

Holodomor 1932-33

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Holodomor Facts and History:

The following is a chronology of events surrounding the "Holodomor"

Holodomor: approximate pronunciation: 'huh-luh-duh-more'

BRIEF SUMMARY

The term Holodomor refers specifically to the brutal artificial famine imposed by Stalin's regime on Soviet Ukraine and primarily ethnically Ukrainian areas in the Northern Caucasus in 1932-33.

In its broadest sense, it is also used to describe the Ukrainian genocide that began in 1929 with the massive waves of deadly deportations of Ukraine's most successful farmers (kurkuls, or kulaks, in Russian) as well as the deportations and executions of Ukraine's religious, intellectual and cultural leaders, culminating in the devastating forced famine that killed millions more innocent individuals. The genocide in fact continued for several more years with the further destruction of Ukraine's political leadership, the resettlement of Ukraine's depopulated areas with other ethnic groups, the prosecution of those who dared to speak of the famine publicly, and the consistent blatant denial of famine by the Soviet regime.

1917

The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin take power in Russia.

1922

The Soviet Union is formed with Ukraine becoming one of the republics.

1924



Holodomor Memorial (Kyiv, Ukraine)

After Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin ascends to power.

1928

Stalin introduces a program of agricultural collectivization that forces farmers to give up their private land, equipment and livestock, and join state owned, factory-like collective farms. Stalin decides that collective farms would not only feed the industrial workers in the cities but could also provide a substantial amount of grain to be sold abroad, with the money used to finance his industrialization plans.

1929

Many Ukrainian farmers, known for their independence, still refuse to join the collective farms, which they regarded as similar to returning to the serfdom of earlier centuries. Stalin introduces a policy of "class warfare" in the countryside in order to break down resistance to collectivization. The successful farmers, or kurkuls, (kulaks, in Russian) are branded as the class enemy, and brutal enforcement by regular troops and secret police is used to "liquidate them as a class." Eventually anyone who resists collectivization is considered a kurkul.

1930

1.5 million Ukrainians fall victim to Stalin's "dekulakization" policies. Over the extended period of collectivization, armed dekulakization brigades forcibly confiscate land, livestock and other property, and evict entire families. Close to half a million individuals in Ukraine are dragged from their homes, packed into freight trains, and shipped to remote, uninhabited areas such as Siberia where they are left, often without food or shelter. A great many, especially children, die in transit or soon thereafter.

1932-1933

The Soviet government sharply increases Ukraine's production quotas, ensuring that they could not be met. Starvation becomes widespread. In the summer of 1932, a decree is implemented that calls for the arrest or execution of any person – even a child -- found taking as little as a few stalks of wheat or any possible food item from the fields where he worked. By decree, discriminatory voucher systems are implemented, and military blockades are erected around many Ukrainian villages preventing the transport of food into the villages and the hungry from leaving in search of food. Brigades of young activists from other Soviet regions are brought in to sweep through the villages and confiscate hidden grain, and eventually any and all food from the farmers' homes. Stalin states of Ukraine that "the national question is in essence a rural question" and he and his commanders determine to "teach a lesson through famine" and ultimately, to deal a "crushing blow" to the backbone of Ukraine, its rural population.

1933

By June, at the height of the famine, people in Ukraine are dying at the rate of 30,000 a day, nearly a third of them are children under 10. Between 1932-34, approximately 4 million deaths are attributed to starvation within the borders of Soviet Ukraine. This does not include deportations, executions, or deaths from ordinary causes.

