Polish state in Western Ukraine. Naturally, these circumstances contributed to the fact that, after defeating the "White" Russians on Russian territory, the "Red" Russians at the beginning of 1920 were able to accomplish their third occupation of the same part of Ukraine they had previously occupied.

This time the Russian Bolsheviks, exploiting the disorientation among the masses of people in Ukraine after the bitter experience with the oppressive "White" Russian regime, began to play a different tune related to Lenin's double-faced nationality policy. By making concessions to the Ukrainian national Communists, the Bolsheviks were able to use them in giving a semblance of Ukrainian character to the "Ukrainian Soviet Republic." To this end they included Ukrainian national Communists in the Ukrainian government, which began to use the Ukrainian language as a vehicle of propaganda and communication with the peasant majority of the population. For tactical reasons the Ukrainian national Communists accepted their role of Bolshevik collaborators, hoping to be able to assume the initiative later and really "Ukrainize" the Soviet regime in Ukraine. One of these groups, called the *borot'bisty* (from the name of their organ *Borot'ba*—The Struggle), even collectively joined the ranks of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks in Ukraine. Another group, organized as the "Ukrainian Communist Party" (abbreviated in Ukrainian "UKP" and therefore *ukapisty*), continued acting as a "legal opposition" to the CP(B)U, but was not allowed to function as a real opposition.

Yet the Russian-Ukrainian war, which was caused by Soviet Russian aggression against the Ukrainian National Republic in December 1917, was still not ended. The government and the main body of the army of the Ukrainian National Republic, headed by the President of the Directory and Supreme Commander of the armed forces of the Republic—Symon Petliura—continued the struggle for Ukrainian statehood. The partisan resistance to the Soviet regime also remained very much alive. Because Petliura's name had acquired wide popularity among the Ukrainian masses as a symbol of prolonged struggle, the

whole of this struggle, and especially the spontaneous peasant uprisings, acquired the name "*petliurivshchyna*"—Petliura movement—both in popular usage and in the pronouncements of the Soviet regime.

This movement was once more on the rise in 1920, during the war between Soviet Russia and Poland, in which the forces of the Ukrainian National Republic (which still held part of Western Ukraine) participated as allied forces under the terms of a Ukrainian-Polish military pact. The first phase of this war was successful for this alliance: Soviet Russian forces were once more driven out of Kiev and the main part of the Ukrainian territory. However, the final victory in this war was Soviet Russia's. When its occupation forces returned to Ukraine for the fourth time, they took hold of it permanently.

To be sure, the Ukrainian peasant partisan movement continued until December 1921, when the last major encounter between the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (formed and commanded by the legendary partisan leader and general of the army of the Ukrainian National Republic, Yurii Tiutiunnyk) and Soviet Russian troops took place at Bazar. It ended tragically with the crushing defeat of the insurgents and the execution of 359 captives.

At the same time an even greater tragedy was taking place in Ukraine—a tragedy that put an end to Ukrainian peasant resistance: a catastrophic famine caused by three year's plundering and terrorization of the Ukrainian countryside. How did this famine in the richest agricultural country in Eastern Europe come about?

A drought in the fall of 1920 and the spring of 1921 was followed by a bad harvest, and a great dearth of food arose. Normally the average Ukrainian yield amounted to some one billion poods of grain a year. But this time less than half of it was harvested, and this was not enough even for Ukraine. However, the policy of the Soviet Government in Ukraine, intending to get as much food as possible, did not change. Though millions of people were already starving in Ukraine in the autumn of 1921, the Russian Government took away from the hungry regions the remaining food stocks and exported them to Russia, fulfilling this way its plan of usual "provision tax collection." Moreover, it even took an additional tax "for aid to Soviet Russia," because at that time there was also a bad harvest in the Volga region due to draught.

As a result of this, according to a representative of the Relief Committee of Fridtjof Nansen who was in Ukraine at the beginning of

1922, "eight million souls were starving in the south of Ukraine, 2 1/2 millions of them had absolutely nothing to eat.... In Zaporozje [Zaporizhzhia] one million souls are literally starving. Child mortality is tremendous, it reaches 50%. Ten thousand people die in Zaporozje daily." But, as the head of America Relief Administration (ARA) in Russia at that time, Harold H. Fisher wrote, "the Moscow and the so-called Kharkov Government did not undertake anything serious for the aid to the hungry people of Ukraine.... From the first the Moscow Government had discouraged all proposals which tended to bring the ARA into contact with the Ukraine." Instead, wrote Fisher, the Russian Soviet Government demanded resolutely that it was "necessary to request the ARA not to split its forces, but to concentrate them on the Volga area." 22

Although mortality during the famine of 1921-22 was high, there were no official statistics of the victims. (According to some estimates, over two million died.)

The famine of 1921-1922 paralyzed the most rebellious areas of the Ukrainian countryside, and when physical survival became the most immediate problem, the peasants' partisan resistance became impossible. Thus the famine became the ultimate weapon in the Soviet pacification of Ukraine and a proven method of genocide. Whether it was planned and executed by the Soviet regime as a genocidal action cannot be positively proved, but one thing is certain: it was used by the Soviet regime as an effective tool in the final stage of subduing an indocile Ukraine. The Soviet Russian authorities at first denied the famine in Ukraine, and then hindered all attempts by Western European and American relief organizations to develop full scale action for rescuing the Ukrainian people from mass starvation, while at the same time welcoming relief actions in the Volga region.

However, it was not genocide as the physical extermination of a people, but genocidal action as a form of punishment and as a means of weakening a people's vitality and will that was the Soviet goal in Ukraine at that time. As this goal was attained, another task became the order of the day: in Ukraine, as well as in Russia and everywhere under Soviet rule consolidating Soviet power, reviving economic life and stabilizing relations with the nationalities and the peasantry on a firm, though temporary basis. To achieve this, Lenin employed the only practical way, which he expressed in terms of the tactical formula: "To retreat now for the sake of an offensive later." This was the formula of Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP), which was much

more than an "economic policy," for it also involved a "new nationality and cultural policy."

The essence of this policy was that until the Soviet regime could gain enough strength to enforce its real goals, a temporary false program would be introduced, adjusted to the needs and strivings of the people in general and the peasantry and nationalities in particular. It was to be based on concessions to private property interests and economic incentives, and to nationality interests and inclinations in cultural and local affairs. As far as the peasantry and nationalities were concerned, this was a bold plan of deceiving them by means of the illusion of fulfillment of Lenin's promises made during the revolution to give land to the peasants and statehood and cultural freedom to the non-Russian nationalities.

The NEP proved to be an effective policy. Although the Soviet nationalization of land and the abolition of private property (1917-1918) made the peasants completely dependent on the Soviet state as the sole owner of the land, the distribution of land among the peasants (according to a special law of land tenure) satisfied their immediate needs. They were not much concerned (and could not know) that this was to be but a temporary measure, because few if any could suspect that the policy was to be of eight years' duration. The agricultural sector of the economy recovered very rapidly; peaceful life in the countryside developed successfully, and relations between the peasantry and the Soviet regime became normalized in the mid-1920s.

The question of nationalities was also settled by compromise through the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1922, as a union of formally sovereign national republics with a constitutional right to secession. Although this right, in the light of Lenin's theory of combined "pro" and "contra" in one single formula, was fictitious, the new nationality policy of the ruling Communist party was based on some far-reaching concessions to the national (and even nationalist) Communist conception of "union republics." Concessions regarding native language, culture and autonomy in the internal affairs of republics provided a basis for "nationals" (and even for real national Communists like the Ukrainian *borot'bisty* and *ukapisty* in the party and government to give real substance to the empty form of constitutional sovereignty.

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic of that time was a striking example of this. A special policy of "Ukrainization" was introduced and vigorously enforced by Ukrainian Communists (especially by na-

tional Communists from the former groups of *borot'bisty* and *ukapisty* who both at that time were integrated in the CP(B)U). This was a policy of state promotion of the Ukrainian language and culture, which also greatly stimulated the development of Ukrainian national consciousness and pride. Mass education and a steady rise in the welfare of the Ukrainian peasantry strengthened the Ukrainian national intelligentsia and gave great impetus to what was later named the "Ukrainian Renaissance." During the Ukrainization period there was even a tendency developed to transform the Ukrainian R.S.R. into the base for peaceful and legal struggle for real Ukrainian statehood and future independence. On this basis there also developed a special form of acceptance by the Ukrainian intelligentsia of the Soviet version of Ukrainian statehood as a temporarily satisfactory solution.

Yet the achievements of the peasantry and nationalities in the NEP period were more illusory than real. From the very beginning of this brief period (1922-1930), behind the seemingly idyllic facade, Moscow was intensively preparing for the offensive that was to follow the retreat of the NEP according to Lenin's formula of "retreat for the sake of an offensive." The only questions hotly discussed in the upper strata of the Communist party at that time dealt with when that offensive should be undertaken and how it should be conducted. The question against whom the offensive would be undertaken was not under discussion: it was self-evident that the target of the offensive would be those social groups whose resistance had forced the regime to retreat temporarily under the cover of NEP. The main object among these groups was the largest and strongest "petty-bourgeois" class of small proprietors—the peasant.

Communist preparations for the offensive against the peasantry were conducted during the NEP period "on the battlefield" itself, i.e., in the countryside, as Communists were fulfilling Lenin's dictum regarding "peasant policy"—"to carry the class struggle into the countryside." For this purpose the peasantry was officially divided into three groups: *kulaks* or peasant bourgeoisie; "middle peasants" (*seredniaks*); and "poor peasants" (*bedniaks*)—the smallest group, pauperized peasants and the "agricultural proletariat."* The Soviet

*It should be kept in mind that the real peasant bourgeoisie was destroyed during the revolution, after nationalization of the land. The *kulak* under Soviet power was a peasant who received his share of land according to Soviet law. His prosperity was the result of his ability and hard work.

authorities, through Communists working in the countryside, sought to inflame the “class struggle” in each village, inciting the poor peasants against the *kulaks* and seeking to neutralize the middle peasants. These efforts were not very successful, and a special offensive action directed “from above” was found necessary.

The direction of the imminent offensive in this class struggle was given by Lenin immediately after the introduction of NEP. He outlined clearly and, as always, bluntly the totalitarian nature of his party’s dictatorship:

The scientific concept of dictatorship means nothing more or less than completely unrestricted power, absolutely unimpeded by laws or regulations and resting directly on the use of force.... The dictatorship of the proletariat is the rule—unrestricted by law and based on force.... The [proletariat] took political power into its hands knowing that it took power alone... and does not deceive itself or others with talk about “popular” government, “elected” by all, sanctified by the whole people....

The [Communist] Party is the highest form of class organization of the proletariat.... The Party can comprise only a minority of the class.... This is why we must admit that only the class-conscious minority can guide the broad masses of the workers and lead them.... When we are reproached with the dictatorship of one party... we reply: “Yes, the dictatorship of one Party!” We stand by it, and cannot depart from it.... The Party is the direct governing vanguard of the proletariat; it is the leader.... All the work of the Party is carried on through the Soviets. ²³

Then, explaining the historical mission of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” to carry on the “class struggle” in the process of “building socialism,” Lenin said:

The dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of the class struggle, but its continuation in a new form. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class struggle of the proletariat, which has won victory and has seized political power, against the bourgeoisie, which although vanquished has not been annihilated, has not disappeared, has not ceased its resistance....

The dictatorship of the proletariat is the most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against the more powerful enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased tenfold by its overthrow.... The dictatorship of the proletariat is a stubborn struggle—bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative—against the forces and tradition of the old society....²⁴

Finally, concentrating special attention on “small-scale production” or “small commodity production,” by which he meant peasants, craftsmen and small proprietors in general, Lenin stated:

Power [of the overthrown bourgeoisie] lies not only in the strength of international capital... but also in the force of habit, in the strength of small-scale production. Unfortunately, small-scale production is still widespread in the world, and small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. All this makes the dictatorship of the proletariat necessary, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate life-and-death struggle which calls for tenacity, discipline, and a single and inflexible will....

The abolishing of classes means not merely ousting the landowners and the capitalists—that is something we accomplished with comparative ease; it also means abolishing the small commodity producers, and they cannot be ousted or crushed.... They surround the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection.... The force of habit in millions and tens of millions is a most formidable force.²⁵

Thus Lenin concluded that the chief enemy force to be dealt with by the “dictatorship of the proletariat” after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie was the “petty-bourgeois” class of “small producers”—peasants (farmers) and craftsmen, seen by Lenin as a main source of continuous regeneration of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeois “in-

fection" of the proletariat. It was this enemy that was to be abolished in the next phase of the class struggle.

Lenin emphasized this task even more when, speaking about "small producers" and pointing specifically to "small farmers," he called them alternately "the last capitalist class" and (together with other "small producers") the "two last capitalist classes":

In addition to this class [the bourgeoisie] there is... a class of small producers and small farmers. The main problem of the revolution now is to fight these two classes. In order to be rid of them, we must adopt methods other than those employed against the big landowners and capitalists. We could simply expropriate and expel both of these classes, and that is what we did. But we cannot do the same thing with the remaining capitalist classes, the small producers and the petty bourgeoisie...

The significance of the period into which we are now entering in Russia is, in essence, that we must now find a practical solution for the problem of the relations the proletariat should establish with this last capitalist class.... It is a sign of great progress that we are now trying to determine the attitude the proletariat in power should adopt towards the last capitalist class—the rock-bottom of capitalism—small private property, the small producer. This problem now confronts us in a practical way. I think we shall solve it. ²⁶

At the time Lenin wrote this, he was working to solve this problem within the framework of NEP and advised that the small commodity producers should be abolished "by means of prolonged, slow and cautious organizational work," "re-education of millions of peasants and small proprietors"—"in order to subordinate them to the proletarian state, to proletarian leadership, to overcome their bourgeois habits." For this purpose he developed a special "co-operative plan" for transforming private farmers and craftsmen into workers of agricultural and other sectors of centralized state production. But soon after that Lenin was struck by a fatal illness, and the task of preparing and executing the offensive against the peasants and other "small commodity producers" became the duty of his faithful disciple and successor, Joseph Stalin.

After Lenin's death, a great debate occurred within the Party

leadership between left and right wings represented, respectively, by Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin. This debate soon developed into a political clash between two factions of the Party to determine the direction of Soviet policies. The question of relations with the peasantry became the central issue in the political struggle between them. Both factions recognized that the main problem was the critical need for rapid industrialization. However, the left wanted the industrial strength of the Soviet Union to serve the cause of the world revolution, while the right saw it as the basis for building socialism in one country. The subject of controversy was the question of how to realize the plan of industrialization.

The left, called Trotskyists, advanced the idea of what in Marxist terminology was termed "socialist primitive accumulation of capital" for rapid industrialization. This idea was presented by Eugene Preobrazhensky, the leading Soviet economist, in *The New Economics*, in which he argued that in such an overwhelmingly agricultural country as the Soviet Union, the countryside with its peasant "pre-socialist," "petty-bourgeois" small commodity form of production should be the object of exploitation by the proletarian state for the "primitive accumulation of capital" needed for "socialist industrialization." Preobrazhensky argued that industrialization could be accomplished at the expense of the agricultural sector of the economy by way of "inequivalent exchange" of goods between town and countryside, by a special state policy of prices and special taxes. And he compared the role of the countryside as an object of exploitation for the sake of industrialization to that of a colony in the system of capitalist imperialism.²⁷

Such "primitive accumulation," of course, meant exploitation of the peasantry, which could lead to sharp conflict between the State and the overwhelmingly peasant population. It was exactly this prospect that forced Lenin to "retreat" by introducing the NEP. Therefore as a spokesman of the "right wing" (which at that time was a "centrist" majority supported by Stalin), Bukharin attacked the "leftist" concept as a betrayal of Leninism.²⁸

Trotsky, the leader of the left faction, saw the conflict of the Communist "vanguard of the proletariat" with the peasantry as a logical and imminent development. This view was expressed in his book *The Year 1905* (published in 1922), which in fact reflected Lenin's view of 1905 (when Lenin wrote about the future struggle of the proletarian party "against the peasantry *en masse*"). Trotsky wrote:

In order to ensure its victory, the proletarian vanguard would be forced in the very early stage of its rule to make deep inroads not only into feudal property, but also into bourgeois property. In this it would come into hostile collision not only with all the bourgeois groupings which supported the proletariat during the first stages of its revolutionary struggle, but also with the broad masses of the peasantry with whose assistance it came into power. The contradiction in the position of a workers' government in a backward country with overwhelmingly peasant population could be solved only on an international scale, in the arena of the world proletarian revolution.²⁹

Stalin finally put an end to this battle between the two factions as he, with the help of the "right," crushed the "left" and then eliminated it completely in 1927. At this time he pushed forward his own plan for industrialization. This plan was created on the basis of Preobrazhensky's "Trotskyist" conception, but in Stalin's version it was simplified and vulgarized. The principal element in Stalin's plan was also industrialization at the expense of the countryside. However, it was not just economic exploitation of the peasantry that was planned by Stalin, but the actual expropriation of the well-to-do and part of the middle peasantry in the form of "liquidation of the *kulaks* as a class," and partial expropriation of the whole mass of the peasantry by total collectivization of their farms and turning the farmers into farm-laborers of the state.

It is interesting to note that in the intra-party struggle with the Trotskyists, Stalin supported Bukharin's arguments against Trotsky's theory of contradiction and inevitable collision of the proletariat with the peasantry, and especially against Preobrazhensky's theory. The argument was this: industrialization at the expense of the countryside would be an imitation of "monopolistic parasitism" of "rotten capitalism." Yet the analogy with exploitation of colonies by capitalist states is not a purely theoretical conjecture, because the majority of the rural population in the Soviet Union consisted of the nationalities of the former colonies of Tsarist Russia. In Bukharin's words: "The problem of economic policy, and of the policies in general, pertaining to former colonies [i.e. nationality policy] is just the complicated and somewhat altered problem of relations of the working class to the peasantry."³⁰

Yet even when Stalin criticized Trotsky's collision course policy toward the peasantry, he himself was taking as a point of departure in his own theorizing Trotsky's thesis of a contradiction between the proletariat and the peasantry (which was in fact Lenin's thesis). However, Stalin's conclusion was the opposite of Trotsky's:

Our country exhibits two groups of contradictions. The first group of contradictions exists between the proletariat and the peasantry (this refers to the building of Socialism in our country).... [This] first group of contradictions... can be overcome entirely by the efforts of one country.... It is true, of course, that the peasantry, by its position, is not socialist. But this is no argument against the development of the peasant farms along the path of socialism.... The peasantry is non-socialist by its position. But it must and certainly will take the path of socialist development.... The main path of building socialism in the countryside consists of using the growing economic leadership of socialist state industry and of the other key positions in the hands of the proletariat to draw the main mass of the peasantry into the co-operative organization and to ensure for this organization a socialist development, while utilizing, overcoming and ousting its capitalist elements.³¹

With this formula Stalin introduced at the Fourteenth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party (December 1925) the simple solution of the "peasant question" in the Soviet Union: since the peasantry was "non-socialist by its position," it was this position that had to be changed. This meant that since the land, the principal means of the peasants' production (and the only base on which the real peasants' "position" depended), had already been nationalized, the next step was to "nationalize" the farms operating on this land and, in a way, to "nationalize" the producers themselves. The way to do this was to organize them in a centralized system of production. This, of course, had nothing in common with the real concept of cooperation, and very little in common with Lenin's "cooperative plan" for the "transitional period" of NEP as a period of prolonged coexistence of two sectors of the economy: the state-controlled private, gradually cooperated sector and the state-owned "socialist" sector—both programmed to develop into a single socialist system, in the more or less distant future.

Stalin's solution meant much more than making the agricultural sector "socialist" through state organized "cooperative" production. The term "cooperation" was soon replaced by "collectivization" behind which there was the idea of integration of agriculture into a single socialist economy. Moreover, collectivization meant an action enforced from above which from the outset was combined with another, ominously defined by Stalin with the above quoted words about "utilizing, overcoming and ousting [the peasantry's] capitalist elements." What was behind this vague terminology came to be known later, after it was concretized in the practice of the "state grain-procurement" (*khlebozagotovki*) campaign of 1928-1929 and in the collectivization itself (1929-1930). It meant a three-stage process of eliminating the well-to-do (and partly even the middle category) peasants under the name of kulaks and semi-kulaks: first by ruinous exploitation of them through various types of super-taxes; then by organized "class struggle" against them through manipulated groups of "poor peasants" and "agricultural proletarians"; and finally by elimination of them through the officially declared action of "liquidation of the kulaks as a class."

Stalin's solution of the peasant problem through collectivization was accepted by the Fifteenth Party Congress (1927) as a part of its program of "industrialized and socialist reconstruction." The three-stage process was, after a heated debate and a split with the "right-wing" opposition group of Bukharin (who called it a "military-feudal method of exploiting the peasants") included in the draft of the first five-year plan of socialist reconstruction at the Central Committee plenum in October 1928 (confirmed at the Sixteenth Party Conference in April of 1929).

Stalin's "solution" was prompted by the urgent need for industrialization generally accepted in the party and in this way strengthening and modernizing its military might for the "building of socialism in one country." It was a method of "primitive accumulation" of capital for industrialization, which was the principle element of Preobrazhensky's Trotskyist concept of accomplishing this at the expense of the peasantry. Thus Stalin's "solution," which became an official policy in 1928, was derived from the Trotskyist position, as it embraced the principal elements of Preobrazhensky's original plan, **but in a more radical form and greatly enlarged in scope and more sinister in its nature.**

The analogy with Preobrazhensky's concept of transforming the

countryside into a sort of internal colony as a source of primitive accumulation of capital for socialist industrialization is evident from Stalin's presentation of his version of the concept to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in 1928. At that time this concept was already transformed into an actual policy for the exploitation of the peasantry in general, and of the well-to-do and prosperous middle peasants in particular. Here is what Stalin said:

In capitalist countries industrialization was usually effected, in the main, by robbing other countries, by robbing colonies or defeated countries, or with the help of substantial and more or less enslaving loans from abroad.... That way is closed to us. What then remains? Only one thing, and that is to develop industry, to industrialize our country with the help of internal accumulations.... But what are the chief sources of these accumulations?... There are two sources: firstly, the working class, which creates values and advances our industry; secondly, the peasantry.

The way matters stand [now] with the peasantry in this respect is as follows: it not only pays the state the usual taxes, direct and indirect; it also overpays in the relatively high prices for manufactured goods—that is in the first place; and it is more or less underpaid in the prices for agricultural products—that is in the second place. This is an additional tax levied on the peasantry for the sake of promoting industry.... It is something in the nature of a "tribute," of a supertax which we are compelled to levy for the time being in order to preserve and accelerate our present rate of industrial development.... It is unpalatable business, there is no denying. But we should not be Bolsheviks if we slurred over it....

Are the peasants capable of bearing this burden? They undoubtedly are....³²

In Stalin's version of "socialist primitive accumulation," as in Preobrazhensky's original concept, the main point was the idea of substituting the countryside for the external colonies as an object of "robbery" for the purpose of industrialization. The nationality problem was directly involved here—as Bukharin rightly pointed out in his criticism of Preobrazhensky's theory, referring to the then official Soviet nationality policy thesis: that the policy of relations of the rul-

ing Soviet proletariat (which was mostly Russian or Russified at that time) with the peasantry of the former colonies of Russia was directly connected and even identical with the problem of relations with the nationalities of the former colonial countries. It should be noted that the author of this thesis of Soviet nationality policy was none other than Stalin. Although the notion of an interconnection between the peasant and nationality questions was traditionally Marxist since the time of the *Communist Manifesto*, it was Stalin who made it his contribution to the theory of the nationality question:

What is the essence of the national question? The essential thing in the national question from the class point of view is to establish definite relations—I am speaking of our Soviet conditions—to establish definite and correct relations between the proletariat of the former dominant nation and the peasantry of the former oppressed nationalities. ³³

On another occasion, extending this thesis beyond the boundaries of the Soviet Union, Stalin stated categorically:

After all, the peasant question is the basis, the quintessence of the national question.... In essence, the national question is a peasant question. ³⁴

Thus as the peasantry, the countryside in the Soviet Union, consisting mainly of "peasant nations" of the former colonies of Russia, were to be treated as a substitute for outside colonies and as the subject of exploitation on behalf of industrialization, this meant the increased exploitation of the non-Russian republics. It was against the richest, most "peasant" and most resistive of these republics that the dictatorship of the proletariat aimed its offensive. Ukraine was the first in a series of victims.

In 1928 the first phase of the offensive against the peasantry was in full swing. It was conducted in the form of the campaign for state grain procurement—forcibly taking away from the peasants their "surplus of grain." In fact, it was the beginning of the action of expropriation of the upper and middle strata of peasantry which within a year were to be completely crushed and eliminated in the course of the next action—of mass collectivization and "liquidation of the kulaks as a class." There followed mass repressions against all those in

the countryside who stubbornly opposed collectivization.

In the same speech at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in 1928, quoted above, Stalin also described some elements of the first phase of the offensive, the action of grain procurement and the development of the "class struggle" in the countryside:

The purpose [of the offensive] is... to remold the peasantry, its mentality and its production, along collectivist lines, and thus to bring about the abolishing of classes.... We are gradually pressing upon and squeezing out the capitalist elements in the countryside, sometimes driving them to ruin.... But it follows from all this that the more we advance, the greater will be the resistance of the capitalist elements and the sharper the class struggle, while the Soviet government, whose strength will steadily increase, will pursue a policy of isolating these elements, a policy of demoralizing the enemies of the working class, a policy, lastly, of crushing the resistance of the exploiters....³⁵

This beginning of the "offensive" in 1928 was also the end of Lenin's NEP and his policy of temporary "retreat." In fact, it was a premature end, because Lenin's NEP was promised to be "in earnest and for a long time" (Lenin's words that became a current phrase in Soviet propaganda during the NEP period). Thus NEP was undoubtedly meant to be of longer duration than seven years. Nevertheless, Stalin's hasty termination of NEP was not a betrayal of Lenin in any sense, because it was an "offensive" that was the principal goal of Lenin's tactical retreat, and the question of timing was not one of political theory, but of political practice in which Stalin was the master in the post-Lenin period. Stalin rightly referred to the very clear direction contained in the following statement by Lenin in 1922:

As long as we live in a small-peasant country, there is a surer economic basis for capitalism in Russia than for communism. This must be borne in mind. Anyone who has carefully observed life in the countryside, as compared with life in the towns, knows that we have not torn out the roots of capitalism and have not undermined the foundation, the basis of the internal enemy. The latter depends on small-scale production.... We are weaker than capitalism,

not only on a world scale, but also within the country. Everybody knows this. We are conscious of it, and we shall see to it that our economic base is transformed from a small-peasant base into a large-scale industrial base.³⁶

Thus, as far as the principal direction of Communist policy is concerned, Stalin was as much a true disciple of Lenin as Lenin was of Marx and Engels. Collectivization and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class was not Stalin's invention, but the logical conclusion of the development of the Communist anti-peasant and anti-nationality ideology and its political application—from Marx-Engel's *Communist Manifesto* to Lenin's October Revolution and to Stalin's "building of Socialism in one country."

This is also true of the genocidal collectivization and "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" that Stalin accomplished in 1929-1933. In this Stalin followed Lenin's formula of what the "dictatorship of the proletariat" is and should be in practice: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is the most ruthless war... bloody and bloodless... against the forces and tradition of the old society... completely unrestricted power, absolutely unimpeded by laws or regulations and resting directly on the use of force."

How ruthless and bloody was the use of force in the course of Stalin's collectivization and liquidation of people considered to be an obstacle on the road to Communism was shown in the ways the anti-peasant and anti-nationality "offensive" was carried out in Ukraine—an offensive against the entire Ukrainian nation that culminated in the Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933.

PART 2

THE UKRAINIAN HOLOCAUST OF 1933

5. The Preparation for the Ukrainian Holocaust in 1930-1932 and Its Culmination in 1933

Act One: The Year of the Great Turning Point

The year 1933, which has come to stand for the whole Ukrainian tragedy that is being discussed here, marked this tragedy's nightmarish finale. That is, this is the date of that genocide by famine whose fatal harvests are designated as the Ukrainian Holocaust. But this finale, too, was only the culmination of the final, third act of the tragedy, which had begun in the second half of 1932. The whole tragedy began earlier, and its first two acts, which served to prepare and develop the catastrophic finale, lasted all together about three years.

The first act of the tragedy began in Ukraine in the "year of the great turning point," which was the official term for the 1929-1930 economic-planning year, the year of compulsory collectivization and liquidation of the kulaks. This year was undoubtedly a turning point throughout the USSR, including Russia, insofar as it was then that the Communist Party undertook to subjugate the peasantry and attained its first significant successes. But neither the pressure on the peasantry at this turning point nor the violence that lasted throughout the USSR until the end of 1932 were in any way identical in Russia and Ukraine. This is evident from Soviet statistics on the dynamics of collectivization between 1929 and 1932. For example, at the end of 1929, the beginning of 1930, and the middle of 1932, the percentage of peasants driven into collective farms in Russia was 7.4, 59, and 59.3 respectively, while in Ukraine for these same dates the percentages were 8.6, 65,

and 70. ¹ This testifies to the slower tempo of collectivization in Russia. Statistics on the subsequent course of collectivization in Russia and Ukraine confirm this point: in Russia collectivization exceeded 90 percent only at the end of 1937; in Ukraine it had reached 91.3 percent by 1935. ² And this at a time when resistance to collectivization in Ukraine was far greater than in Russia.

An even more significant difference between Ukraine and Russia was that the Soviet regime began breaking the backbone of the Ukrainian peasantry by eliminating nationally conscious Ukrainians, particularly the intelligentsia. The first and greatest act of Stalinist terror was the trumped-up trial of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, the first in a series of infamous purge trials. Viacheslav Chornovil, well known for his work in the Ukrainian national movement and a political prisoner in Soviet camps and prisons for many years, writes about this affair in a *samvydav** document:

At first, with the expansion of collectivization, they arrested a part of the intelligentsia (predominantly from the villages), those who had supported the UNR [Ukrainian National Republic] during the revolution but who later became absolutely loyal to the Soviet regime and who enthusiastically welcomed the Ukrainization announced by the Party. It was not too difficult to convince the public of their guilt by referring to their old sympathies.

At the same time, a group of well-known Ukrainian scholars was also eliminated (Yefremov, Hermayze, and others). Although they did not conceal their opposition sentiments, they did not engage in any organized struggle against the Soviet regime, and contributed greatly to the development of Ukrainian culture. The NKVD [GPU at that time] fabricated the SVU [Union for the Liberation of Ukraine] and by means of promises and threats, extracted confessions from the scholars arrested (though not from all of them) and staged an open show trial of leaders of the non-existent Union. ³

**Samvydav* (*samizdat* in Russian) is the system of clandestine publication of banned literature in Communist countries.

This first wide-scale campaign to liquidate potential opposition claimed as its victims in Ukraine not only the forty-five writers, scholars, and national and religious leaders who were put on trial as members of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine, but also tens of thousands of teachers, agronomists, cooperative directors, clergymen, and students. Most of them were shot in 1930 or were slowly exterminated in prisons and camps. This first act of mass terror was so closely linked with collectivization and liquidation of the kulaks that tens of thousands of Ukrainian peasants who refused to join the collectives were deported from Ukraine to northern Russia as "dekulakized" peasants and whose numbers, according to Soviet statistics, amounted to at least 1,200,000. ⁴

It must be noted that the liquidated kulaks were in fact ordinary hardworking peasants who with their large and industrious families had prospered on the plots of land that they had received after the Revolution. Most of them came from the peasant masses and had nothing in common with the nonworking classes, which had been expropriated by the Revolution. Although kulaks were defined as peasants who used hired labor on their farms, most of them simply hired seasonal hands or household assistants to help in families with many children, which was completely legal at the time. All these kulaks were products of the New Economic Policy proclaimed in the 1920s, when the Party exhorted peasants to enrich themselves and assured them that the Party and government had decided to carry out such a policy "seriously and for a long time." Thus the dispossession of the peasants who had prospered through their own labor (not to mention extension of this campaign to broader strata of the population) was a criminal action that, in the guise of liquidating the kulaks, was meant to destroy the peasantry as a class. But it was not simply a matter of economic destruction.

Liquidation of the Kulaks as a Class and the First Elements of a Holocaust

What dekulakization meant, and how it was carried out, is movingly depicted in Vasily Grossman's novel, now banned in the USSR, *Forever Flowing*. The speaker is a Russian woman who took part as an activist in the dekulakization campaign in a Ukrainian-Cossack area and then experienced the horrors of the famine in Ukraine. Telling her story to a Jew, after the Holocaust of World War II, she says:

The campaign to liquidate the kulaks began at the end of 1929, and the height of the drive came in February and March of 1930.... Before they were arrested, a special assessment was levied on them. They paid it once, finding the money somehow or other. Then it was levied on them a second time, and those who had anything left sold it, anything to be able to pay up.... They began to arrest the heads of families only.... The arrests were carried out solely by the GPU. Party activists had no part in this at all. Those rounded up in this first stage were shot to a man.... Then, at the beginning of 1930, they began to round up the families, too. This was more than the GPU could accomplish by itself. All party activists were mobilized for the job.... It was openly proclaimed that "the rage and wrath of the masses must be inflamed against them, they must be destroyed as a class, because they are accursed...." There was no pity for them. They were not to be regarded as people; they were not human beings. One had a hard time making out what they were—vermin, evidently. I became a member of the party activist committee, too. The activist committee included all kinds—those who believed the propaganda and who hated the parasites and were on the side of the poorest peasantry, and others who used the situation for their own advantage. But most of them were merely anxious to carry out instructions.... The most poisonous and vicious were those who... shouted about political awareness—and settled their grudges and stole. They stole out of a crass selfishness: some clothes, a pair of boots. It was so easy to do a man in: you wrote a denunciation and didn't even have to sign it. All you had to say was that he had paid people to work for him as hired hands, or that he had owned three cows....

I will not forget your words.... I asked you how the Germans could kill Jewish children in gas chambers, how they could go on living after that. Could it be that there would be no retribution, either from God or from other people? And you said: only one form of retribution is visited upon an executioner—the fact that he looks upon his victim as something other than a human being and thereby ceases to

be a human being himself. He is his own executioner. While the man who has been executed remains a human being for all eternity....

Nowadays I look back on the liquidation of the kulaks in a quite different light—I am no longer under a spell, and I can see the human beings there. Why had I been so benumbed? After all, I could see how people were being tortured and how badly they were being treated! But what I said to myself at the time was “They are not human beings, they are kulaks.” And so I remember, I remember, and I think: Who thought up this word “kulak” anyway? Was it really Lenin? What torture was meted out to them! In order to massacre them, it was necessary to proclaim that kulaks are not human beings. Just as the Germans proclaimed that Jews are not human beings. But that is a lie. They are people! They are human beings! That’s what I have finally come to understand. They are all human beings!

And so, at the beginning of 1930, they began to liquidate the kulak families.... The party activists were in charge of the expulsions, of course. There were no instructions as to how the expulsions should be carried out.... From our village the kulaks were driven out on foot. They took what they could carry on their backs: bedding, clothing.... It was terrible to watch them. They marched along in a column and looked back at their huts, and their bodies still held the warmth from their own stoves. What pain they must have suffered! After all, they had been born in those houses; they had given their daughters in marriage in those cabins. They had heated up their stoves, and the cabbage soup they had cooked was left there behind them. The milk had not been drunk, and smoke was still rising from their chimneys. The women were sobbing but were afraid to scream. We party activists didn’t give a damn about them. We drove them off like geese....

In the district center there was no space left in the prisons.... There were many more coming than just this one column—a column from each village. The movie theater, the club, the schools were all inundated with prisoners. But they weren’t kept there long. They were

driven to the station, where trains of empty freight cars were waiting on the sidings. They were driven there under guard—by the militia and GPU—like murderers: grandfathers and grandmothers, women and children, but not fathers, because they had been taken away in the winter....

Some of the so-called “kulaks” escaped from their special resettlement areas. I spoke with two of them.

They were transported in sealed freight cars, and their belongings were transported separately. They took with them only the food they had in their hands. At one transit station... the fathers of the families were put on the train.... They were en route more than a month. The railways were full of trainloads of similar peasants. Peasants were being transported from all over Russia. They were all tightly packed. There were no berths in the cattle cars. Those ill died en route. But they did get fed. At the main stations along the way they were given a pail of gruel and two hundred grams of bread per person. The guard consisted of military units....

When they got there, the provincial authorities scattered them in the Siberian taiga. Wherever a small village was, the ailing and handicapped were put into huts as crowded as the prisoner-transport trains. And where there was no village nearby, they were simply set down right there on the snow. The weakest died. And those able to work began to cut down timber and build shacks, lean-tos; makeshift sheds and dwellings.... Their settlements were called “labor settlements.”⁵

This vivid picture must be supplemented with several details from Roy Medvedev’s study of the Stalin epoch, *Let History Judge*. A dissident Marxist historian, Medvedev discusses the question of who was dekulakized and describes the mass repressions that occurred during the campaign:

Many lower-middle peasants, poor peasants, and even some day laborers, who had never hired labor but were momentarily influenced by kulak agitation, were given the senseless label of “subkulaks” and were banished. In some

*raiony** up to 20 per cent of the peasants were banished; for each kulak evicted, three or four middle or poor peasants had to be arrested.... In one *raion*, investigation revealed that only three of thirty-four households subjected to dekulakization were actually kulak. There were thousands and thousands of such cases.

Some *raiony* declared martial law (*osadnoe polozenie*) during the liquidation of the kulaks, and did not leave the banished kulaks even the statutory minimum of equipment and supplies. Hundreds of kulak special settlements (*spetsposeleniia*) were created at the beginning of the thirties in uninhabited regions of Siberia and the East. The settlers were deprived of most rights and privileges for a long time, including freedom of movement. Contrary to instructions, even those kulaks were banished who had family members who had served in the Red Army. And these excesses were not sporadic incidents; they took place on a mass scale.

Indeed, there can be no justification for many actions that conformed to instructions, such as the arrest of an entire family along with a kulak or "subkulak," including young children. In unheated railway cars hundreds of thousands of peasants, with their wives and children, went east, to the Urals, Kazakhstan, Siberia. Many thousands died en route from hunger and cold and disease. E.M. Landau met a group of these transportees in Siberia in 1930. In winter, during a severe frost, a large group of kulaks with their families were being taken in wagons three hundred kilometers into the *oblast*. One of the peasants unable to endure the crying of a baby sucking its mother's empty breast, grabbed the child from his wife's arms and dashed its head against a tree.⁶

Based on generally inaccessible archival materials and on testimony by important participants in these events, Medvedev's description is particularly noteworthy for its conclusion that in some regions up to twenty percent of the peasants were banished. These regions included the primary grain-growing regions of the USSR—Ukraine, the Kuban,

*A *raion* is an administrative division of a province (*oblast*).

and the Don, which were considered to be the most kulak-dominated and the most counterrevolutionary. Hence collectivization and dekulakization were the most brutal here. No wonder that Medvedev draws his example of the most flagrant overfulfillment of the plan from the Baturyn region of Ukraine.

Multiplying the official number of kulak households in Ukraine by the average number of members in a household gives us a figure of 1,200,000 people who fell victim to the liquidation of the kulaks in Ukraine in the year of the great turning point. Multiplying this result by Medvedev's figure of three or four banished middle or poor peasants for each evicted kulak gives us a total figure of 3,600,000 to 4,800,000 persons who were caught up in the dekulakization campaign in Ukraine between 1930 and 1932.

Naturally, not all these people were victims in the sense that they perished directly because of the campaign. The physical victims included: several thousand who were executed in prison to intimidate other prisoners or to stop rebellions; several hundred thousand who died of cold, hunger, and mistreatment while being transported to the northern and eastern reaches of Russia; several hundred thousand who died in concentration camps, digging canals and building roads in inhuman conditions; and many, especially elderly people and children, who died while struggling for survival in the special settlements. On the whole, however, no more than half of the dekulakized Ukrainians perished after they were deported to the Far North and East of Russia.

For Ukraine and for the Ukrainian people on adjacent territories all these were absolute losses in a national sense. Only a very small number returned to Ukraine. Most of the deported Ukrainians stayed until the war in the special settlements under NKVD supervision and remained there forever. Through forced Russification the second generation ceased to be Ukrainian and added to the growth of the Russian nation, which has increased so incredibly by assimilating non-Russians, primarily in Siberia and other northern and eastern regions, during the last few decades.

Here lies the essential difference between Ukraine and Russia during the liquidation of the kulaks. Although this campaign claimed many Russian peasants as victims, the implementation of the campaign was less severe in Russia than in Ukraine (since Russia proper, with the exception of the non-Russian regions adjacent to Ukraine, was not considered to be a "crucial grain-growing region"), and the campaign had different national consequences. There was less dekulakization and

deportation in Russia in proportion to the peasant population, and the Russian peasants were deported within the boundaries of Russia. The Ukrainian peasants, however, were deported en masse to a foreign land, where they were assimilated and lost to the Ukrainian nation. Thus from its very beginnings collectivization had in Ukraine a national aspect that was not found anywhere in Russia.

*Act Two: "The Struggle for Grain is a Struggle
for Socialism"*

Act One of the Ukrainian tragedy had begun in the autumn of 1929 with the collectivization of the countryside and the liquidation of the kulaks and lasted until the end of 1931. Act Two began early in 1932 and lasted until the end of the year. The principle difference between the two acts lay in the emergence of new forces and in the changing character of their conflict in the new social and political situation. Because the kulak class had been liquidated by 1932 and the so-called private sector had lost its significance, the new forces in the continuing tragedy were the collective-farm peasants and the Communist Party, which now aimed to subordinate them to its own purposes as quickly as possible. Thus the struggle in Act Two was for mastery of the collective farms. Since the Ukrainian Party's main goal, imposed on it by Moscow, was to fulfill the production plan and to deliver Ukrainian grain to the state (by which was meant the entire Ukrainian farm product), the slogan of the campaign became: "The struggle for bread is a struggle for socialism."

Thus the campaign to achieve collectivization now became a campaign to fulfill the plan for grain deliveries from the collectivized peasants. As this struggle raged on, a dual conflict of interests emerged: between the collectivized peasants and the Communist Party of Ukraine and between Ukraine as a whole, including the nationally oriented Ukrainian Communists, and Moscow, which was now openly pursuing a policy of Russian great-power centralism. The ambiguous position of the Ukrainian Communists in this dual conflict was an important new element in Act Two of the Ukrainian tragedy. The role of the Ukrainian Communist Party in the whole tragedy therefore deserves particular consideration.

In Act One of Ukraine's tragedy, when the groundwork was being

laid for the Holocaust of 1933, Ukrainian Communists played an important and baneful role, seeing in all this only a socio-political process of class warfare. For this reason they loyally carried out the demands of Moscow, their ideological center, and went against the wishes and national interests of their own people. During the Ukrainization campaign of the 1920s those Ukrainian Communists who were responsible for national cultural development—Mykola Skrypnyk, for example—performed an invaluable service in strengthening Ukrainian consciousness and language and even attempted to develop a political life separate from that of Moscow, within the framework of Soviet Ukrainian statehood. But since they were Communists first and Ukrainians second, they bowed to Moscow's wishes in the name of Communism, causing great damage to their own people and paying with their lives.

That the Ukrainian Communists played a servile role is apparent from Moscow's disregard for them when it drew up its plans for Ukraine. In accordance with the First Five-Year Plan, the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Party and the government of the Ukrainian SSR resolved on 25 December 1929 to collectivize 21.6 percent of Ukraine's arable land by October 1930. But the Central Committee in Moscow issued a resolution demanding complete collectivization and liquidation of the kulaks in Ukraine by 1932. Disregarding the need for national planning, the Communist Party of Ukraine obeyed Moscow's instructions and collectivized 70 percent of the arable land by October 1930.⁷ This hasty tempo produced chaos and rebellions against the collectives, and in November 1930 collectivization dropped to 36 percent. Instead of demanding the 70 percent that the Ukrainian Party had planned for the spring of 1931, Moscow now set a target of 80 percent by the spring of 1931 and complete collectivization in 1932.⁸ By resorting to the most drastic measures, the Ukrainian Communists carried out Moscow's assignment, but they caused such chaos in Ukrainian agriculture that it became the basis on which Moscow was able to create the famine of 1933.

“Moscow Does Not Believe Tears”

Yet the main cause of the catastrophe was not the chaotic and hasty collectivization ordered by Moscow, but the deliberate policy of

plundering Ukraine by ordering excessively high grain deliveries. Although Moscow knew perfectly well that Ukrainian agricultural productivity had declined, the grain deliveries that it now demanded were 2.3 times higher than in the best years before collectivization. In 1930 Ukraine had delivered (largely to meet Moscow's export obligations) 7.7 million tons of grain, which comprised 33 percent of the Ukrainian harvest of 23 million tons that year. In 1926, which had been better in this respect, Ukraine had delivered for export 3.3 million tons or 21 percent of the harvest.⁹

What is most striking here, however, is that Ukraine had to deliver a much larger percentage of its harvests than any other republic: the grain harvest in Ukraine comprised 27 percent of the Soviet harvest, but Ukraine's deliveries amounted to 38 percent of all deliveries to the state.¹⁰ When we take into account that the harvest was usually calculated on the basis of inflated estimates, we see that Ukraine had to hand over an even larger portion of its production. This conclusion is supported by the fact that in the sowing campaign of 1931 Ukraine had only 95 percent of the seed that it needed.¹¹

In 1931 Moscow again imposed on Ukraine grain quotas based on the anticipated harvest, that is, 7.7 million tons, or 33 percent of the expected harvest of 23 million tons. But the harvest proved to be much lower, even according to official statistics, and totalled only 18.3 million tons, of which almost 30 percent was lost during the harvesting. One would expect that no one would even think of demanding the previously set quotas. But this is precisely what Moscow ordered: to extract the assigned contingent of grain from Ukraine at any cost, with no consideration for the victims.¹² Thus by 1931 it became evident that Moscow was deliberately leading Ukraine's economy to ruin.

Ukrainian Communists waged a bitter struggle to meet the quotas imposed by Moscow until the spring of 1932. The peasants' reserves of grain were confiscated, so that they were left 112 kilograms of grain per capita for the entire year. Even so, by the spring of 1932 only 91 percent of the quota for the previous year's harvest had been met.¹³

In the spring of 1932 Ukraine had only 55 percent of the seed needed to sow spring wheat. To ensure sowing, Moscow was forced to give Ukraine a "grain loan" (from Ukraine's own grain) of 135,000 tons. In 1932, before the new harvest was brought in, famine struck the Ukrainian countryside. Although the harvest was much smaller than in previous years (because less was sown), Moscow imposed the same

plan of grain deliveries.¹⁴ Only then did Ukrainian Communists finally realize that a catastrophe was impending. Still convinced that Moscow did not understand the true situation in Ukraine, they made efforts to avoid the catastrophe and to stop Moscow from what struck them as simply a foolishly shortsighted plan. Such leading Ukrainian Communists as Mykola Skrypnyk, Vlas Chubar, and Hryhorii Petrovsky appealed to Moscow several times early in 1932 to lessen the pressure on Ukraine, pointing out the critical situation in Ukrainian agriculture and warning that a catastrophe was impending. To convince Moscow that a change in policies was required, they collected evidence, which was presented to the Central Committee.

On 6-7 July 1932 a special Third All-Ukrainian Conference of the Communist Party of Ukraine was convened in Kharkiv with the sole purpose of examining the situation in the countryside. Moscow sent to the conference its top leaders—Viacheslav Molotov, the head of the government of the USSR, and Lazar Kaganovich, the second secretary of the Central Committee. At the conference Ukrainian Communists attempted to persuade the representatives from Moscow, citing eloquent facts in their speeches. Skrypnyk said that everything possible had been taken away from the Ukrainian villages, quoting peasants who had told him during a trip through the countryside that “there’s nothing left to take away because everything has been swept up.”¹⁵ Other Ukrainian Party and government leaders spoke in a similar spirit.

But they waited in vain for Moscow to sober up, because it had quite soberly decided to carry out its criminal plan. Molotov and Kaganovich shattered the Ukrainian Communists’ illusions by announcing at the conference that there would be “no concessions or vacillation in carrying out the tasks set before Ukraine by the Party and the Soviet government.”¹⁶ It is true that in granting Ukraine a loan of seed Moscow had also been forced to reduce the plan of grain deliveries from 7.7 million tons to 6.6 million tons, but even this plan could not be met by the harvest of 1932, of which more than 40 percent was lost during the harvesting.

Thus Moscow made it quite clear that it did not believe the Ukrainian Communists’ tears. It was not a question of senseless planning, but of a ruthless genocidal plan for Ukraine. Nor did Moscow believe the tears of Ukrainian collective farmers, who were going hungry by 1932. We say collective farmers, because the few remaining individual farmers retained some freedom of movement and were able to leave

the villages in search of food, but the collective farmers had already been turned into serfs and were forced to starve in the depleted collective farms.

Ukrainian Collective Farmers and Communists as Moscow's "Class Enemies"

Having eliminated the kulaks and subkulaks, the Communist Party turned its attention to the collective farmers. The attack against this category of the peasantry (which included those who had dekulakized their neighbors and energetically built "the new collective-farm life") was theoretically justified by Stalin, who stated at a joint session of the Politbureau of the Central Committee and the Presidium of the Central Control Commission on 27 November 1932:

The collective-farm peasantry is an ally of the working class.... But this does not mean that among collective farmers there are not individual detachments which are going against the Soviet power and are supporting the sabotage of grain deliveries. It would be foolish if Communists assumed that the collective farms are a socialist form of economy and therefore did not respond to this blow by individual collective farmers and collective farms with a decisive blow.¹⁷

This decisive blow against collective farmers who were "sabotaging" the grain deliveries by not fulfilling the quotas that had been imposed on them was different from the previous blows against the kulaks and subkulaks in that it took the form not of execution, imprisonment, and exile, but of artificial famine. That everything was being done to kill the peasants with famine is indicated by the Draconian laws that were issued then by the Soviet government, laws whose aim was to kill as many peasants as possible. The first was the infamous law of 7 August 1932 which imposed the death penalty for "violation of socialist property," including the picking of left-over grains of wheat during and after harvesting.

A particularly blatant act in the planning of the famine was the cancellation of the Ukrainian government's previous resolution to

issue advances to the collective farmers from the new harvest. Instead, a new resolution on 20 November 1932 ordered stopping all payment for work with grain until the grain delivery plan had been met and even confiscating from the collective farmers any grain issued to them and including in the grain deliveries all collective-farm supplies, including stores of seed.¹⁸ To insure that this total robbery would be carried out, 112,000 Party members, largely non-Ukrainians from various industrial centers, were sent to the Ukrainian countryside. The magnitude of this attack on the Ukrainian villages is apparent from the fact that in 1930, when collectivization and liquidation of the kulaks were being carried out, 40,000 Party members were sent to the Ukrainian countryside.¹⁹ Thus Moscow's second attack was directed not against the kulaks, who no longer existed, but against the collectivized Ukrainian villages.

Moscow's blatantly criminal policy against the Ukrainian collective-farm peasantry angered even those Ukrainian Communists who had carried out Moscow's order to plunder the Ukrainian countryside. Late in 1932 the Soviet press was full of announcements that were later summed up in a special resolution by the Central Committee dated 17 November 1932 which announced that in many rural party centers in Ukraine direct links had been found between groups of Communists and kulaks and Petliurites, as a result of which some Party organizations were becoming spokesmen for the class enemy.²⁰ Thus the fictitious concept of the kulaks, which in official Soviet terminology was always a pseudonym for the entire peasantry, was now applied to those collective farmers who were not fulfilling the impossible grain quotas. The term Petliurites, as we know, is the standard Soviet pejorative for nationally conscious Ukrainians. Thus even those Ukrainian Communists who had sympathized with the collective farmers and had tried to save them from the catastrophe that Moscow was planning were now labelled "class enemies." As a rule, these Communists broke with the party and were subjected to repressions, or they were exposed as class enemies who had infiltrated the party and were purged and arrested.

By the end of 1932 the entire Ukrainian people, including those rural Communists who had sided with it in this struggle for life and death, was opposed to Moscow. It was a struggle in the most literal, physical sense of the word, a total war with its own cruel laws. Moscow's ruthlessness in this total war is evidenced by the military blockade, of the kind usually practiced only by armies on enemy ter-

ritory, that was imposed on Ukraine late in 1932. All deliveries of consumer items to those regions that had been blacklisted for not meeting the grain quotas were halted. How the blockade was applied is evident from a resolution by the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, dated 6 December 1932:

In connection with the shameful wrecking of the grain-procurement plan, which was organized by counterrevolutionary elements with the participation of some Communists and with a passive or indifferent attitude by Party organizations in some raions, the Council of People's Commissars and the CP(b)U have decided to place these raions on the blacklist and to apply to them the following repressive measures:

1. To halt delivery of consumer goods to these raions and to halt all state and cooperative trade, for which purpose state and cooperative shops in these raions will be closed and existing goods will be removed;
2. To ban the trade in consumer goods that collective farms and individual enterprises have been conducting until now;
3. To halt all credits for these raions and to withdraw all the credits that have already been issued to them;
4. To change the personnel of the local administrative and economic leadership, eliminating all hostile elements;
5. To do the same in the collective farms, eliminating from them all the hostile elements that took part in the wrecking of grain procurements.²¹

Such measures, typical of a military occupation, were applied, as the Soviet press indicates, in eighty-six *raions* of Ukraine, which were placed on the blacklist in December 1932.²² By these and other extraordinary measures the Party extracted 4.7 million tons of grain from Ukrainian collective farms by the end of 1932. This totalled 71.8 percent of Moscow's plan of 6.6 million tons. Although only about 83 kilograms of grain were left per capita of rural population in Ukraine for the seven months until the next harvest,²³ Moscow continued to demand "unconditional" fulfillment of the plan and to intensify the terror against the Ukrainian people. Thus, *Pravda* emphasized "Ukraine's shameful lagging behind this year" and called for "ap-

plication of more severe methods” in the “struggle for grain,” demanding “a decisive struggle against remnants of the kulaks, particularly in Ukraine.”²⁴

The Beginning of Act Three of the Ukrainian Tragedy

Act Three of the tragedy inflicted on the Ukrainian people by the Communist Party’s ruthless grain procurements began late in 1932. In the autumn of that year a food crisis broke out in Ukraine, assuming catastrophic proportions in the major grain-growing regions. But the overall catastrophe of peasant Ukraine came in the winter of 1932-1933, and its consequences—the extinction of entire villages and rural regions—came in the spring and summer of 1933. Because nothing was left by the end of 1932, the Ukrainian Communists ceased to meet the grain procurement plan that Moscow had imposed on them early in 1933. Instead of easing its demands Moscow stepped up its pressure on Ukraine and on the Ukrainian Communists.

In early January 1933 *Pravda* sounded an alarm over decreasing grain deliveries from Ukraine and accused the Ukrainian party of permitting class enemies to organize themselves.²⁵ Those Ukrainian Communists who understood where Moscow was leading Ukraine—Skrypnyk and Petrovsky, for example—apparently protested to Moscow, because two weeks later Moscow openly expressed its lack of confidence in the Ukrainian party leadership.

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) takes as an established fact that Ukrainian Party organizations did not carry out their obligations where grain procurements are concerned and did not meet the grain procurement plan.²⁶

The same resolution sent a group of Moscow party and police leaders to Ukraine, as special representatives of Moscow, led by the prominent Russian Communist Pavel Postyshev, who was given broad powers as Moscow’s regent and who was placed over the entire party and government structure of the Ukrainian SSR. Postyshev’s arrival in Ukraine in January 1933 marked the beginning of the final act in Ukraine’s tragedy.

Although Postyshev assumed power when the artificial famine was already underway, he was the real commander of the famine and the physical personification of Moscow’s anti-Ukrainian policy. Moscow

prepared the famine with the aid of Ukrainian Communists who were blinded by their faith in “class struggle” and “internationalism,” but it was able to realize its genocidal intention only with non-Ukrainian hands, because even the Ukrainian Communists, if they still thought of themselves as Ukrainians, were marked for extinction. Thus to carry out the decisive final phase of the genocide—genocide in its pure form—Moscow had to send the Russian Postyshev, accompanied by a handpicked staff that included such prominent members of the Moscow Party center as M. Khatayevich, Ye. Veger, and others.

Postyshev was particularly suited for his role as the leader of the blatantly anti-Ukrainian phase of this campaign, because while carrying out Moscow’s assignments in Ukraine he had revealed himself as a Russian chauvinist who was openly hostile to everything Ukrainian. This “pureblooded” Russian had been sent to Ukraine back in 1923, when he had acquired, like Kaganovich before him and Khrushchev after him, a leading position in the Party hierarchy. But between 1923 and 1930 Moscow was forced by its relative weakness to give in to Ukrainian national pressure and to accept the policy of Ukrainization, which Postyshev had criticized. Thus while it needed this policy Moscow recalled Postyshev from Ukraine and rewarded him for his anti-Ukrainian position by swiftly promoting him to the position of Stalin’s trusted lieutenant. As a specialist in Ukrainian affairs, Postyshev assisted Stalin in drawing up his policies for Ukraine and thus may have played a leading role in organizing the preparations for the genocide in Ukraine, which he was entrusted with completing in 1933.

The Postyshev Stage in the Ukrainian Genocide

The greatest horrors of the famine—the death of most of the people that Ukraine lost during the Holocaust of 1933—occurred while Postyshev was in power. It is possible that Ukrainian party and government leaders—Chubar, Skrypnyk, and Petrovsky, who were still trying to stop Moscow—would have taken measures to avert the famine in the spring of 1933. It would only have been necessary to issue to the peasants the grain that had been confiscated from them and was being stored in grain elevators before being exported. But as soon as Postyshev and his entourage arrived from Moscow the Ukrai-

nian party and government were deprived of all initiative. All decisions had to be approved by Postyshev, who took his orders directly from Moscow.

Stalin's response to attempts by prominent members of the Ukrainian party to warn him of the impending catastrophe is illustrated by the reprisal against R. Terekhov, a secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee. Terekhov had been first secretary of the Kharkiv Province Party Committee before Postyshev's arrival. A Russian born in Russia, Terekhov was a committed Bolshevik who was accustomed to speaking bluntly even in the highest ranks of the party. Perhaps as a Russian who could not be accused of Ukrainian nationalism, he was entrusted by his colleagues in the Ukrainian party leadership with the assignment to bring to Moscow's attention the true situation in Ukraine. Citing a document issued by the Politbureau of the Central Committee and published in *Pravda* in 1964, Roy Medvedev describes what came of Terekhov's efforts:

Stalin also brushed aside reports of famine, which appeared in many areas in 1932-33, as a result of crop failures and forced grain collections. Tens of thousands of peasants died of starvation, and hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, left their homes and fled to the cities. In 1932 R. Terekhov, a secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party's Central Committee, reported to Stalin on the terrible situation developing in the villages of Kharkiv *oblast* as a result of the crop failures. He asked Stalin to send some grain to the *oblast*. Stalin's reaction was strange. Sharply cutting off the speaker, Stalin said:

We have been told that you, Comrade Terekhov, are a good speaker; it seems that you are a good storyteller, you've made up such a fable about famine, thinking to frighten us, but it won't work. Wouldn't it be better for you to leave the post of *obkom* secretary and the Ukrainian Central Committee and join the Writers' Union? Then you can write your fables and fools will read them.²⁷

Terekhov's fate was decided in a Stalinist fashion: Postyshev was ordered to replace him as secretary of the Kharkiv *obkom* and first assistant to the secretary-general of the Ukrainian Central Committee with Stanislav Kosior. Terekhov was then recalled to Moscow, where

he was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. He was "rehabilitated" during the post-Stalin thaw of 1956.

Having eliminated Terekhov, Postyshev replaced the party membership in the Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Odessa regions and then on 1 March 1933 purged the government of the Ukrainian SSR, eliminating Skrypnyk as commissar of education and director of Ukraine's cultural affairs. The next to fall was Chubar, who was removed from the leadership of the Ukrainian government.

As for the famine, Postyshev not only failed to prevent the catastrophe, but in his first speech immediately after assuming his duties in Ukraine announced that there could be no talk of issuing grain to the Ukrainian collective farmers to stave off famine or of issuing seed to the collective farms. "The broad masses of party and non-party collective-farm workers," announced Postyshev, "must clearly understand that there can be no question of state assistance in supply grain for sowing. The collective farms... and individual farmers must themselves find and sow the seed."²⁸ Realizing later that given this attitude there would be no spring sowing and no harvest to expropriate, Moscow made Ukraine a loan of its own grain, exploiting the opportunity to make cynical propaganda about its own charity. But no relief was ever issued to the starving peasants. Only during the spring sowing, to force the collective farmers to work, was some food given them, although only in the fields, during the work.

Postyshev's particular mission in Ukraine was to use the famine, which had paralyzed the Ukrainian peasantry and excluded it from the political struggle, as a basis for a purge of the Ukrainian intelligentsia and the Ukrainian elements in the Communist Party, which had been reborn during the period of Ukrainization, and to liquidate the consequences of Ukrainization. It was with a dismantling of the Ukrainization program that Postyshev began his work in 1933, quickly letting Ukrainians understand that he had arrived not to save Ukraine from the famine, which he refused to notice, but to save Ukrainians from the Ukrainian language, which had supposedly begun to diverge from the Russian language because of "wrecking" by imaginary Ukrainian nationalists and "mistakes" by the Ukrainian Communists, who had supposedly permitted a dangerous "nationalist deviation."

"The mistakes and oversights made by the Communist Party of Ukraine in implementing the party's nationalities policy were a major reason for the breakdown of 1931-1932 in agriculture," announced Postyshev at a plenary session of the Ukrainian Central Committee in

1933.²⁹ What bitter irony and cynicism! Through its regent Moscow was seriously claiming that the only trouble in that year of famine was the undue success of Ukrainization and the promising development of Ukrainian culture, which were almost held responsible for all the difficulties in Ukraine in 1933. It was for this success that Postyshev eliminated Skrypnyk and unmasked Ukrainian nationalism on the linguistic front by ordering a revision of Ukrainian spelling and vocabulary that made the language more similar to Russian.

It is no coincidence that Moscow began its reversal of the nationalities policy in Ukraine in 1933 by hounding and dismissing Skrypnyk. As a loyal Communist and convinced internationalist, Skrypnyk had defended the interests of the non-Russian republics, particularly of Ukraine, at the time of the Soviet Union's formation. Although he bore a large measure of responsibility for Ukraine's loss of the national sovereignty that it had acquired during the Revolution, by his consistent defense of genuine internationalism and true national equality, without privileges for the Russian "elder brother," Skrypnyk did much to establish the preconditions for true Ukrainian sovereignty, even in the form of the Ukrainian SSR.

At stake, of course, were all the achievements of the Ukrainian intelligentsia under Skrypnyk's leadership during the last years of Ukrainization. It was against these cadres that Moscow began its attacks when Postyshev arrived in Ukraine to head the struggle against the "Ukrainian nationalist deviation." Unlike previous campaigns against this deviation, which Moscow had never stopped attacking, the new campaign by Postyshev was not simply an ideological struggle, but a rule of terror that was meant to destroy physically all those who had been attacked ideologically.

Thus in the spring of 1933, when the highways of Ukraine were littered with the corpses of peasants who had attempted to escape to the towns, where people were still receiving a little food, leading figures in Ukrainian economic, cultural, and political life began to be arrested and executed without trial. It was at this time that Ukrainian Communists began to be arrested and executed, particularly those who had come to the Communist Party from various Ukrainian revolutionary parties and almost all the Communists who came from Western Ukraine.

In March 1933 thirty-five leaders of the People's Commissariat of Agricultural Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR were executed by the GPU. Their leader, Fedir Konar-Palashchuk, was falsely accused of ties with

the Ukrainian Military Organization. Forty other people involved in the case were also convicted.³⁰ Almost all the members of the writers' group Western Ukraine were arrested and executed, as were the leaders of Ukrainian literary organizations in the 1920s (Serhii Pylypenko, Mykhailo Ialovy, and others). The historical and literary departments of the All-Ukrainian Academy of Sciences were purged (the schools of Mykhailo Hrushevsky and Matvii Iavorsky), and the linguistic institutes and their publishing houses were terrorized and paralyzed. The more prominent linguists—Olena Kurylo, Ievhen Tymchenko, Oleksa Syniavsky, Mykola Sulyma, and others—were arrested and perished in imprisonment.³¹

Writers and linguists had been victims of Moscow's terror since the trial of the Union for the Liberation of Ukraine. Now the terror caught up all the leading Ukrainian Communists who had been Borotbists or Ukapists. Oleksander Shumsky, Karlo Maksymovych, Andrii Richytsky, Vasyl and Iurii Mazurenko, Mykhailo Avdiienko, Mykhailo Poloz, Pavlo Solodub, Omelian Volokh, Vasyl Sirko, Ivan Lyzanivsky, Mykhailo Lozynsky, Andrii Slipansky, Semen Vityk, Serhii Vikul, and others were shot without trial or were sent to prisons and labor camps. This group included former members of Ukrainian socialist parties and even some leaders of the Ukrainian national revolution: Iurii Tiutiunnyk, Vsevolod Holubovych, Pavlo Khrystiuk, M. Chechel, Hryhorii Kossak, Iosyp Bukshovany, and others. A mere listing of those prominent persons who fell victim to the Postyshev terror in 1933 would run to many pages.³²

By May 1933 terror and famine reigned throughout Ukraine. In protest against Moscow's genocidal policies Mykola Khvylovy, one of the most prominent writers of the Ukrainian national revival of the 1920s, committed suicide on 13 May 1933. Khvylovy's demonstrative suicide was a particularly significant event in the tragedy of 1933. A committed Communist and at the same time an idealistic romantic, he, unlike other Ukrainian Communists of the older generation, was not a creator, but rather a product of the Soviet Ukrainian state. As an artist and thinker, Khvylovy gradually shifted away from Communism to a Ukrainian national ideology and put forth the slogan "Away from Moscow!" After painful vacillations and contradictions he confirmed the validity of his slogan with his own suicide precisely at the time when the slogan became the logical and ineluctable conclusion about the catastrophical development for which he himself, as a Communist, probably felt responsible. The significance of his suicide lay

not in fear, but in a refusal to cooperate with Moscow's heinous plans.

An even more eloquent political protest was the suicide of Mykola Skrypnyk, who shot himself on 7 July 1933 in response to Moscow's demand that he condemn his "national deviation" and capitulate to the anti-Ukrainian terror. Even more than Khvylovy's death, Skrypnyk's suicide demonstrated that the founders of the Ukrainian SSR had realized the perniciousness of "international unity" with Moscow. Aged sixty-one at the time of his death and with over thirty years of experience in the Communist movement, Skrypnyk could not have been swayed by momentary feelings when he killed himself. His death was a sober and logical conclusion to his own and his party's activities in Ukraine. This is how thoughtful Ukrainians, particularly in the younger generation, interpreted his suicide. In this sense the suicides of Khvylovy and Skrypnyk were sacrifices that they made to warn those Ukrainians whose thinking had been formed under the influence of propaganda about Moscow's Communist internationalism. But Moscow does not believe tears, and these protest suicides had no effect on the further course of Moscow's policies in Ukraine.

The Horrors of the Ukrainian Holocaust In the Light of Three Testimonies

Moscow demonstrated its refusal to believe tears with such pitiless consistency in that terrible spring and summer of 1933 that those who did not see the horrors with their own eyes find them difficult to accept. But the horrors were witnessed by all Ukrainians who lived through those times—both those who went hungry in the villages and those who merely suffered from the difficulties and terror in the cities. Going to work in the morning, workers in the industrial centers of Ukraine stepped over the corpses of peasants who had descended like black clouds on the cities in search of food. Whole villages died out and were overgrown with weeds. Entire regions were turned into wastelands. Corpses lay like sheaves of wheat in the fields, where the new crop was growing. Many peasants went mad with hunger and turned to cannibalism. This was the real Ukrainian Holocaust. Vasiliï Grossman's *Forever Flowing*, sections of which have already been quoted in the chapter on dekulakization, provides a vivid picture of the artificial famine in Ukraine. The account is all the more important and

convincing because the witness is a Russian woman who was sent to work in Ukraine as a party activist to strengthen the Russian element in the unreliable Ukrainian collective farms. Here is her account:

As a party activist, I was sent to Ukraine in order to strengthen a collective farm. In Ukraine, we were told, they had an instinct for private property that was stronger than in the Russian Republic. And truly, truly, the whole business was much worse in Ukraine than it was with us. I was not sent very far—we were, after all, on the very edge of Ukraine, not more than three hours' journey from the village to which I was sent. The place was beautiful. And so I arrived there, and the people there were like everyone else. And I became the bookkeeper in the administrative office....

How was it? After the liquidation of the kulaks the amount of land under cultivation dropped very sharply and so did the crop yield. But meanwhile people continued to report that without the kulaks our whole life was flourishing. The village soviet lied to the district, and the district lied to the province, and the province lied to Moscow.... Our village was given a quota that it couldn't have fulfilled in ten years! In the village soviet even those who weren't drinkers took to drink out of fear. It was clear that Moscow was basing its hopes on Ukraine. And the upshot of it was that most of the subsequent anger was directed against Ukraine. What they said was simple: you have failed to fulfill the plan, and that means that you yourself are an unliquidated kulak.

Of course, the grain deliveries could not be fulfilled. Smaller areas had been sown, and the crop yield on those smaller areas had shrunk. So where could it come from, that promised ocean of grain from the collective farms? The conclusion reached up top was that the grain had all been concealed, hidden away. By kulaks who had not been liquidated yet, by loafers! The kulaks had been removed, but the kulak spirit remained. Private property was master over the mind of the Ukrainian peasant.

Who signed the act that imposed mass murder? I often wonder whether it was really Stalin.... Not the tsars certainly, not the Tatars, nor even the German occupation

forces ever promulgated such a terrible decree. For the decree required that the peasants of Ukraine, the Don, and the Kuban be put to death by starvation, put to death along with their tiny children. The instructions were to take away the entire seed fund. Grain was searched for as if it were not grain, but bombs and machine guns. The whole earth was stabbed with bayonets and ramrods. Cellars were dug up, floors were broken through, and vegetable gardens were turned over. From some they confiscated even the grain in their houses—in pots or troughs. They even took baked bread away from one woman, loaded it onto the cart, and hauled it off to the district. Day and night the carts creaked along, laden with the confiscated grain, and dust hung over the earth. There were no grain elevators to accomodate it, and they simply dumped it out on the earth and set guards around it. By winter the grain had been soaked by the rains and began to ferment—the Soviet government didn't even have enough canvas to cover it up!

...So then I understood: the most important thing for the Soviet government was the plan! Fulfill the plan! Pay up your assessment, make your assigned deliveries! The state comes first, and people are a big zero.

Fathers and mothers wanted to save their children and tried to hide at least a tiny bit of grain, but they were told: "You hate the country of socialism. You are trying to make the plan fail, you parasites, you subkulaks, you rats."

...Incidentally, when the grain was taken away, the party activists were told that the peasants would be fed from the state grain fund. But it was not true. Not one single kernel of grain was given to the starving.

Who confiscated the grain? For the most part, local people, the district executive committee, the district party committee, the Komsomol, local boys, and, of course, the militia and the NKVD. In certain localities army units were used as well. I saw one man from Moscow who had been mobilized by the party and sent out to assist collectivization, but he didn't try very hard. Instead, he kept trying to get away and go home. And again, as in the campaign to

liquidate the kulaks, people became dazed, stunned, beastlike....

Well, then came an autumn without any rain, and the winter was snowy. There was no grain to eat.... No bread.... They had taken every last kernel of grain from the village. There was no seed to be sown for spring wheat or other spring grains. The entire seed fund had been confiscated. The only hope was in the winter grains, but they were still under the snow. Spring was far away, and the villagers were already starving. They had eaten their meat and whatever millet they had left; they were eating the last of their potatoes, and in the case of the larger families the potatoes were already gone.

Everyone was in terror. Mothers looked at their children and began to scream in fear.... The children would cry from morning on, asking for bread. What could their mothers give them—snow? There was no help. The party officials had one answer to all entreaties: “You should have worked harder; you shouldn’t have loafed.” And then they would also say: “Look about your village. You’ve got enough buried there to last three years.”

Yet in the winter there was still no real, honest-to-God starvation.... People dug up acorns from beneath the snow and dried them out, and the miller set his stones wider apart, and they ground up the acorns for flour. They baked bread from the acorns—more properly, flat cakes. They were very dark, darker even than rye bread. Some people added bran to them or ground-up potato peelings. But the acorns were quickly used up because the oak forest was not a large one and three villages rushed to it all at once....

In the spring the school shut down. The teacher went off to the city. And the medical assistant left, too. He had nothing to eat. Anyway, you can’t cure starvation with medicine.... And all the various representatives stopped coming from the city. Why come? There was nothing to be had from the starving. There was no use coming any more....

The starving people were left to themselves. The state had abandoned them....

Old people recalled what the famine had been like under Tsar Nicholas. They had been helped then. They had been lent food. The peasants went to the cities to beg "in the name of Christ." Soup kitchens were opened to feed them, and students collected donations. And here, under the government of workers and peasants, not one kernel of grain was given them. There were blockades along all the highways, where militia, NKVD men, and troops were stationed: the starving people were not to be allowed into the cities. Guards surrounded all the railroad stations, even the tiniest of whistle stops.... In the cities the workers were given eight hundred grams—a pound and a half—of bread each day.... The peasant children in the villages got not one gram. That is exactly how the Nazis put the Jewish children into the gas chambers: "You are not allowed to live, you are all Jews!"

...It was when the snow began to melt that the village was up to its neck in real starvation. The children kept crying and crying. They did not sleep. And they began to ask for bread at night, too. People's faces looked like clay. Their eyes were dull and drunken. They went about as though asleep. They inched forward, feeling their way one foot at a time, and they supported themselves by keeping one hand against the wall. They began to move around less. Starvation made them totter. They moved less and less, and they spent more time lying down....

No dogs and cats were left. They had been slaughtered. And it was hard to catch them, too. The animals had become afraid of people, and their eyes were wild. People boiled them. All there was were tough veins and muscles. From their heads they made a meat jelly.

The snow melted, and people began to swell up. The edema of starvation had begun. Faces were swollen, legs swollen like pillows; water bloated their stomachs.... And the peasant children! Have you ever seen the newspaper photographs of the children in the German camps? They were just like that: 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

with skin that was like yellow gauze. And the children's faces were aged, tormented, just as if they were seventy years old.... And the eyes. Oh, Lord!

Now they ate anything at all. They caught mice, rats, snakes, sparrows, ants, and earthworms. They ground up bones into flour and cut up leather, shoe soles, and smelly old hides to make noodles of a kind, and they boiled down glue. When the grass came up, they dug out the roots and ate the leaves and buds. They used everything there was: dandelions, burdocks, bluebells, willowroot, sedums, nettles, and every other kind of edible grass and root and herb they could find....

And no help came! But they no longer asked for any. Even now when I start thinking about it all, I begin to go out of my mind. How could Stalin have turned his back on human beings? He went to such lengths as this horrible massacre! After all, Stalin, had bread. What it adds up to is that he intentionally, deliberately killed people by starvation. He refused to help even the children. And that makes Stalin worse than Herod. How can it be, I keep thinking to myself, that he took their grain and bread away, and then killed people by starvation? Such things are simply unimaginable! But then I think: it did take place, it did! And then immediately I think: no, it couldn't have.

Before they had completely lost their strength, the peasants went on foot across country to the railroad. Not to the stations, where the guards kept them away, but to the tracks. And when the Kiev-Odessa express went past, they would kneel there and cry: "Bread, bread!" They would lift up their horrible starving children for people to see. And sometimes people would throw them pieces of bread and other scraps. The train would thunder on past, and the dust would settle down, and the whole village would be there crawling along the tracks, looking for crusts. But then an order was issued that whenever trains were traveling through the famine provinces the guards were to shut the windows and pull down the curtains. Passengers were not allowed at the windows. In the end the peasants themselves stopped going to the railroads. They had too little strength left to get to the tracks—in

fact, they didn't have enough strength to crawl out of their huts and into the yard.

I can still recall how one old man brought the farm chairman a piece of newspaper he had found near the tracks. There was an item in it about a Frenchman, a famous minister, who had been taken to Dnipropetrovsk Province where the famine was at its worst, even worse than ours. People had become cannibals there, but his hosts had taken him to a local village, to a collective farm nursery school, and he had asked the children: "What did you have for lunch today?" And they answered, "Chicken soup with pasties and rice cutlets." I read it myself and I can still see that piece of newspaper right now. What did it mean? It meant that they were killing millions and keeping the whole thing quiet, deceiving the whole world! Chicken soup! Cutlets! And on our farm they had eaten all the earthworms. And the old man said to the farm chairman: "When Nicholas was tsar, the whole world wrote about the famine and was urged to give: 'Help, help! The peasantry is dying.' And you Herods, you child-killers, are showing off Potemkin villages, making theater out of it!"

The whole village moaned as it foresaw its approaching death. The whole village moaned—not out of logic, but from the soul, as leaves moan in the wind or straw crackles. And I myself saw red; why were they moaning so plaintively? One had to be made of stone to hear all that moaning and still eat one's ration of bread. I used to go outdoors with my bread ration and would hear them moaning. I would go farther, and then it would seem as if they had fallen silent. And then I would go on a little farther, and it would begin again. At that point, it was the next village down the line....

Death from starvation mowed down the village. First the children, then the old people, then those of middle age. At first they dug graves and buried them, and then as things got worse they stopped. Dead people lay there in the yards, and in the end they remained right in their guts. Things fell silent. The whole village died. Who died last I do not know. Those of us who worked in the collective farm administration were taken off to the city.

First I went to Kiev.... The peasants kept crawling from the countryside into the city. All the stations were surrounded by guards. All the trains were searched. Everywhere along the roads were roadblocks—troops, NKVD. Yet despite all this the peasants made their way into Kiev. They would crawl through the fields, through empty lots, through the swamps, through the woods—anywhere to bypass the roadblocks set up for them. They were unable to walk; all they could do was crawl. People hurried about on their affairs... and there were the starving children, old men, girls, crawling about among them on all fours. They were like mangy dogs and cats. And they had the nerve to want to be treated like human beings!... But the ones who had managed to crawl their way there were the more fortunate, one in ten thousand. And even when they got there, they found no salvation. They lay starving on the ground, and they spluttered and begged but were unable to eat. A crust might lie right next to them, but they were dying and could not see it.

In the mornings horses pulled flattop carts through the city, and the corpses of those who had died in the night were collected. I saw one such cart with children lying on it. They were just as I have described them—thin, elongated faces, like those of dead birds, with sharp beaks. These tiny birds had flown into Kiev, but what good had it done them? Some of them were still muttering, and their heads were still turning. I asked the driver about them, and he just waved his hands and said: “By the time they get where they are being taken they will be silent too.”³³

This extremely vivid picture of the Ukrainian tragedy is supplemented by a brief but powerful fragment from Alexander Solzhenitsyn's famous novel *The First Circle*. The fragment is part of an autobiographical narrative by the Russian Jewish dissident Lev Kopelev, who appears in the novel as Lev Rubin. (This episode also appears in Kopelev's memoirs, *To Be Preserved Forever*.*) Rubin recalls the time when, as a Komsomol activist, he was sent to collectivize the Ukrainian countryside:

*Kopelev's *The Education of a True Believer* contains a lengthy chapter, “The Last Grain Collections (1933),” which is entirely about his involvement in the events of 1933 in Ukraine.

...To prove his usefulness both to himself and to the revolutionary class, Rubin, a Mauser on his hip, had gone off to collectivize a village.... It all seemed perfectly natural: to dig up pits filled with buried grain, to keep the owners from milling their grain or baked bread, to prevent their getting water from the wells. And if a peasant child died—die, you starving devils, and your children with you, but you'll not bake bread! It evoked no pity in him but became as ordinary as a city streetcar when at dawn the solitary cart drawn by an exhausted horse went through the stifled, deathly village.

A whiplash at a shutter: "Any corpses? Bring them out."

And the next shutter: "Any corpses? Bring them out!" And soon it was: "Hey! Anyone still alive?"³⁴

Still another eloquent testimony can be found in the memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev, who was in charge of the Moscow Party apparatus at the time of the famine and who later replaced Postyshev as Moscow's regent in Ukraine. Khrushchev's memoirs shed light on Moscow's perception of the tragic events in Ukraine and on Stalin's refusal to believe the Ukrainian Communists.

One of my friends was Veklishev, the Chief of the Political Directorate [armed forces "security"] of the Moscow Military District. He told me that strikes and sabotage were going on all over the place in Ukraine, and that Red Army soldiers had to be mobilized to weed the sugar beet crop. I was horrified. I knew from my own experience with agriculture that sugar beets are very delicate; they have to be weeded at the right time and with the proper care. You couldn't expect Red Army soldiers, most of whom had never seen a sugar beet and didn't give a damn if they ever saw one again, to be able to do the job right. Naturally, the sugar beet crop was lost.

Subsequently the word got around that famine had broken out in Ukraine. I couldn't believe it. I'd left Ukraine in 1929, only three years before, when Ukraine had pulled itself up to prewar living standards. Food had been plentiful and cheap. Yet now, we were told, people were starving. It was incredible.

It wasn't until many years later, when Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan told me the following story, that I found out how bad things had really been in Ukraine in the early thirties. Mikoyan told me that Comrade Demchenko, who was then First Secretary of the Kiev Regional Committee, once came to see him in Moscow. Here's what Demchenko said: "Anastas Ivanovich, does Comrade Stalin—for that matter, does anyone in the Politbureau—know what's happening in Ukraine? Well, if not, I'll give you some idea. A train recently pulled into Kiev loaded with corpses of people who had starved to death. It had picked up corpses all the way from Poltava to Kiev. I think somebody had better inform Stalin about this situation."

You can see from this story that an abnormal state of affairs had already developed in the Party when someone like Demchenko, a member of the Ukrainian Politbureau, was afraid to go see Stalin himself. We had already moved into the period when one man had the collective leadership under his thumb and everyone else trembled before him. Demchenko decided to tell Mikoyan about what was happening in Ukraine because he knew Mikoyan was close to Stalin and might be able to get something done....

Now that Stalin's abuse of power has been exposed, a more searching, objective analysis of collectivization is in order if we're ever going to understand what really happened. Perhaps we'll never know how many people perished directly as a result of collectivization, or indirectly as a result of Stalin's eagerness to blame its failure on others.³⁵

Particularly noteworthy here is Demchenko's mention of the train that picked up corpses along the railway tracks. The special sanitary brigades and freight trains that collected the corpses of peasants who had died while begging for food from passengers or while trying to get to a town or city were known to all who had the opportunity to observe these "sanitary operations" in the spring and summer of 1933. According to eyewitnesses, the corpses were shipped by train to refuse dumps on the outskirts of the cities—including Kiev, as Demchenko mentioned—where special brigades clandestinely destroyed them by throwing them into huge pits, dousing them with gasoline and

setting them on fire, and then covering them with earth and refuse. Were these the first Babyn Yars, the first time in history that an insane regime burned its victims?

The Great Crime, the Great Lie, and the Russian-Chauvinist Background of the Great Anti-Ukrainian Pogrom

According to the most cautious calculations, 4.8 million people died in the spring and summer of 1933. Statisticians have calculated that during those months when the famine was most severe in Ukraine, 25,000 people died every day. That was more than 1,000 every hour, or seventeen people every minute.³⁶ To comprehend the scope of this catastrophe, we must remember that the mortality in those days, 18.8 percent in respect to the entire population of Ukraine, was five times larger than the mortality during the greatest natural famine in India, in 1918-1919, and twice as large as the total number of dead in World War I.³⁷

Yet the greatest horror of this artificial famine was not in the number of victims, but in the cynicism with which Moscow covered up its unprecedented genocide, not only denying to the world that a famine was taking place, but also assuring the starving Ukrainians that they had never been as happy as now. Newspapers and the radio spoke incessantly about the happy life. Poets were put to work writing poems about it. Thousands of agitators blared about it at compulsory public meetings.

People in Ukraine knew perfectly well that this was all a lie, but, given the mass terror, had to grit their teeth and accept the torment. In the West, however, in the humane civilized West, this lie was accepted even by serious politicians and heads of state. Edouard Herriot, the ex-Premier of France, visited several masquerades organized by Postyshev in Ukraine in 1933 and then authoritatively confirmed the Soviet lie about the joyful, happy life in Ukraine. As if to reward the Soviet Union for successfully carrying out genocide, France renewed and strengthened its friendship with Moscow, and the United States extended diplomatic recognition to the Soviet Union after sixteen years of stubborn refusal. Was it Moscow's success in destroying millions of Ukrainians that led Franklin D. Roosevelt to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR in 1933?

Ukrainian and other anti-Soviet émigrés, as well as Ukrainians liv-

ing on non-Soviet Ukrainian territories, tried in vain to shake the conscience of the Western world. With a few exceptions the West was completely indifferent to Ukraine's tragedy. By an irony of history only the Nazis, who had just come to power on a platform of militant anti-Communism, used the famine for their own purposes, thus diverting the world's attention from the facts: anyone who could think realized that the Nazis were concerned not with saving the victims of the famine, but with planning a new genocide in Ukraine based on the Soviet experience. Thus, in respect to Ukraine, the West followed Moscow and showed that it, too, did not believe the Ukrainian people's tears.

Moscow was able to carry out its infernal plan in Ukraine only with the West's complete indifference and even indirect sanctioning. The plan was completely carried out. The 4.8 million Ukrainian peasants who were destroyed by famine were the price at which Moscow allowed the remaining Ukrainians to stay alive and work as slaves in the collective farms and factories. Moscow immediately began to send in settlers from Russia to replace the Ukrainians lost to famine and terror. By the summer of 1933 deserted villages in the Kharkiv, Poltava, Donetsk, and Dnipropetrovsk regions, as well as in the western borderlands, were being populated with settlers from Russia. Postyshev himself, as a special secret inspector for resettlement at the USSR People's Commissariat of Agriculture, supervised the campaign of Russian colonization.³⁸ Grossman's *Forever Flowing* contains a passage about the Russian colonization that followed on the heels of the catastrophe of 1933:

I found out that troops were sent in to harvest the winter wheat. The army men were not allowed to enter the village, however. They were quartered in their tents. They were told there had been an epidemic. But they kept complaining that a horrible stink was coming from the village. The troops stayed to plant the spring wheat, too. And the next year new settlers were brought in from Orel Province. This was the rich Ukrainian land, the black earth, whereas the Orel peasants were accustomed to frequent harvest failures. The new settlers left their women and children in temporary shelters near the station and the men were brought into the village. They were given pitchforks and told to go through the huts and drag out the corpses. The

dead men and women still lay there, some on the floor and some in their beds. The stink in the huts was still frightful. The new settlers covered their noses and mouths with kerchiefs and began to drag out the bodies, but the bodies fell apart in pieces. Then they buried the pieces outside the village.... When they had removed the corpses from the huts, they brought in the womenfolk to clean the floors and to whitewash the walls. Everything was done as it was supposed to be done. But the stink remained. They whitewashed a second time, and they spread new clay on the floors, but the stink remained. They were unable either to eat or sleep in those huts, and they returned to Orel Province. But of course the land did not remain empty. It is rich land.³⁹

Even more Russian colonists were brought into the cities, thus doubling the number of Russians in Ukraine (from 5.6 percent of the population to 9.2 percent in 1939).⁴⁰

We must emphasize again and again that Moscow's genocidal famine in Ukraine in 1933 was a purely national genocide, because although it was dependent to a large measure on Ukrainian grain, Russia did not experience any famine. All Ukrainians who lived in Ukraine in 1933 remember what struck everyone with special horror at that time. As one witness wrote, "Two villages at the border between the Ukrainian SSR and the Russian SFSR. On the Ukrainian side everything was confiscated. On the Russian side there were normal planned grain procurements. Ukrainians clambered on the roofs of trains and went to Russia to buy bread."⁴¹

A famine similar to the Ukrainian one was experienced in the Kuban and Don regions and in Kazakhstan. But the Kuban and Don regions, although they are incorporated in the RSFSR, are not national Russian regions, and at the time of the famine the majority of the population consisted of Ukrainians and Cossacks, who had demonstrated their hostility to Russia during the Civil War. Kazakhstan is a non-Russian republic, and in the 1930s, in addition to the native Kazakhs, it had many Ukrainian farmers. Thus if we count the Ukrainian losses in the Kuban and Don regions and in Kazakhstan, then the Ukrainian victims of the famine total not 4.8 million, but at least 6, and by some calculations even 8 or 9 million. Even the Soviet census of 1939 revealed that the number of Ukrainians in the Soviet Union had decreased by 10 percent between 1926 and

1939, while Russians had increased by 27 percent.⁴² This demographic change has continued since then.

The drastic demographic change in Ukraine in favor of Russians, which has served as a basis for a stepped-up Russification, particularly in urban areas, is now seen by some *samizdat* students of the problem as the primary anti-Ukrainian aspect of Russian genocide in Ukraine. This is clearly stressed in Maksym Sahaidak's "Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the USSR":

Moscow's regime was carrying out its dictatorial policies in Ukraine not only by military force, but also through the control that the Russian-dominated and Russified cities, even though they constituted the minority, exercised over the preponderant Ukrainian villages.

Thus, according to the 1926 census, the total urban population of that part of Ukraine which was then under Moscow consisted of 5.7 million persons, while in the villages there were 23.8 million. Such control could not be promising for the long run. Furthermore, plans were being made for industrialization, which would necessitate an influx of a new working force from the villages into the cities. The city was faced with the prospect of Ukrainization. This meant that the occupying regime would lose its control over the Ukrainian city, over the intelligentsia, over the administrative apparatus, and this in turn would make it necessary to recognize the sovereignty of the Ukrainian nation not only in words but in deeds. The invaders understood this only too well. Thus Stalin, speaking at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (of Bolsheviks) declared:

"It is clear that while in the cities of Ukraine up to this time the Russian elements still predominate, with the flow of time these cities will inevitably be Ukrainized. Forty years ago Riga was a totally German city, but since the cities grow at the expense of the villages, and the villages manifest themselves as guardians of the national [spirit], today Riga is a Latvian city. Fifty years ago all the cities of Hungary were German in character, while now they are Hungarian. The same can be said of Ukrainian cities, which are Russian in character and which will become Ukrainized, because all the cities grow at the expense of

the villages. The village is the representative of the Ukrainian language, which will enter into all the Ukrainian cities as the dominant element."

The occupying regime feared this like fire and still fears it today. Bolshevik Moscow, headed by the "father of all nations," put to use all of its power to prevent the Ukrainian city from becoming Ukrainian. And this was the main reason for the death-carrying famine in Ukraine in the years 1932-1933!

This "original" and "most equitable in the whole world" method of solving the national problem was devised by "Father Stalin."⁴³

Only by totally smashing the peasantry, as the main army of the Ukrainian national movement, and the intelligentsia, as the potential officers of this army, was Moscow able in 1933 to reverse its nationalities policy in Ukraine by 180 degrees. The reversal was confirmed by a resolution of the November plenary session of the Central Committee (15-22 November 1933) and then by resolutions of the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine in January 1934, which declared that "the chief danger in Ukraine" was now "local Ukrainian nationalism." That this was more than a verbal declaration is apparent from statistics on the drastic decline of Ukrainian culture and the position of the Ukrainian language in the Ukrainian SSR, which began precisely in 1933. One indication is the decline in Ukrainian book production, which was 80 percent Ukrainian in 1931 but fell to 59 percent in 1934.⁴⁴ A frenzied Russification of the school system, the press, the administrative apparatus, and economic life was begun. Thus, with the assistance of the genocidal famine of 1933, Moscow was able to embark on the "merging" and liquidation of the Ukrainian nation that is continuing unabated today.

6. The Ukrainian Tragedy of 1933 in Historical Perspective

Some Historical Comparisons and Affirmations

The years since 1933 have been exceedingly rich in tragedy and catastrophe. One need only recall World War II, with the terror of Nazi and Communist occupation, particularly in Eastern Europe, and the recent wars and revolutions in Asia, with the mass destruction after the Communist victory in Cambodia. It is no coincidence that since 1945 the concept of genocide—the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group—has been firmly established in international law.

Yet even in this dismal historical setting one tragedy remains without precedent. Its closing act was staged in 1933 in Ukraine and the adjacent lands of the Kuban and the Don, which were tied to Ukraine at that time by a substantial Ukrainian population. This was the first instance of peacetime genocide in history. It took the extraordinary form of an artificial famine deliberately created by the ruling powers. This savage combination of words for the designation of a crime—"an artificial, deliberately planned famine"—is still incredible to many people throughout the world, but it indicates the uniqueness of the tragedy of 1933, which is unparalleled, for a time of peace, in the number of victims it claimed.

By the most conservative estimate, based on an analysis of Soviet statistics, the casualties of the famine in the Ukrainian SSR totalled 7.5 million Ukrainians, of whom 4.8 million starved to death in one year,

1932-1933, while the remainder is accounted for by the loss of natural increase in the Ukrainian population for this period. All together, Ukrainian losses throughout the USSR in this period totalled 8.1 million.¹

According to a 1976 document of the Ukrainian Helsinki Watch Group, more than six million Ukrainians died in the artificial famine in Ukraine in 1933 alone. Yet this was but a part of the approximate total of ten million victims of the anti-Ukrainian terror that reigned between 1930 and 1933, when "dekulakization" (or, in the official terminology of the time, the "liquidation of the kuláks as a class") was carried out.²

Let us limit ourselves for the moment to the victims of genocide by starvation. The number of six million cited by the *samizdat* article must be viewed in context. Considered in relation to the Ukrainian SSR's population of thirty-two million, according to official data for 1932, this number is clearly more terrible than the losses suffered by Ukraine during World War II, which for a population of forty-two million, amounted to 5.6 million.³ But surely one cannot compare the victims of war, an extraordinary, abnormal time of mass slaughter, with those of genocide in peacetime.

One must also consider that the Ukrainian victims of 1933 were largely from the peasant population, with regard to which Ukraine's losses in 1933 constituted 19.4 percent, while war losses constituted approximately 15.6 percent, in terms of the entire population of Ukraine, including more than one million Ukrainian Jews.⁴

Holocaust as the Essence of the Ukrainian Tragedy of 1933

Thus, only the Jewish victims of Nazi genocide in World War II can be compared with the Ukrainian victims of Soviet genocide. In the best known genocidal tragedy, so frighteningly referred to as the Holocaust, some six million Jews fell victim to Nazi terror. But even this cannot eclipse the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933, for again we are comparing peacetime genocide in one country with a tragedy that encompassed many countries during history's first total war. In this greatest and most violent war, which lasted over five years, Jews and other peoples lost millions of victims to the horrors of war and the genocidal terror of Nazi and Communist totalitarianism.

Yet it is not simply a matter of comparing historical circumstances

and numerical magnitudes. Other historical parallels and contrasts must be drawn. The crime of genocide was identified and condemned only after the Jewish Holocaust of World War II, but all the elements of this tragedy that shook the conscience of the world formed the gist of the earlier Ukrainian tragedy. Most importantly, the Ukrainian tragedy, the first of its kind in an age of genocidal totalitarianisms, failed to shake anyone in the world other than Ukrainians themselves. The genocide perpetrated against Ukrainians by the Soviet regime was not called by its proper name or condemned by the world, and it has not been properly recognized, except by a few small circles, even to this day.

The parallel with the Nazi genocide against the Jews, is the most appropriate context for a discussion of the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933, which is still not entirely clear to the world and has not been duly acknowledged even by all Ukrainians. The principal element underlying the concept of a holocaust can be found as well in the Soviet genocide against the Ukrainian people in 1932-1933. Let us remember that "holocaust" comes from Greek and Latin and designated the mass slaughter of people of a certain race, especially by burning them as sacrificial offerings to a pagan deity. In keeping with this meaning, the word has been applied to the Nazis' attempt to destroy the Jewish people in the territories that they had occupied by sacrificing them to their insane idea of racial superiority. In our time the word is acquiring a broader meaning, as the name for the kind of mass slaughter that is now branded in international law as genocide. We usually speak of a holocaust with reference to the systematic destruction of a certain race, class, or nation by offering this group in sacrifice, as it were, to the historic aims of a particular ideology. Thus the word applies to those national or socio-political genocides that are justified by the single-minded worshippers of such an ideology.

We can apply the word "holocaust," in this specific sense, to the genocide that was planned by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and carried out by its agents in Ukraine in 1932-1933 and that took the form of artificial famine and merciless anti-Ukrainian terror.

Genocide in a Socio-Political Context

We must also affirm that this genocide was integrally linked with the "socialist reconstruction" of socio-economic life that the Com-

munist Party was effecting in the early 1930s. This meant above all accelerated industrialization, to support which the Party decided to rob private landowners in the villages and to make them the slaves of a state run by the Party. In form and substance, this compulsory collectivization and liquidation of the kulak class was a revolution dictated from above. Marxist-Leninist theory required that the peasantry, a "petit bourgeois class" that was supposedly breeding capitalism, be sacrificed to this goal. Insofar as the terror and famine in Ukraine and the Kuban and Don regions resulted from a special intensification of the overall revolution, one might conclude that in this case one should talk about social, not national, genocide. Indeed, such a view of the tragedy is held by some non-Ukrainians, particularly Russians, who have even managed to imply that the tragedy equally affected Russia.

Although the social and national aspects of the famine of 1933 were complementary, for Ukrainians it was above all a national catastrophe. In Ukraine, whose principal strength lay at the time in the peasantry, the socio-political action of liquidating the private land owning peasantry, became a national one. By "building socialism in one country," which included acceleration of industrialization and compulsory collectivization of the peasantry, the Party wanted to attain the maximum concentration of all political economic and even cultural life in its hands. For this purpose the Party chose to rely on Russian nationalism, traditionally imperialistic and chauvinistic, which demanded that the federalist principle on which the Soviet Union was based be liquidated. The logical outcome of this reliance on Russian nationalism was a decision to solve the "nationalities problem" in the USSR by creating a unified Soviet people on a Russian linguistic, cultural, and political basis.

Disturbing and hateful for the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, concentrated as it was in Russian chauvinist hands, the nationalities problem was always inseparable from the "peasant problem." A clear awareness of this link can be found in the writings of Joseph Stalin, who was the chief theoretician on the nationalities problem and the principle author of the party's genocidal policies in the 1930s. In *Marxism and the National Colonial Question*, published in the 1930s and still current in the USSR after Khrushchev's denunciation of the Stalin cult, since it is merely a compilation of Marxist-Leninist sophistries on the subject, Stalin wrote: "The peasantry figures as the basic army of the national movement.... Without the peasantry there can be no strong national movement. This is what we

mean when we say that the national question is, essentially, the peasant question.”⁵

Given this understanding of the peasantry as the “basic army of the national movement,” it was inevitable that Moscow’s national and agrarian policies in the non-Russian republics were thoroughly interconnected. This was true first and foremost in Ukraine, as the republic that was politically and economically the most important and that also had the strongest peasantry, both in numbers and in national potential.

Moscow had reason to be concerned about Ukraine. The first decade after the “civil war” had been marked by a vigorous Ukrainian national revival. The peasant majority of the Ukrainian people had demonstrated such dynamic national development that it would soon have been able to master and Ukrainize the cities and industrial regions, which had traditionally been dominated by Russians. Ukraine would then have inevitably demanded that the Ukrainian SSR become a genuine nation state.

It was Moscow’s fear of such a prospect that turned the union-wide collectivization and liquidation of the kulaks into a terrorist campaign of merciless destruction in Ukraine and the adjacent Kuban and Don regions. The political logic that dictated this approach to the Ukrainian peasantry was entirely in agreement with Stalin’s formula. If the peasantry was the “basic army of the national movement” and if any non-Russian national movement threatened the centralization of the USSR, then collectivization inevitably had to be transformed into an overthrow of the peasantry, and the “liquidation of the kulaks as a class” had to be aimed at liquidating the peasantry as the social basis of the Ukrainian nation.

Nevertheless, Moscow’s offensive against the Ukrainian nation was the first of two campaigns. The peasantry is the basic army of the national movement only in potential, because an army needs leaders, unity, and awareness of its goal. What makes a nation a nation is its own culture and its own state, which is created and developed primarily by a national intelligentsia that emerges from the masses. There can be no strong national movement without the peasantry in a predominantly rural country, but there cannot be a strong national movement without a national intelligentsia. For this reason Moscow’s blow at the Ukrainian peasantry also had to become a blow at the Ukrainian intelligentsia. This meant first of all a blow at that part of this intelligentsia which supported Ukrainian national aspirations and

was politically and socially opposed to Communism. After this, however, the blow also had to strike at the part of the intelligentsia that was not opposed to Communist ideology but that gave it a different political content. This content conflicted with Moscow's new nationalities policy of liquidating the "nationalities problem" in general and the Ukrainian national question in particular. It is in terms of this anti-Ukrainian policy that one should regard the events that culminated in the Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933.

The Campaign against Ukrainian Nationalism

Collectivization has often been assumed to be the primary cause of Ukraine's tragedy in 1933. But after five decades of difficult national and political experience for the Ukrainian people in the USSR, and particularly in light of current developments in Moscow's policies toward Ukraine and Ukrainians in other republics of the USSR, it becomes clear that neither collectivization nor the liquidation of the kulaks was the prime cause of the tragedy. This in no way contradicts the fact that it was these two actions that made possible the Ukrainian tragedy, and in this sense they were its first two acts. But the first two acts were still part of the general tragedy of the whole USSR, as the Communist Party introduced its totalitarian ideals. The third act, however, was strictly a Ukrainian matter. It was the realization of a specifically anti-Ukrainian plan, implemented in the interests of Moscow's overall plan for the USSR.

Both the party, in its official interpretations of those facts of the tragedy that it cannot conceal, and anti-Soviet Russian spokesmen reduce the tragedy to these general socio-political points and arguments. Moscow officially states that there were "great difficulties" in the process of implementing the "socialist reconstruction of agriculture" by means of "total collectivization" and "liquidation of the kulaks as a class." Since this took place "in conditions of fierce class struggle" and "hostile resistance by the kulaks," these very kulaks and the poorer peasants whom they incited with their "counter-revolutionary sabotage" of the collectivization plan supposedly caused "food-supply difficulties" in "scattered areas." Russia's anti-Soviet spokesmen use this scheme a little differently, showing it in a bad light and playing down the Ukrainian tragedy as if it were simply part of an "all-Russian" one.

This scheme has no basis in reality. The collectivization plan was implemented for the most part by 1930 in Ukraine and the Kuban and Don regions, and by 1933 the collectivization process was completely finished. The liquidation of the kulaks began in the autumn of 1929 and was completed by the end of 1930. In addition, by 1932 a special campaign of "uprooting remnants of kulak elements" had been carried out. Labelled "kulak henchmen," all opponents of collectivization were eliminated. Thus by 1933 there were no kulaks or even "kulak elements" left in the villages of Ukraine, the Kuban, and the Don.

By 1933 the Ukrainian peasantry was for the most part already collectivized and was no longer resisting the collective-farm slavery in which it now found itself, for without the pitiful wages that the peasants earned in the collectives they would not have been able to survive. When this completely collectivized, "socialist" peasantry fell victim to Soviet genocide, this was obviously not simply a matter of "difficulties in implementing the collectivization plan" or even of "fierce class struggle," because an identical collectivization plan, also accompanied by "class struggle," was implemented at the same time on ethnically Russian territories, but without producing a catastrophe like the one that took place in Ukraine, the Kuban, and the Don, with their sizeable Ukrainian populations. The issue, then, lay in the different plan that Moscow adopted for Ukraine and for the Ukrainians in other parts of the USSR, a plan that was based on completed collectivization.

The nature of this plan and its accompanying struggle is explained in no uncertain terms in official Soviet pronouncements on the political events of 1933 in Ukraine. For example, in summarizing the consequences of this operation, the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of Ukraine, which took place in January 1934, immediately after the genocidal famine, stressed difficulties in the nationalities problem and in the implementation of the nationalities policy in Ukraine in the previous two years. The Congress declared in its resolutions, in the words of Pavel Postyshev, that "1933 was the year of the overthrowal of the Ukrainian nationalist counterrevolution" and that in that year the party had conducted the "Herculean labor of liquidating nationalist elements in Ukraine."⁶

As we know from the resolutions of the party in Ukraine, in 1933, when "local Ukrainian nationalism" was announced to be "the principal danger in Ukraine," Moscow replaced Ukrainization, a policy of

compromise with Ukraine, with a blatant course of anti-Ukrainian terror.⁷ As the first and most decisive phase of this terror Moscow planned the artificial famine, which was intended to exclude from the power struggle the basic foundation of any "Ukrainian nationalist counterrevolution" and to solve the nationalities problem. In Ukraine, as in virtually all the nations enslaved by Moscow, this foundation was the peasantry.

All this, of course did not pertain to Russia proper or to the Russian peasantry: the ruling power in the USSR is Russian, and imperialistic Russian nationalism, according to Soviet theory, is synonymous with "internationalism." In Russia, collectivization and the liquidation of the kulaks were simply that. They brought with them agricultural "difficulties" and suffering for the Russian peasants, for in Russia too this stratum was enslaved in the collective farms, but the "socialist reconstruction of agriculture" there did not lead to catastrophe and famine. There were cases of starvation in isolated regions of the Volga and the Urals among peasants ruined by collectivization, but these cases were far from catastrophic.

The famine of 1933 in Ukraine, then, was not a consequence of union-wide socio-political changes, but rather a consequence of a special policy toward Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in other parts of the USSR. In Russia, the collectivization was limited to a liquidation of the peasantry as a social class independent of the state. In Ukraine, however, it was the starting point for the liquidation of the Ukrainian national question as such, based on the destruction of the peasantry as the principal source of Ukrainian nationalism. That this was the aim Moscow set out to realize in Ukraine, decisively and unscrupulously, is proven by the irrefutable connection between the artificial famine and the campaign against Ukrainian nationalism, which was equally catastrophic for Ukraine.

The Beginning of Ukraine's "Deukrainization" and the Crime and Punishment of Ukrainian Communism

The most obvious and most shocking fact about the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933 was, of course, the mass destruction of the Ukrainian peasantry in a deliberately organized famine. What made the tragedy a

national catastrophe comparable to the Holocaust, however, was the infernal union of genocide by starvation with a whole complex of political, cultural, and other forms of anti-Ukrainian terror, which as a whole had fatal historical consequences for the Ukrainian nation. For this reason, when we discuss the tragedy from our present perspective, we must place particular emphasis on this complex.

1933, the year that stands for the whole tragedy, was not only the year of the artificial famine that claimed as victims millions of Ukrainian peasants. It was also the year when a wave of terror swept up the Ukrainian intelligentsia, which was mostly peasant in origin. It was the year in which the terror was extended to the intelligentsia that had been formed in the postrevolutionary period. It was the year when Ukrainian writers and cultural figures, including Party and Komsomol members, committed suicide or were executed by firing squads. For this was the year when Moscow made a sharp change in its nationalities policy toward Ukraine, ending the Soviet national-cultural building and the policy of Ukrainization of the preceding decade. This was also the year of the first great purge of the Ukrainian cadres in the Communist Party of Ukraine for a "Ukrainian national tendency" in connection with the ill-fated Ukrainization, and it was the year when ruthless Russification was introduced and the Ukrainian language itself began to be displaced as part of the campaign to "deukrainize Ukraine as a nation."

The Ukrainian nationalist intelligentsia was a principal object, together with the Ukrainian peasantry, of the genocidal action implemented by Moscow in 1933. This fact is eloquently confirmed by the statistics concerning the losses suffered at this time in crucial areas of Ukrainian cultural and political life. Compared to the millions of Ukrainian peasants starved to death, the thousands of Ukrainian writers, scientists, and figures active in culture, education, government, politics, and agriculture who were shot to death and the hundreds of thousands who were imprisoned and exiled do not appear as such horrible quantities. But their percentage in the total intelligentsia was several times larger than the percentage of peasants who starved to death.

As an example it suffices to point out the approximate number of victims among those active in Ukrainian cultural affairs during the Ukrainization period of 1923-1933. Authoritative research into this period has concluded that Ukrainian cultural cadres, above all writers, diminished by some eighty percent in the 1930s.⁸ Most of them were

arrested, executed by firing squad, or exiled in 1933, in connection with Moscow's catastrophic change in its nationalities policy in Ukraine. The Communist Party and the Komsomol also experienced an enormous purge: forty-six percent of party members and forty-nine percent of Komsomol members were excluded and otherwise repressed in those "years of crisis."⁹ Again, most of them were victims of the same change in the nationalities policy toward Ukraine in 1933.

The spread of terror even into the Communist cadres in Ukraine, which elsewhere in the Soviet Union began later, after the assassination of Kirov, is a particularly important aspect of the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933. These cadres did not have any special national-political significance, although some of them were genuinely creative and valuable. Yet the purge of Communist cadres clearly demonstrates that Moscow's genocidal policy toward Ukraine had a national, rather than a social or ideological character. Thus Ukraine learned by its own experience in 1933, decades before any other country subject to Russian Communism, what the whole world nows now, after the experience of Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia: despite its professed internationalism, Communism is as much a national force as any other in this world.

As far as the tragic aspect of the events of 1933 in Ukraine is concerned—tragic according to the classical concept of tragedy, as penance by suffering for a fatal crime, the burden of which inevitably leads to catastrophe—then Ukrainian Communism, which was guilty of directing the fragmented forces of the Ukrainian revolution of 1918-1921 into the mainstream of "international" Communism under Moscow's control, figured as the principal hero in the tragedy of 1933. As in any authentic classical tragedy, the profound sense of the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933 lay first in the painful realization by the people of the fatal crime of Ukrainian Communism, which had been taken in by Moscow's demagoguery at a crucial time, and second in the punishment for this crime and in the bitter lesson to be drawn from it for posterity. This comprehension came about through punishment by the catastrophe of 1933, from which Ukraine learned a lesson, one that all Ukrainians must remember now. As a Russian proverb has it, "Who goes to Moscow carries his head." Or in the words of another, "Moscow does not believe tears." In the savage mercilessness of its imperialistic nationalism it knows no bounds and will not stop short of any crime.

7. The Political Consequences of 1933 and the Present Ukrainian Situation

The Continuation of Moscow's Anti-Ukrainian Plan in the Post-Stalinist Period

The contemporary policy of "merging" the non-Russian peoples of the USSR on the basis of the "international" Russian language, which amounts to eliminating them through merciless Russification, makes clear, as never before, the aim of Moscow's genocide in 1933 and the consequences of that genocide for Ukraine. In the present Ukrainian situation in the USSR we have nothing less than a continuation and intensification of the nationalities course that Stalin applied so savagely to Ukraine in 1933.

Until 1933, Moscow followed the "Leninist nationalities policy," which Lenin himself had formulated under the pressure of difficulties in the non-Russian republics and under the influence of non-Russian Communists. The policy was declared a guiding principle by the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party in 1923, and then reaffirmed by the Sixteenth Congress in 1930. According to this policy, the chief danger throughout the USSR was the great-power nationalism of the ruling Russian nation. As Lenin put it, "all talk about the advantages of the Russian language and culture is simply an attempt to reinforce the domination of the Russian nation."¹ Favorable to the desires of the non-Russian peoples, this nationalities policy could be changed only if the balance of power in the non-Russian republics were changed and local national forces were paralyzed and eliminated. This is precisely what Stalin set out to do in the 1930s, first in Ukraine,

as the largest and most powerful republic after Russia. As we have already indicated, Stalin's first concern was to paralyze and eliminate the peasantry, as the army of the national movement, and then to liquidate the national intelligentsia, including the national Communists. This he accomplished in 1933.

Thus the genocidal destruction of Ukraine by Stalin and Postyshev in 1933 was the first stage in the implementation of the nationalities policy that is being applied by the present leaders of the USSR, as a policy of liquidating the nationalities of the USSR and creating a unified Soviet nation. Today Moscow is able to treat the Ukrainian language as secondary, not obligatory even in elementary schools, not to mention universities, and to plan the Russification of the language (by eliminating differences between Ukrainian and Russian in spelling and grammar). It was able to come to this audacity only because of the preconditions created by the Stalin-Postyshev operation of 1933.

The first of these preconditions is the increase in the percentage of Russians in Ukraine (between 1926 and 1959 the percentage increased from 8.1 to 16.9; in 1970 it reached 19.4, and it is continuing to increase) and the decrease in the percentage of Ukrainians who speak their native language (according to the census of 1970, only 69.5 percent of Ukrainians spoke Ukrainian).² The second precondition is the destruction of the independent Ukrainian intelligentsia, as a source of resistance to Russification, and of all opposition in the Ukrainian party and government, which ceased to be Ukrainian in 1933. Only after liquidating political opposition even in a Soviet form was Moscow able to begin liquidating the nationalities question in the USSR by liquidating the nationalities themselves. In this respect, the present situation in Ukraine is a direct consequence of 1933, an epilogue to the Ukrainian national tragedy.

It should be particularly noted that the de-Stalinization and the partial rehabilitation of Stalin's victims begun by Khrushchev never touched the genocide in Ukraine in 1933. According to Khrushchev's thesis, which still determines the official line on permissible criticism (although criticism is no longer tolerated) of the Stalin cult, Stalin "fell from grace" in 1934, when he murdered Kirov and then began a mass terror against the Party. Thus 1933 has been placed beyond the pale of theoretically permissible criticism. Although the truth about 1933 in Ukraine occasionally broke through in Soviet Ukrainian literature in the late 1950s and early 1960s (in Oles Honchar's novel *Man and Arms*, for example, a character named Reshetniak relates how he lived

through the horrors of the famine in a Ukrainian village³), neither the party nor the government has ever made the slightest reference to Ukraine's tragedy.

On the contrary, whenever Stalin's pupils in the post-Stalinist leadership found it convenient to pose as non-Stalinists, they would caution Soviet citizens against dotting the i's in criticizing the Stalin cult and would emphasize that despite all the mistakes Stalin made after 1934, under his leadership the Party achieved collectivization and smashed the class enemy, including, of course, "bourgeois nationalists." Thus the events of 1933, which Soviet propaganda continues to call "difficulties in collectivization and the class struggle," were for Khrushchev and the present Soviet leaders "wonderful accomplishments," for which Stalin must be lauded.

The Rehabilitation of the Stalin-Postyshev Genocide in Ukraine and the "Utilization of the Corpses" of the Ukrainian Victims

Khrushchev's de-Stalinization was limited from the very beginning to a review of those crimes of the Stalin period that were harmful for the Communist Party, and there has been no reexamination or de-Stalinization in the nationalities policy. On the contrary, the Stalinist heritage has been aggrandized and strengthened. It is significant in this respect that the only work by Stalin to be republished since his downfall is *Marxism and the National-Colonial Question*. Although the Soviet nationalities policy is now called "Leninist" instead of "Stalinist," there is no question of resurrecting the resolution of the last party congress under Lenin (the Twelfth) about Russian great-power nationalism as the chief danger in the USSR. Instead, Stalin's position on the nationalities question at the Seventeenth Party Congress is consistently stressed, even though, according to the theses of the Twentieth Party Congress, the Seventeenth Congress signalled the appearance of the "personality cult."

Even more significant is the nature of the rehabilitation of Stalin's victims in Ukraine. Although some victims whose deaths were connected with Ukraine's tragedy in 1933 were rehabilitated, what we have is not a real rehabilitation, a complete exoneration, but what might be called a "utilization of corpses." The murderers used the victims' name in their own interests without even mentioning how and

why the victims had been tortured, murdered, or forced to commit suicide. The achievements for which the victims were destroyed continue to be condemned and the terrorism against the victims continues to be justified.

Most of the post-Stalinist rehabilitations were of Communists, yet there was no question of rehabilitating those Ukrainian Communists who were destroyed in 1933 for defending Ukrainian interests. There is no question, for example, of rehabilitating Shumsky, Khvylovy, and the hundreds who were executed for alleged membership in organizations fabricated by the secret police, such as the Konar-Palashchuk case, the Ukrainian Military Organization, and other "nationalist"—or even "terrorist" centers. The cynical political concern that I have called utilization of corpses has extended to a rehabilitation of Skrypnyk. But the rehabilitation applies only to those activities for which he was not criticized—his role in Moscow's conquest of Ukraine after the Revolution under the false flag of internationalism. Skrypnyk's activities during Ukrainization, with which he partly compensated his previous crimes against Ukraine and for which he paid with his life, have not been rehabilitated. On the contrary, they have been attacked as Ukrainian nationalism, and the Russification that Skrypnyk opposed has been stepped up.

To stifle any thoughts that there might be a review and censuring of its genocidal policies in 1933, Moscow completely rehabilitated Postyshev, Stalin's regent in Ukraine, and even renewed the cult of Postyshev that it itself had created. The rehabilitation of Postyshev in 1962, shortly before the thirtieth anniversary of the Ukrainian tragedy, has its particular significance today. It is an insult to the millions who were starved to death or shot under Postyshev's bloody command, and it is a clear demonstration that the genocidal policy begun by Moscow in 1933 continues unchanged.

The homage that Postyshev receives today has another important aspect. As Stalin's first viceroy in Ukraine, Postyshev was assigned to complete the genocide and to liquidate all opposition from the Ukrainian Communists. Having carried out this assignment, Postyshev was himself murdered in the torture chambers of the Kremlin. His replacement was none other than Nikita Khrushchev, Postyshev's fellow student in the school of Stalinist crime.

The years when Khrushchev ruled as viceroy in Ukraine were no less bloody than the Postyshev reign. These were the years of *Yezhovshchina*,* when hundreds of thousands of innocent Ukrainians were

arrested and deported, when mass executions were carried out in Vinnytsia and other known and unknown places, and when even the Ukrainians in Moscow's puppet regime were destroyed. These were also the years of World War II, when Ukrainians were sent without arms to be slaughtered by the German army and when they were murdered in NKVD-MVD torture chambers for "betraying" Moscow. Finally, these were the years of still another famine in Ukraine—the famine of 1946, which was caused not only by the ravages of the war, but also by Moscow's merciless robbing of Ukraine. All this took place under Khrushchev's leadership. By the gangster law that led Stalin to destroy Postyshev, Stalin was forced to go to his grave bearing all the responsibility for the Kremlin's crimes, so that his pupils could use new methods, in new conditions, to continue his criminal activities.

New Methods of Eliminating Ukrainians from Ukraine and the Conclusions from the Tragic Experience of 1933 for Ukrainians Today

In the decades that have elapsed since the tragedy of 1933 much has changed in the world and in Ukraine. The tactics of Moscow's anti-Ukrainian policies have also changed. Khrushchev and Brezhnev substituted Lenin's coat and tie for Stalin's police uniform. The expression on the dull Moscow mug has also changed, and Lenin's cynical smile has replaced Stalin's scowl. Because all terror has its limits, the terrorist regime has changed its appearance, having achieved its end, and has now assumed a pose of legality.

But the essence of the anti-Ukrainian policies has not changed. Arrests and deportations to hard labor in Siberia are becoming more common. Even more people are sent—as "volunteers," of course—to construction sites in Siberia, where they do not perish as their predecessors in the 1930s did, but where they are nonetheless condemned to a sure national death, because the Ukrainian language and all contacts with Ukrainian cultural life are severely forbidden. More and more Russians are being brought into Ukraine, where schools, theaters, and newspapers are made available for them. Thus Brezhnev and Shcherbytsky are conducting the same anti-Ukrainian policy as Stalin, Postyshev, and Khrushchev before them.

In his "secret speech" about Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress Khrushchev himself admitted that Stalin had hoped to deport the entire Ukrainian nation to Siberia. "The Ukrainians escaped this fate," commented Khrushchev, "only because there were too many of them and not enough room to deport them to."⁴ Khrushchev, as the executor of Stalin's plans for Ukraine can certainly be believed here. But one cannot believe that after the death of Stalin and all the changes in the Kremlin leadership Moscow has renounced its goal of ridding Ukraine of the Ukrainians.

The plan has certainly undergone some changes, to accomodate a longer period and new methods. The post-Stalinist nationalities program of the CPSU, which calls for the "merger" of the non-Russian peoples with the Russians, has been made dependent on the construction of Communism in the USSR, which in this period of peaceful coexistence and détente with the West Moscow plans to accomplish within several decades. If the West gives Moscow as much moral and economic capital as it did in Stalin's day, then Moscow will not stop at anything to carry out its plan.

Yet Moscow's success in this venture will not depend solely on Moscow itself or on the West's attitude. The chief factor that makes Moscow's plan unfeasible is the resistance of the Ukrainians and the other peoples subjugated by Moscow. Their national consciousness, which Moscow has been trying to eradicate for decades, is certain to triumph over Moscow's criminal plans. In Ukraine, even after several decades of horrible genocide, national resistance has grown and strengthened. Moscow changes its methods of destroying the Ukrainian nation, but the nation's methods in its struggle for survival also change. Despite all its horrible consequences, the tragedy of 1933 has also had a positive aspect: it has taught all Ukrainians that Moscow does not believe tears and its promises cannot be trusted, no matter how "internationalist" and "fraternal" they may be.

Given their present desperate situation, Ukrainians are forced to repeat hollow words about "internationalism" and "friendship," adapting to conditions and using every opportunity to survive the national catastrophe until more hopeful times come. After the ordeal of 1933 and the subsequent decades, Ukrainians are no longer credulous believers in fine-sounding words. Today they know that durable deeds and not tears are needed to survive trying times. Moscow does not believe tears, but the "humane" West also does not believe them. Ukraine is no longer willing to accept the promises that Moscow or

any other foreign “benefactor” or “liberator” may make. Ukrainians expect liberation through their own strivings, because God helps only those who help themselves.

8. The Tragedy of 1933 in *Samvydav*

“The ashes of Claas strike at my heart.” Repeated frequently in Charles de Coster’s classic novel *Thyl Uhlenspiegel*, this phrase has become proverbial and refers to an obligation that lies on the conscience of descendants of those who died at the hands of an enemy and are demanding revenge. Thyl Uhlenspiegel carries around his neck a small sack with the ashes of his father Claas, who was burned at the stake by inquisitors. Thyl swears to avenge the murder and to devote himself to liberating Flanders. “The ashes of Claas strike at my heart,” he says. “Death rules over Flanders, mowing down the strongest men and the most beautiful girls. The rights of Flanders have been trampled, her freedom has been taken away, and famine gnaws at the country.... If we do not come to the aid of Flanders, she will perish.”

For the Ukrainians who have come after the generation that was decimated by the famine, memories of 1933 have become like the ashes of Claas. “Forever be cursed he who forgets 1933.” This cry of anguish, composed by the people themselves in that year, has been indelibly etched in the minds of those who survived the Holocaust. Since then their cry has emerged again and again in the minds of those who cherish the Ukrainian historical consciousness, striking at their hearts as a painful reminder and giving the Ukrainian conscience no rest.

This is true above all of those young Ukrainians who began a new

national revival during the post-Stalinist "thaw" of the early 1960s. In 1959 the lawyer Levko Lukianenko wrote a Draft Program of the Ukrainian Workers' and Peasants' Union. The program is described in Ukrainian *samvydav*:

[It] subjected to sharp criticism the policies of the party and government during the famine of 1933-1934 and the mass repressions of the 1930s in the eastern provinces of Ukraine.... [It] subjected to criticism the policy toward the peasants, who suffer from social, political, and cultural oppression and whose situation does not differ from that of the serfs in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The national policy in Ukraine during the whole period of the Soviet regime was subjected to particular criticism.... On the basis of Ukraine's situation it was concluded that for the normal development of the Ukrainian nation and its statehood Ukraine must secede from the USSR, in accordance with Articles 14 and 17 of the Constitutions of the Ukrainian SSR and the USSR, and become a completely independent state.¹

Throughout the 1960s the memory of the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933 disturbed the conscience of that generation of Ukrainians known as the "sixtiers." This unrest was sensed both in the *samvydav* poetry of the period—from Vasyl Symonenko to Mykola Kholodny—and in political writings—from Ivan Dziuba to Viacheslav Chornovil. For Ivan Dziuba, whose *Internationalism or Russification?* examined Ukraine's national problems, 1933 was a central concern. In a chapter titled "Ukrainization and Its Repression" Dziuba describes the reversal in Moscow's nationalities policy and the ensuing anti-Ukrainian repressions of 1932-1933:

In 1927 the Russian nationalist deviation was condemned. And in 1932 Stalin sharply reversed this and sent his trusty men (who had quite likely belonged to the same Russian nationalist deviation group) to Ukraine ostensibly to exterminate "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism," but in reality to eradicate all manifestations of Ukrainian nationality, national life and culture, and to liquidate educational and scientific cadres. Up to that time people had boasted of the successes in Ukrainization, but then it

became fashionable to vaunt the annihilation of Ukrainian culture, to report the number of liquidated scholars, writers, etc.... Almost the whole of the Ukrainian culture was revealed to be "counter-revolutionary" (as in certain later times "unrewarding"). This is why scholars and writers of world renown, hundreds of talented people in all spheres of culture, and thousands upon thousands of the rank and file intelligentsia were destroyed. "At the same go" several million peasants were wiped out in the artificial famine of 1933. Let us bear in mind: this was long before notorious 1937....

It is hard to calculate and to imagine to what an extent the strength of the Ukrainian nation was undermined and how catastrophically its cultural potential was lowered. And after this, how many pogroms followed....²

Yet in the 1960s, when the campaign against the Stalin cult was still fresh in memory, the younger generation of Ukrainians manifested its resistance to Moscow's anti-Ukrainian policies largely in loyalistic forms, and the *samvydav* of the period did not provide scope for a discussion of Moscow's crime against the Ukrainian people in 1933 in all its breadth and width. References to the famine were limited to allusions and passing references in the context of a survey of Ukraine's catastrophic postrevolutionary history. An example is provided by Ievhen Sverstiuk's essay "A Cathedral in Scaffolding," which deals with Oles Honchar's novel *The Cathedral*:

What does writing popular history involve? First of all it means swearing the most solemn oath to observe truth and objectivity, to depict accurately all the important events and people (without throwing out one word of a song), to write down everything preserved in the people's memory—through the famine of 1933, the plague of 1937, the fire of 1941-45.... I believe that, from all the heroic epos of its history, our people have managed to preserve only soulful songs and enigmatic legends. During the last half-century, while the world population has reached four billion, our nation has shrunk in numbers. It rose feebly after 1914-21, then, half-dead, after 1933 and again, wounded and injured, after 1945. Today it is exhausted and its natural increase is in doubt....³

The fatal role played by the famine of 1933 in the demographic decline of the Ukrainian people was considered in Ukraine in the 1960s. Dziuba emphasized the problem in *Internationalism or Russification?* "During the last decades," he wrote, "the Ukrainian nation has virtually been deprived of the natural increase in population which characterizes all present-day nations." Citing censuses from 1913 to 1959, all of which mention some 37 million Ukrainians, while the number of Russians has more than doubled, Dziuba writes: "Even if there had been no other alarming facts, this alone would have been sufficient attestation that the nation is going through a crisis. But there are countless other facts."⁴

1933 in the *Samvydav* Essay "Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the USSR"

Ukrainian *samvydav* openly spoke about the significance of the famine only after the anti-Ukrainian crackdown of 1972. The most serious study of the Ukrainian demographic decline that appeared in this period is "Ethnocide of Ukrainians in the USSR," by the pseudonymous Maksym Sahaidak, in the *samvydav* journal *The Ukrainian Herald*. The author raises the question that Dziuba had brought up in 1965, often using similar phrases:

If we analyze the data of the 1970 census and ponder the figures, especially while comparing them with figures of previous censuses, then we cannot help but be alarmed at the fate of the Ukrainian nation....

In 1913, on the eve of World War I, the population of that part of Ukraine which was under Russian rule totaled 35.2 million.... According to calculations based on Soviet statistics, there were 35 million Ukrainians in the Russian Empire in 1913. The entire Ukrainian population of the U.S.S.R. in January 1933 was 32 million. In 1939 the population of the Ukrainian S.S.R. fell to 31 million.

What happened to Ukraine? Maybe the Ukrainian people had lost their capacity for life, the ability to propagate? No! The statistics point elsewhere. The average figure of natural population in 1920—31 was 22 per thou-

sand people. The peasant population during the years 1933 to 1938 decreased by five million; in this same period, the urban population increased by four million. We thus have a deficit of one million people. One could assume that four millions peasants had migrated to the cities (although in that case the mystery is what happened to the missing one million people). But this [assumption] is incorrect, because if that were the case, then there should also have been an increase in the percentage of Ukrainians in the cities, inasmuch as the population of the Ukrainian villages had diminished. In the thirties only one tenth of the Ukrainian population lived in the cities. On the other hand, the percentage of Russians in the cities did not decrease, but increased, notably in the large industrial centers, as for example in the area of the Donbas, where [the percentage of Russians] was the highest. The numerical growth of the cities was, therefore, due not to the influx of Ukrainian peasants, but to the flow of Russians from the Russian S.F.S.R. Data on migration bear this out. Having made the proper calculations, we come to the conclusion that Ukraine lost nine-ten million people between 1931 and 1938.

An average population increase per thousand people between 1933 and 1938 was as follows: urban population: + 73.2; non-urban population: -37.4.... Where did millions of Ukrainians go?

Forced collectivization was accompanied by mass destruction of the more prosperous group of peasants, as well as by the deportation of a sizeable number of *kurkuls* and *semi-kurkuls*. The right to include peasants in the latter category was given to the so-called village activists—criminals, fanatics, adventurers, and opportunists who wished to profit from the misfortune of others.

Just in the first two months of 1931, 300,000 inhabitants were shipped out of Ukraine to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and the Far North.

In 1932-33 a famine unparalleled in its dimensions raged in Ukraine, on the Don, in the Kuban, and in those areas along the Volga River where the majority of inhabitants were Ukrainian.

The singular characteristic of the famine of 1932-22 was that it was not a natural disaster, but had been planned at the top in the Kremlin. It was, in a manner of speaking, a political famine.

The harvest of 1932 was good throughout Ukraine, but the collective farm workers were not paid even one kernel of grain for a day of work. Moscow imposed on Ukraine an unbelievably high quota of sale of grain to the state. The centralized plan was carried out throughout all levels. It worked in the following fashion: a quota was set for a region, but regional officials pledged to deliver even more grain [than had been stipulated] and so on down the line to the [individual] collective farm. Naturally, there was no way the collective farm was able to fill the quota. As a result, armed detachments of authorized agents were sent into the villages to enforce the shipping out of all the threshed grain. If a local official protested against such measures, he was relieved of his post and later liquidated. Such was the case, for instance, with the first secretary of the regional party committee in Odessa Region.

The peasants were deprived of all means of existence. During the winter and in the spring of 1933, an unheard of famine flared up, sending to the grave those millions of Ukrainian peasants mentioned above.

People, driven to despair, went mad and turned to cannibalism. At first, such cannibals were shot on the spot, but later they were thrown into concentration camps. Cordons of troops prevented the peasants from entering the cities; those who broke through wandering about until they fell down on the street. Such people were loaded onto trucks together with the corpses and dumped outside the city. Others were hunted down by the militia and later put on trial (those who were not completely exhausted). The peasants were easy to recognize by their dress. Some escaped capture by buying, if they had the means, city clothes from laborers.

It must be said that the cities, especially those like Kharkiv and Kiev, were carefully cleaned of the starving and the dead peasants, so that foreign correspondents and political figures could be shown the clean streets, thus rec-

tifying the "slandorous fabrications circulated by bourgeois propaganda."

Entire villages died out. For instance, such villages as Chernechchyna, Moroshyna, Oleshchyna, all in Poltava Region died out completely; in the village of Veseli Shemrantsi in Kiev Region, two thousand inhabitants died. There were thousands of such villages in Ukraine....

We shall cite one more example to show the heights of hypocrisy and cynicism that were reached by the propaganda of the occupationary regime at that time in Ukraine. In the spring of 1933, at the entrance to the city of Kirovohrad stood a triumphal arch, and on it was the slogan: "We have entered the first phase of communism—socialism." Lying around the arch were the bodies of several dozen peasants who had died of starvation. This is the kind of socialism that was brought to the Ukrainian people by those who, "illuminated by the light of Lenin's ideas," were building "the most equitable" society in the history of mankind....

Forced mass collectivization initiated in 1929 dashed the peasants' illusions about the possibility of possessing the land that they had dreamed about and fought for, and this set them against the Bolshevik government with even greater hostility.

Stalin and his toadies had to make a choice: they could either forget the strategic plans of Russian imperialism for world domination and allow the enslaved non-Russian nations to determine their own fate, or they could carry on the policies of their tsarist predecessors and continue annihilating the non-Russian nations, primarily the Ukrainian people, since Ukraine had for centuries provided Russian imperialists with an economic basis. The latter [option] was taken....

To the deadly famine one needs to add the executions by shooting and the mass emaciation of the "enemies of the people" in prisons and concentration camps in the thirties. Unfortunately, their exact number is unknown, because Soviet statistics, supposedly the most progressive in the world, is silent on the subject, as if the cat got its tongue.

The average annual population growth in Ukraine bet-

ween 1897 and 1926 was greater than in the period from 1927 to 1938, regardless of the fact that World War I and the Civil War, both of which also destroyed large numbers of the population, occurred during the first period.

If one takes into consideration the fact that the latter period was "peaceful" and had no noticeable epidemics, then such destruction of a civilian population has been unknown in the history of mankind. Even Hitler's bloody fascism could not surpass Soviet "socialism" in the number of victims.⁵

A Political Document from the 1970s about 1933

The most eloquent evidence that memories of 1933 are like the ashes of Claas for present-day defenders of Ukraine's trampled rights is offered by the Memorandum of the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords, which was published as *samvydav* in Kiev on 6 December 1976. The signers of the document included Mykola Rudenko, a prominent Ukrainian writer, Levko Lukianenko, a lawyer who had recently completed a fifteen-year sentence and who has since then been sentenced to a second fifteen-year term, Oleksa Tykhy, a teacher, Mykola Matushevych and Mykola Marynovych, young scholars, Oles Berdnyk, a popular science-fiction writer, Ivan Kandyba, a lawyer, Oksana Meshko, and Petro Grigorenko, at that time the Moscow representative and now the foreign representative of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. Part 2 of the Memorandum, which discusses Ukraine's situation in the USSR states:

From the first years of Stalinist dictatorship Ukraine became the scene of genocide and ethnocide.... In 1933, the Ukrainian nation, which for centuries had not known famines, lost over six million people, dead by starvation. This famine, which affected the entire nation, was artificially created by the Government. Wheat was confiscated to the last grain. Even ovens and tool sheds were destroyed in the search for grain. If we add the millions of "kulaks" who were deported with their families to Siberia, where they died, then we have a total of more than ten

million Ukrainians who in the short span of some three years (1930-1933) were destroyed with premeditation. That was one quarter of the Ukrainian population. Then there was 1937, when hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian prisoners were shot. Later, there would be the war with Germany, which would destroy another seven or eight million Ukrainians. And after this, another war would begin; the destruction of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, * which took up arms against Hitler and would not put them down at Stalin's command. Along with the insurgents, innocent people were also killed.... If one looks at the last half-century of our history, it becomes clear why our native language is not heard today on the streets of Ukrainian cities.⁶

According to the court verdict passed against Mykola Rudenko in July 1977, he himself had this Memorandum supposedly "written, multiplied and distributed". One indeed can feel the authorship of this writer in the Document. In some places there are even outright repetitions of thoughts he had expressed in his own political and poetic *samvydav* works. Then there is the following fact: the chapter about Ukraine's national and political situation begins with a reminder about the genocidal crime of the Soviet regime against the Ukrainian nation in 1933. This was also the element which proved to be the leading motif in the works of Rudenko the poet in the very same year the Helsinki Memorandum was written.

Indeed, M. Rudenko's most prominent poetic work of this period, his poem, *The Cross*, which had just been completed, appeared in *samvydav* in February 1976, the very same year the Memorandum was written.⁶⁴ In the symbolic and philosophical images of this poem, a generalized representation has been given of both the Ukrainian tragedy of 1933 and of its perception by a Ukrainian of that generation of which Rudenko is a vivid representative.

Mykola Rudenko was born on 19 December 1920, to the family of a miner in the Donetsk Basin. Thus during the famine, he did not belong to that category of the Ukrainian people against which this genocide

*The Ukrainian Insurgent Army was formed as an underground resistance under German occupation in 1942. It fought against both German and Soviet forces under the slogan "Against Hitler and Stalin, for an independent Ukraine," and then continued to resist Soviet occupation until the early 1950s.

was directly aimed, either by age (he was only thirteen years old then) or by social status (an urban-industrial surrounding). Furthermore, he was brought up in the League of Communist Youth and then joined the Communist Party, even holding some responsible positions—until he was expelled in 1976 for participation in the Ukrainian movement for human and national rights. Even more significant is the fact that the historical memory of 1933 disturbs the conscience of Ukrainians of Rudenko's generation and social standing. It is as if this catastrophe became "the ashes of Claas," awakening the conscience of the descendants of the victims of the Ukrainian Holocaust.

The Cross is first of all a stirring poetic confession of the national, and also simply human, conscience of a Ukrainian Communist idealist, awakened by the memory of 1933. He finally comes to realize the crime perpetrated against his people in the name of Communism. He arrives at an identification with his nation that was crucified like Christ, and at the recognition of a higher Truth, which is God. The central figure in the poem is the symbolic image of a Communist commissar, who shares the blame for Ukraine's tragedy in 1933, which brought death to his mother and his native village. The poet also takes upon himself a part of the historical guilt of this commissar. (Rudenko himself was a political officer during the war.) He often identifies himself with the person he creates in the poem, and he experiences together with that person all the horrors of Ukraine in 1933. He watches with a commissar's eyes his native village, in which everyone has died and in which he has arrived exactly in the midst of the harvest of that year:

Well, my Commissar kept walking along,
He didn't ask which way to go.
Even the skylark high up in the clouds,
Greeted him as a native son....

Here he knows everyone well,
He hasn't forgotten anybody....
It was a year of deaths, of fatal hardships.
It was the year of 1933....

But behind the fences
There isn't a single soul.
The windmill keeps raising its vanes
On the slopes alone....

The smoke is not about to rise
From the black chimneys.
Thistles are blooming
All around in the yards.

And there it is, his home.
I have come, Mama!
The saplings in Father's orchard
had all withered.

The footpath to the well
is overgrown with thick couch grass.
The broken beehives have fallen apart,
The swarms are gone.

Even on the threshold,
Some weed is growing.
Could it be that
This is the end of the world?

Maybe I am just dreaming
A dream full of horror?
Mama! Do you hear me, Mama?
It's I, your son, Myron....

But his mother is not there—she has starved to death along with the majority of the villagers. And in the empty house, amidst the desolate village, scenes of the horrible reality torment Myron:

The rye is beginning to ripen,
But—and his hair stands on end—
Not many have survived
To see the new harvest.

The nights, oh these infernal nights!
He won't fall asleep till dawn.
Some woman's robust hands
are trying to strangle him to death.

Then his mother approaches
And says with sorrow,

"My son, it's time to get up,
The sun has risen over the field.

We cannot lie peacefully in our graves,
We, the dead, are unable to rest.
Who will care for the precious ears of grain
In the fields, my dear son?"

The little ones with their fair heads,
Totally emaciated, keep whining.
"Please, Mama, a crumb of bread,
A tiny piece of bread!"—and their cry is dying.

And where the collective's pantry stands,
Khrystia, a widow gone mad.
Comes running on the porch in the morning
And starts dancing her cannibal dance:

"Why, I slaughtered my children,
I cooked them before sunrise.
I prepared some jellied meat
For the tractor driver, that brave man."

And further, there are still more depressing facts: the cruel and outrageously lying radio broadcasts; the masquerade of filming the "happy and joyous life" of villagers who had just been brought in great numbers from Russia:

That night Myron became gray-haired:
In a hundred households he alone was alive.
Only the loudspeaker was balking
Dog-like about "the new way of life."

And a famous poet—in that fateful moment
With his words, like with clubs
Kept driving the people "into one grave:
We shall, we shall destroy them!"

Myron is walking on, looking like one
Just taken off the cross, the poor fellow.
And there he hears a dog barking—
Maybe the house there isn't empty after all?

A cart is standing in the small backyard,
Behind the barn there are stacks of corn.
And a pretty girl, a gorgeous beauty,
is bringing pies out of the home.

A table is set
And on it there are brandy, salt pork and pickles.
A peasant in bast shoes
Is unfolding the straw on the cart.

He starts for the house with a *samovar*,
On the porch he stops trying on a straw hat.
—"Hey, you there! A *samovar* is good for nothing:
That's Russian, not Ukrainian style!"

Who said this? Whose voice
Has Myron heard through the window?
As if the sky burst:
Why, a film is being made here!

All of a sudden, everything becomes clear:
They have brought a bunch of people from Russia,
Dressed them in Ukrainian costumes,
And seated them at the tables.

As if to say: Let the enemy's gang
Not raise a maddening noise
That Ukraine is on the brink of death,
There is no famine, there is none!

Here, you see, already the bosses are coming
To taste the pies and the cakes.
The yard is packed with people,
All are non-local, all are strangers....

Countless glasses are shattered by tossing,
And the chairman of the collective himself
Babbles words of such a kind,
As if the man had lost his senses:

“We are going ahead boldly, victoriously!
We move like a thunderstorm!
If we cannot reeducate them,
We shall bury them.

And to say it straight,
This does not bother us, not a bit.
Let's put all the *khokhols** into one grave—
We shall, we shall destroy them!”

Then Myron goes to look for his mother's grave, having made a cross for it in order to honor her religious feelings, even though he himself is not a believer:

An old man took Myron,
To look for his mother's resting place.
But the grave could not have been identified
Even by turning the cemetery upside down.

Only the poplar trees know her whereabouts,
For peasant blood flows in them....
Myron picked up the cross and slowly
Walked away on the dewy path.

Although it was a moonlit night,
His soul was unable to enjoy
That dead light that was resting
On the roofs of the dead village.

“Do you hear me, Mama? Where, oh where are you?
Your son is coming to stand before your judgement.”
And, as if from the depths of the planet,
He heard the words, “Here I am!”

He stopped and listened, then again
He went to the church behind the village.
And repeatedly he heard a profound voice:
“I am here!” it sounded from beneath his feet.

**Khokhols*—a derisive Russian name for Ukrainians.

He walked for a long time. And at dawn,
When the steppe was still sleeping in the morning dew,
Myron, exhausted, fell down
On a Scythian burial mound....

Suddenly, somewhere on the horizon
There was the plaintive sound of the string.
Someone there, still alive, was playing on the *kobza**
And the echo was reverberating over the steppe....

Myron got to his feet.
But what's this? In the sparkling dew,
Someone was approaching him with the *kobza*,
No one else, but Christ, in person.

It is He, to whom my dear Mama prayed
For everybody, for the quick and the dead.
And only his *kobza* is somewhat old
As if it came from the campaigns that the *Sich**
undertook.

Then a dialogue takes place between Myron and Christ, the gist of which is contained in the following lines of the poem:

MYRON:

"Where is the truth? There are infernal tortures only,
Without any limit and without any end in sight.
The people reach out to you with outstretched hands,
But you lift up your eyes to your Father.

What have you given our unfortunate Ukraine,
What kind of freedom, what kind of blessing?
We keep looking for goodness, as if for a needle in a
haystack,

Yet in our lifetime we find only evil....

**Kozba*—an ancient Ukrainian lute-like instrument.

*The *Sich* was the main camp of the Zaporozhian Cossacks in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Situated on an island in the Dnieper, it became a symbol of the Ukrainian struggle for freedom.

You tell us about the eternal blessings of Paradise,
And we believe in your graciousness.
Meanwhile, the mother devours her small children,
And her heart hardens into stone...
Death reigns in my native Ukraine.
What offense did her sons commit?"

CHRIST:

"The deeds of your nation are immortal,
Since it—it is I....
A nation is God. And its people are cells
In a prophetic body which
You are incapable of seeing. It's a child's soul
And the mind that had outlined the purpose
Of the entire infinite universe,
So that we might live by it....

Such a nation,
Will not place anyone in bondage,
It won't kill the parents, nor will it enslave the orphans.

Stop to think: have the Ukrainians ever taken
Other nations in slavery? In whose land
Did they perpetrate brigandage?...
An honest belief in brotherhood
Was borne by them openly on their wise foreheads.

Take up your cross. Rest it on your shoulder
As a heavy yoke, and carry it.
For in it there are the screams of hungry children
And the dying voices of women.

In it there is faith, the prophetic call of the Word,
It is your banner, God's standard.
In it there is the true Ukrainian language,
Where each comma is a sacred grain....

Take up your cross. Carry it, Myron,
As I am carrying this *kobza*, a present from the
Zaporozhians...."

And a miracle happened: it wasn't God on his throne
any more
But a blind *kobzar** sitting on a rock.

And now both Myron with his cross and the *kobzar*, Christ's incarnation, are criss-crossing devastated Ukraine and with songs of the *kobza* strings they are awakening the immortal faith of the people in the victory of their truth, for which they had to suffer so long and which is the truth of God-Man, crucified on the cross:

The *kobzar* is walking, and at some distance,
Hiding tears in his eyes,
There goes Myron, with slow pace,
With the cross on his bent shoulders.

And the people are not astonished by them—
All of them are gloomy with worry:
All over in Ukraine, anywhere and everywhere,
There are only crosses, burial mounds and graves.

When they stop by a well
To get a drink of clear fresh water,
Little by little old men and young women
Assemble around them.

The blind *kobzar* plays on his *kobza*
And hums but does not sing.
And each one just wipes his eyes,
Unable to speak....

In the fumes of the hellish Gehenna,
All of them fall silent, all keep quiet.
And it's impossible to count the murdered ones,
All over in the villages there are countless graves....

**Kobzár*—an itinerant player on the *kobza*, usually an old blind man, who sang old ballads.

And yet the old cheer up the young,
Grandma cheers up her greatgrandson:
"If the strings of the *kobza* are alive,
The soul is alive too.

The rye will still yield its crop for us,
We shall survive our bitter plight.
A grain dies in order to come to life again
In the gold-colored spikes.

He who does not die shall not arise from death,
He won't start a new life.
All that's been fair since immemorable times,
In our nation shall once again come to life...."

O my Ukraine, with your dark brows,
My world of sky-blue and wheat!
For three hundred years now, Mother of mine,
You have been a milking cow.

You have such a gentle nature,
That even a loafer will milk you,
And then the same lazy hand
Will rake your manger bare of the rests.

But our faith in you is not extinct yet,
Our sacred confidence that such empty mangers
Shall turn into a crib for Christ,
Is not dead, not yet.

The poem does not end here. Myron and the *kobzar* find themselves in the hand of the NKVD, and while Myron is in prison, he hears the voice of Christ. It is coming from a cross, visible only to him, in the corner: "I am here. I am a prisoner." The poem also contains the author's conclusion about the contemporary political situation and an introduction, not quoted here, with an expression of the author's moral and philosophical standpoint. But the essence of the poem, its basic symbolical and philosophical content, can be found in what was quoted here. It can be summarised as a characteristically Ukrainian messianism. The nation is destined to carry the truth unblemished through all its Christ-like sufferings in captivity and in its struggle for

liberation. Liberation is identical with and inseparable from the victory of truth and goodness.

And one must say that this idea has something in common with that of the Jews. With its help they nurtured that strong belief in their special predestination. This idea brought the realization of their dreams of a new Israel as an embodiment of the ideals of truth and goodness. It was done by way of suffering and sacrifice and after centuries of captivity, oppression and persecution in their dispersion all over the world.

And the very Jewish Holocaust during the Second World War according to the scheme of the enemies of Judaism, was intended to bring about the end of the Jews, became the beginning of their rebirth. In the same way the memory of the Ukrainian Holocaust of 1933 has awakened in Ukrainians a belief in the sacredness of the Ukrainian nation's immense sufferings and sacrifices, a belief that these will inevitably culminate in a great rebirth in free Ukraine, a state in which truth and goodness will prevail.

NOTES

Introduction

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4. *Ibid.*, vol. 20, pp. 31-32.
5. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, pp. 116, 118, 246, 248, 250-251, 380-381, 503-504, 533; vol. 20, pp. 20, 22.
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7. *Ibid.*, vol. 20, pp. 28, 30-31, 32-33.
8. *Ibid.*, vol. 22, pp. 340-341.
9. *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 235.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 236-237.
12. *Ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 423. More on the same subject in vol. 8, pp. 231-235; vol. 9, pp. 439-446; vol. 10, pp. 40-43.
13. *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 237.
14. *Ibid.*, vol. 31, pp. 217-218.
15. *Ibid.*, vol. 31, pp. 242-243.

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