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FAMINE IN UKRAINE, 1932 – 1933 (on the basis of oral testimonies)

The historically known three famines in Ukraine of 1923 – 1923, 1932 – 1933 and 1946 – 1947 that have been carried out by Red Moscow were a planned criminal action against the Ukrainian nation. This fact has been substantiated by numerous documents and verbal testimonies.

However, even to this date, some falsifiers are striving to explain the famine of 1921 – 1923 and 1946 – 1947 as being caused by drought in southern regions of Ukraine – a fact that does not agree with real-life conditions. Ukraine is so geographically located that a dry season in some areas is always compensated by large precipitations in others and, therefore, can never be the cause of famine. There exists documental proof that during these hungry years bread (=grain) was exported from Ukraine.

The most terrible and most cruel famine of 1932 – 1933 was simply not talked about as it was an obvious political repression against the Ukrainian ethnos – genocide to which the world can not be indifferent because of its horrible nature. Even at that time grain was available in Ukraine – it was exported and even destroyed so as to starve the Ukrainian people.

Seventy years have already passed since that tragic time in the history of our nation, however, the wounds remain open ...

Anthony D.Smith, Professor of Sociology at the London University, defines in his work “National Identity” two phenomena of the destruction of the ethnos: the genocide and the ethnocide. Under the genocide, the author discusses such cases, when it is known that mass deaths of a cultural group have pre-planned ahead of time, and that the underlying cause of such intent was the existence of such cultural group. Anthony D.Smith defines ethnocide as “cultural swallowing-up and ethnic inter-mixing”.

Student Interviews of the 1932 – 1933 Famine Survivors

Both these methods of destruction of the ethnos of Ukrainians were applied in the 20th century by the Bolshevik government of Russia. There is no analogy in this world for such cruel crime against the Ukrainian people.

Of course, during the rule of the “Soviets”, the subject matter of the famine of the Ukrainians was taboo. Initial publications about the famine in Ukraine appeared abroad. One such book was the well-known work of Robert Conquest “*The Harvest of Sorrow*” (1993). [Translation from English edition: Robert Conquest. *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* – New York; Oxford, 1986 and others]. A series of documents was also published during the years of the Independence of Ukraine proving that the famine of the Ukrainian peasantry during 1932 – 1933 was a deliberately planned extermination of millions of innocent victims. Most of these were children and persons of advanced age¹.

At present, the most urgent task is to collect testimonies of persons who themselves survived the famine and witnessed martyrs’ deaths of their kin. Such witnesses were 10 – 15 years old at that time. They will never forget these events until they die. Their number, however, is steadily decreasing. When that time comes, we will have lost very a valuable source of information of oral history. But most importantly, present students and future historians can themselves realistically evaluate the truths and untruths and learn their own history from first sources.

Students of the History Department of the Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University gathered testimonies about the famine mainly in villages of the areas (= oblasts) of Kyiv, Cherkassy, Chemihiv, Zhytomyr, Vinnytsia, Poltava, Sumy and Kirovohrad. The students were using a program-questionnaire specially designed for that purpose. They were assigned to geographic areas predicated on their own origin or that of their parents or relatives

in order to make it easier to establish contacts and to open channels of communication. It is a known fact, that even to this day, fear is pervasive among the population. The majority is still very hesitant to give their first and last names to strangers, especially when they see that their comments are to be recorded on paper or by a recording device.

The survey was conducted by one hundred and fifty (150) third-year students and fifteen (15) second-year students. Each of them interviewed 5 – 10 persons. The overall number of those surveyed exceeds nine hundred (900) persons. The testimonies about the famine fall into two categories: the first is from the oldest persons, who themselves lived and survived it and remember horrors of these events, the second constitutes tales of parents, relatives and neighbours of the new generation that was born after the famine but who had lost relatives. The first category outweighs the second. The first-hand testimonies about the Famine in Ukraine are by persons who were 10 – 15 years old at that time and who are eighty (80) years and older at present.

Preliminary generalizations of the collected materials make it possible to uncover facts not heretofore known – versions connected with the Famine in Ukraine in 1932 – 1933. They also confirm and irrefutably prove the greatest crime in human civilization – extermination of a nation by means of martyrs' deaths. These testimonies also contain materials of oral history of the 1946 – 1947 famine, however, these are subject to separate publications and conclusions.

As to the causes of the famine – we have learned from oral recalls of the villagers (= peasants) who unanimously testify that in 1932 the grain harvest was good. “The harvest was not bad so that no one should have died from hunger. Any stored reserves that we had – the authorities took them away. They dug up everything, some beans, any barley, they rummaged in every nook and cranny...” “They are saying that the famine was planned because the harvests were good” (village of Bokhonyky, oblast' Vinnytsia). The oral testimonies contain two major fundamental versions as to the causes of the famine. The most widespread assertion is that “at that time they especially made the famine in order that Ukraine die out ...” and “Stalin did that deliberately in order for people to die out, to starve, and so that they would more readily join the collective farms...”, “It is that accursed torturer Stalin who caused the Last Judgment”. However, there are cases that people think that “in principle, it was the locals that caused the famine, the ones on top did not know anything about it”. But there are not too many such latter opinions. An example of the testimony from a village in the Kirovohrad oblast: “There were such “buksirs”. They went from house to house and took everything: beans, barley, corn. They even rummaged in baking ovens and took everything, everything. Even clothes. It was an organized gang. We knew them very well, because they lived like street people, and were lazy and stupid, did not do anything, they only robbed ...”

It would be appropriate to mention that, at that time, a new terminology came into use; strictly popular names of representatives of the government, who used particularly violent tactics against the population. Thus, in some villages of the surveyed oblasts, there were local denominations that reflect the flavour of that time. There names of such types are *obkhodchyky* (because they came back to the house several times in a month), *komsomols*, *activists*, *brigadists*, *party-men*, *murderers*, *komisia*, *gang*, *red broom*, *komizans* (from *komnezamy*), *strikers* (because they used steel rods and dug everywhere to find food), *collectors*, *red gangs*, etc. Here are some testimonies: “There were also those “party men” – the devil with them – they were your own kind. They even swept crumbs off the tables.” (Village of Krasnosilla in the Cherkasy oblast’).

According to the testimonies of living witnesses, the brigades made their rounds starting in autumn 1932 and also in winter. When they saw that someone was not swollen with hunger they returned time and time again and always searched for hidden food stores. As a rule, they came in groups of seven to ten men so that any resistance was impossible especially since so many men have already been arrested beforehand. These “brave men” dealt mostly with women and children. Petro Luchko, (born in 1924) from the village of Pzpruddyz of the Rokytyah region, Kyiv oblast’ testifies as follows: “In the years 1932 – 1933 there was artificial famine in Ukraine. There were special brigades – “red teams” who shook out all bread. Even the head of the collective farm went along with them People were beaten and seated on hot pans, while being interrogated as to where they were hiding bread. Took away cows and horses and starved them to death.”

Here is a testimony from village of Mala Vyska from Kirovohrad oblast: “They were searching for bread (grain) and when they could not find any they then took anything that they could lay their hands on – clothes, embroidered towels... We were calling them gangs because quite often, in order to find out where the grain was, they beat people mercilessly.

As told by eyewitnesses from Kirovohrad, the “buksirs” were conducting the searches: “My mother had money hidden in her hair-braids which they found and took away.” Here is a testimony of Halyna Pavluj, (born in 1912) from village of Kyselivka, Nosivsky region, Chenihiv oblast’: “They arrested my father because he did not pay up all demands. Mother was left with four children. She begged for alms. Mother wept into the cradle of little Havrylo. She put some grain under her skirt. They found it and took it... With their sticks they checked out all walls and shelves.”

There are very many examples of such atrocities. They did not spare the old or the young – contrary to the traditional moral behaviour of normal people. Subsequently there followed something of a mass dulling-off, an indifference and hatred.

One can find among the tales that some people saw in the exploited ones as semi-slaves. They saw it as “that accursed Stalin ordered to punish us poor folks because some did not want willingly join the collectives” (village of Mykhailivka, Chernihiv oblast’). It does not occur frequently, but one meets cases as if there is a justification for the actions of the komsomols. Here is a testimony from the Kirovohrad oblast’: “The komsomols went around in order to take away anything that was edible. If they had smart parents they were told that they, the komcomols should pretend not to see anything in the house – to look around and to leave. They were ordered to go around – if not – they would be considered enemies of the people. Besides, they had education ...”

Still and all, most accusations are against the “local crooks, thieves”.

The authorities stooped to such methods as bribing individual persons and setting up one person against another. “Already in winter, when people started swelling from hunger, it was announced that if anyone lets it be known who has hidden grain, that person will receive a portion of the found grain.” (Hanchenko, born in 1915, Nosiv region, Chernihiv oblast’).

People suffered from poverty from 1929 – 1930 on, but the real famine started during the cold autumn of 1932. The first action was directed to search, to help, primarily by honest means. They took out of the houses almost all of their clothing, the kerchiefs, embroidered towels and went to Russia and to Byelorus’, where there was no famine, and tried to barter away their belongings for food. These themes are repeated in the tales of eyewitnesses. As testifies inhabitant (born in 1905) from the village of Popravka, of the White Church region, Kyiv oblast’: “My husband went to Russia to exchange clothing for food. He took away all our clothing. He brought back a pud (35 lbs.) of potatoes, flour. At that time, many people from the village travelled that way. When Semeon went away for the third time, nobody who went with him, came back. So the three of us were left: Wasyl’, Sonya [children] and myself. I and a cousin worked in a closet all winter long. We used to stuff into the boots all kinds of grass ... and my little Wasyl’ died and how Sonya cried ...”

The non-return of the husband and of others who went away to exchange clothes for food meant their physical destruction. There are constant testimonies of many persons about the elimination of their relatives. What is more important, even if a few were lucky enough to return, even then their successful barter was doomed to the arbitrariness of the authorities. Natalia Tutyk (born in 1923) from the village of Zaprudya, Rokytnyansky region, Kyiv oblast’, testifies as follows: “After we were disenfranchised, my father went as far as Kherson to exchange kerchiefs for a pud (16 kg) of flour. He brought back the flour, but the local “collectivisators” took it away.”

They also interrogated children. Natalia Tutyk witnesses: “I used to come back from school and the “strikers” (those who forced people into collective farms) asked me where my father was hiding the buckwheat. I told them that I did not know. It was hidden in the attic, mixed in with chaff. Then the strikers took everything, chaff and all, to the last grain kernel ...”

Thus it became apparent that survival was impossible by means of barter of articles for food. However, in order to completely exclude such possibility, the authorities decided to take away all things that could be used for barter. Such peasant chattel consisted primarily of jackets, coats, (sheepskin) coats, embroidered towels and kerchiefs. All that was confiscated and carted away to communal storehouses where it was eventually wasted (“whistled away”) on vodka. Eyewitnesses testify to this, as for example, Sofia Zdoryk (born in 1925) from the village of Popravka, Bilotserkva region, Kyiv oblast’: “During the hunger people were stripped of their clothing and the “comisans” or “comizans” as they were called, put it into a storehouse. And there were such as Andronika Onyska, and others, who exchanged clothing for drink from the “comisans”. My mother told my father that he too should exchange something with them because he worked at the storehouse. But my father said did not want to because those were human tears ...”

In the fall of 1932 a second means of rescue was directed to escape to the city – but it was unsuccessful. According to the testimony of eyewitnesses: “Many people tried to move to other places but they were fined at the railroad stations and forced to return...” (village of Nosivka, Chernihiv oblast’). “A person could not leave the village without the passport (Ed. note: everyone had to have “papers”).” Even though the second chance was also unrealistic, since no one was let out of the villages, people tried to use it until their last breath. We thus have many attestations that most persons who died in spring of 1933 were found lying close to the railroad stations. They died, not having had the physical strength to reach the dreamt-of escape. Thus the iron ring of famine closed up on them.

The peasantry of the central and eastern oblasts of Ukraine was doomed to die. The means of survival could no longer adhere to honest rules. It became necessary to the theft of grain from the collective pantries but even that became almost impossible since, according to testimonies, “threshing floors, pantries and fields were protected by NKVD (secret police) officers.” For the theft of 3 kg of grain one was sentenced to prison, to deportation, as a rule, without any hope of return.

People frequently recall about a working “law of five [grain]ears”. An inhabitant (born in 1915) of the village of Makiivka, Nosivsky region, Chemihiv oblast’, recalls: “There was a law of the “five ears”. My father went to jail for it. And he never returned.”

However, at that time in many cases authorities did not bother to send people to jail – they simply killed them on the spot without any inquiry or trial. There are very many such attestations. Here are some examples: “They killed my son who carried away from the communal plot one water melon and one pumpkin. The supervisors shot them on the spot ...” (from the Kirovohrad region). Another witness from the village of Bokhonyky (Vinnitsia region): “Some man was so very, very hungry. He pulls into a bag some beet tops, those “comesans” caught him, killed, dragged him to a pit near the river. Thus no one even buried him”. Arbitrary courts and sentencing were typical occurrences of the day.

Based on numerous testimonies one can draw certain generalizations as to who had a chance to survive and did not go hungry during 1932 – 1933. These were primarily the managers of the collectives: the supervisors, group leaders, store supervisors, families of Red Army commandants. Theodosij Herasymenko (born in 1926) from the village of Baybuzy, Shpolansky region, Cherkassy oblast’ testifies: “I did not know hunger as such. My father was the head of the collective farm. There was plenty to eat. I was young at that time, I heard about the famine but was never hungry... We kept one cow, one pig, ate bread. We did not wear linen...” One must bear in mind that clothing such as shirts, petticoats, made from home spun-linen was worn by the majority of peasants (villagers) – local authorities could be differentiated in that they wore factory-made clothing. One inhabitant (born in 1927) from the village of Didovychi, Novohrad-Volyn’ region, Zhytomyr oblast’, relates: “My mother took me and my two sisters to our grandmother in the next village. One of her sons was a commandant in the Red Army and thus the authorities did not touch her or her house. Because of it, we re remained alive...” Another testimony from the same village: “Our whole family survived that period because my older brother Mykola worked in the granary of the collective ...sometimes he brought barley, sometimes flour...”

When villages were located close to a town or to large settlements, where there were sugar processing plants, distilleries, brick factories or other such facilities, people could sneak out at night to gather potato peels or leftovers. And when someone from the family worked in such factory, there was greater chance of survival. There are testimonies that those who worked in a factory lived better, because they received rations.

Thus, those who had access to food, constituted about one-fourth of a village. The other three-fourths were condemned to a slow, torturous death. Since all foodstuffs were taken away, all that remained is to eat things that were considered off-limits. There are mass testimonies to the fact that people ate wild and domestic animals and birds, cats, dogs, pigeons, sparrows, crows, mice, and animals that died in the collectives. In the spring they ate snakes and hedgehogs. Those who lived close to the river of South Buh (in the Podolia) caught fish from canoes. Fish was also caught in secret from fisheries and eaten raw so that it would not be taken away. Hedgehogs were baked alive in the ovens to get rid of their needles. An inhabitant of the village of Rozdolnoe, Nosivsky region, Chemihiv oblast’, says: “we baked a she-hedgehog in the oven, she had six little ones inside – there is nothing we could do, we ate them all”.

From plant life people ate tree barks, leaves and flowers of linden trees. One even baked cookies made from linden-tree flowers. They ate rotten potatoes that were gathered from the fields in spring, they ate pigweeds, cat tails, nettles, nightshade, cattle cake, steamed and ground-up chaff, roots of dogs’ grass, leaves of beets, flowers of white acacia, acoms, brewers’ mash, sugar-beet residue. A woman from the Kirovohrad region says: “children went to the (sugar beet) residue pit, scraped out the dry stuff and at home it was mixed in with grain sift-outs or with steamed chaff and baked into “motorzhenky” (nickname of cookies).

Nina Sloska (born in 1923), an inhabitant of the village of Stepivka, Kirovohrad oblast’, relates: “Our mother went away for food and perished somewhere. There remained three of us, me and two little brothers. We ate acoms, weeds ... we were swollen, a very smelly fluid oozed from our legs. There still stands before my eyes that aunt who did not give us bread, and they had plenty...”

A woman from the village of Stepivka, Kirovohrad oblast’, says: “When the green rye came out from under the snow in spring we baked scones from it – if we could steal the grain from the collective. We baked them for our sister because she was very ill ... Many were exiled to Siberia for stealing the green rye. Somebody squealed on us about it and my sister was so frightened that she died and the scones were given to the grave-diggers at the funeral...”

However, funerals according to the traditional rituals were conducted even less during the winter when people began dying en-masse. At the beginning the died in houses, died-out by whole families, and there was no one to bury them according to Christian rite. Some ethnographic surveys attest to the daily losses of people. It is known that there was a wide-spread superstition, that if there was a dead, unburied person in the village, one could not pickle vegetables, as they would not keep and would not be edible, because of bad taste and smell. As related by Hiakeria Prysiazhenko (born in 1928) from the Cherkassy oblast’: “Our father managed to buy some turnips for

pickling. We were dicing them and eating them because if mother left the farm and heard about a deceased one, – and if one hears about it to one cannot do the pickling...”

In some localities people were buried without any rites into gulches, into pits, into common graves in cemeteries, and into pits for potatoes or turnips. Wasyl' Tushchenko (born in 1926) relates: “My grandfather, grandmother, aunt died in 1933. One could not leave the [burial] pit, if one left it for a short time, someone else would have been thrown in...”

There are many testimonies to the fact that in the spring of 1933, when people started dying in droves, even those who lived but could not move, were thrown into the pits together with the dead. Some examples follow:

Liubov Kurinna (born in 1919), from the Cherkassy oblast', relates: “They were carting the dead to the collectives and threw them into the pit without any clothes and they still moved. Motrya Bakalyna, somehow, climbed out. This is how we met. I told her: “Motrya, you survived ... I myself saw how you were thrown into the pit.” She told me that after she clambered out, later some people gave her a little bread each and thus fed her back to strength. At that time were bodies were carted in by trucks (lorries), some dead, some still alive. People were saying that Torsin (?) was there on hot coals, that the earth, used to cover the dead was moving...”

Petro Luchko (born in 1924) from the village of Zapruddia, Kyiv oblast' tells: “There was a separate truck and two men designated to gather the dead. They used to get a loaf of bread for each dead person collected. They used to dump between 10 – 20 persons into the pit. They just threw them in without coffins. It happened that during one night three families died. The entire family of my aunts gave up their souls to God during one night...”

Andrij Hanchenko (born in 1915) from the village of Sofiiivka, Chemihiv oblast', recalls: “Over one third of people in our village died. The dead lay in houses, in the streets and nobody picked them up. When people started dying from hunger in masses, the dead ones were collected, carted off outside the village and buried there. For that those assigned to the task were given rations. I was tending cattle there. Two bodies of older men were brought when they started throwing them into the pit. Some were still alive...”

One more testimony from the Kirovohrad oblast': “A pit was dug next to the gulch and they were throwing them all, even the live ones. One of them (who did the dumping) said: “Close your eyes, because I am going to throw earth on you ...” A inhabitant from the village of Pryiutivka of the Kirovohrad oblast', (born in 1924) oblast' relates: “Five brothers and sisters from my family died of hunger. Almost the entire village died out. People were carted away to the cemetery every day...”

Mykhailo Prokopenko, (born in 1920) from the village of Krasnosilla, Cherkassy oblast', relates: “Stalin decreed to rob Ukraine, to take away the bread and sell it abroad and children died by the thousands. The barges, full of grain, were most probably drowned in the sea, because nobody would buy that grain – and they took everything away from Ukraine...” When he was asked how he knew about the barges, he answered: “I served in the Navy during the 40-s and there were sailors [serving with me] who did the drowning. We were sitting around after a bad dinner and were fantasizing of a fluffy flat bread, and somebody started talking about it, and then he came to his senses and begged not to tell it to anybody because he would be arrested...”

These testimonies are confirmed by archival data that while people were dying of hunger there during that winter there were wasted [lost] on the threshing floors of the collectives “350 puds [1 pud = 16 kg, – 35 lbs] of peas, as much buckwheat and other grains”. (The village of Khyzhnytsi, Vinnitsia oblast')².

Then followed, naturally, psychological disintegration and even, though rare, cases of cannibalism or infanticide of one's own children so that “that hey would not suffer”.

There was no census or records of the dead. The authorities destroyed any household accounting books. Some people managed to make it to the city railroad stations, where they abandoned their children. What happened to them – no one knows. People were afraid to leave their homes and did not let out their children.

The famine was never mentioned during the years of the Soviet rule; the dead were not commemorated, there were no markers, the crosses were not put up. Even to this day, they do not exist although symbolic crosses or plaques were put up in certain villages much later.

But do we have the right to forget about such a horrible, consciously planned crime, against the Ukrainian peasants? The entire world must know about it and pray for the millions of these innocently destroyed souls.

Therefore these documents and attestations of verbal history can only confirm the planned mass destruction of Ukrainian peasants by the Bolshevik rulers of Russia by means of blockade, violence and artificial famine.

However, reason refuses to understand such unheard-of cruelty. There occurred physical, psychological, morally-ethical destruction of the Ukrainian ethnos. It is absolutely essential that young people learn about it in all educational institutions of the world so that humankind should never again face similar fact of such martyrdoms. There shall also be lessons in many counties about the Famine in Ukraine – similar to the educational programs about the Holocaust.

Our tradition has a highly developed cult of the honouring of ancestors. It is, therefore, a sign of lack of respect for the dead, if there are no memorials in most villages of Ukraine. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary to erect

close to Kyiv a monument to all those who perished from the forced famine in Ukraine, – to properly honour these innocent victims by government leaders not only of our own country but also of other states of the world.

Only knowledge about the three famines in Ukraine can assure their non-recurrence. It is, therefore, essential to publish and to print, in large quantities, a textbook about the famines in Ukraine that would be available in each school and institution of learning both in Ukraine and also in Byelorussia and in Russia.

I consider it absolutely necessary that, it be made easier for the students of ethnography, to conduct recordings of verbal (oral) history – a polling of living witnesses of these tragic events in the history of our nation.

¹ Kolektyvizatsiya i golod na Ukraini: 1929 – 1933. – Kyiv, 1992; Golod 1921 – 1923 rokiv v Ukraini. Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv. – Kyiv, 1993; Sergijchuk V. Yak nas moryly golodom. – Kyiv, 1996; Chorna knyga Ukrainy. Zbirnyk dokumentiv, arkhivnyh materialiv, lystiv, dopovidej, statej, doslidzhen', ese. Uporyadkuvannya Fedora Zubanycha. – Kyiv, 1998; Yacshuk P. Portret temryavy. Svidchennia, dokumenty i materialy u 2-h knyгах. Kn. I. Kyiv – New-York, 1999; Bilokin' Sergij. Masovyj teror yak zasib derzhavnogo upravlinnia v SRSR. – Kyiv, 1999; Kulish Andrij. Genotsyd. Golodomor. 1932 – 1933. Prychyny, zhertvy, zlochynsi. – Poltava, 2000 and series of other publications.

² Zayava do Vinnyts'koi prokuratury vid instruktora Vinnyts'kogo mis'kbyuro "Soyuzpechat" Mel'nyka Myhajla // Derzhavnyj arhiv Vinnyts'koi obl. – Vinnyts'kyi mis'kyi viddil rob-sel'-inspektsii. Fond R-994, op. 1., spr. 528, ark.21.

Translation from Ukrainian by Martha T. Pelensky, PE (USA) Editing by Zenon G. Izak (USA) in tribute and homage to the victims and martyrs.

TESTIMONY, FAMINE IN UKRAINE, 1931 – 1933 (2003) IVAN J. DANYLENKO, SOMERDALE, N.J. USA

Our family lived in a small rural farmstead (khutir), near the villages of Svichkivka and Matiashivka – today Lubny region.

There were five children in the family, fifteen to one-and-a half years of age at the peak of starvation in 1933.

My earliest memory of the famine began when I was about six years old, in 1929. At this time several kulak's families, my uncle Yakiv's including, suddenly disappeared from neighborhood. Their property – dwellings, orchards, gardens – were promptly vandalized and left in ruin... Some of the kulak's families fled to large cities and towns, some were exiled; uncle Yakiv's family found refuge in Crimea, where he, sometime in 1931 or 1932, vanished. Rumors have it, that he was cannibalized...

After "dekulakization" food shortages became more acute. By about 1931 my farther made several trips to Kuban, bartering my mother's garments for flour. Soon, however, there were no garments left and the travel out of Ukraine was barred... Simultaneously, as the collectivization intensified and state quotas of grain kept climbing, food reserves grew scarcer and scarcer. In early spring of 1932 four of us children tried digging for frozen sugar beets and potatoes, left unharvested from previous year... In vain I tried begging for food from neighbors... Closed, silent homes only deepened my feeling of helplessness...

Later that year, after harvest, we tried to glean. Most of the time we were chased and whipped by overseerson horseback, our cleanings confiscated from us... As I think about it today, these "cleaning episodes", more than anything else, speak of a premeditated, planned attempts to starve the people. Not surprising, perhaps, that similar stories ("cleaning") took place also during 1921 and 1947 famines.

Here I should mention that my father owned four hectares of land and was classified as a middle class farmer (seredniak)... He opposed collectivization, refusing to the end to join the collective farm. Because of this, he was tried and sentenced to two years of hard labor (in Kharkiv). His verdict read: "Even though he is not a kulak, his appearance is that of a kulak..."

But the worse came late in fall of 1932: my father's property was confiscated and the family was evicted from the house. Fearfully, a neighbor (M.Karpenko) took us in for a few days until our family settled in a barn of the state farm (Velychkivka), where my father worked as a carpenter. In this cold, damp and dark place we spent five or six months, facing the most critical days of our lives. Tortured by hunger, weak, with skinny or swollen, watery bodies, hopeless and indifferent, all of us seemed to be ready for the "final act"... But it did not come... Miraculously, our family survived...

My maternal grandparents (Mykytenko) as well as an uncle died from starvation; uncle's wife was sentenced to seven years of hard labor in Siberia for cutting half ripe ears of wheat, trying to save her husband's life...

We endured these horrifying events in a total solitude, dispossessed and isolated from the world.

Валентина БОРИСЕНКО
Київ

ГОЛОД В УКРАЇНІ 1932 – 1933 РОКІВ **(за матеріалами усних свідчень)**

В статті за спогадами очевидців трагедії українського народу – голодомору 1932 – 1933 років, узагальнено матеріал переважно з центральних областей України. Спогади біля тисячі свідків голодомору в Україні засвідчують спланований геноцид урядом більшовицької Росії, направлений на знищення українського селянства.

Матеріали усної історії, зібрані студентами Київського національного університету імені Тараса Шевченка, підтверджують, що уряд червоної Москви здійснив проти української нації нечуваний в світі злочин, прирікши мільйони селян на мученицьку смерть.

Автор висловлює щирі вдячність добродійці Марті Пеленській за переклад статті на англійську мову та Зіновію Іжаку за редакцію тексту.