



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on November 21, 2008

Remembering Holodomor: The Ukrainian Famine

Everyone has heard of the Jewish Holocaust carried out by the Nazis. It has been the subject of innumerable movies, film and television documentaries, novels, history books, and articles. The names of Nazi concentration camps such as Auschwitz, Dachau, Treblinka, and Sobibor are well known to school children and adults worldwide. They are synonymous with totalitarian terror and man's inhumanity to man.



However, few outside of Ukraine have heard of the Holodomor. It is not the name of a particular death camp like Auschwitz. It was a campaign of death and terror all across the nation of Ukraine, then under control of the Soviet Union. It was especially aimed at eliminating the small farmers of the Dnipro River region, a fertile and highly productive area of Ukraine that had long been known as "the bread basket of Europe." Seven to 10 million Ukrainians were forcibly starved to death, including up to a third of the nation's children.

In an effort to wipe out Ukrainian nationalism, as well as to destroy the resistance of Ukrainian farmers to collectivization of agriculture, Stalin, the communist dictator of the Soviet Union, sent troops to confiscate all food. Throughout whole regions the Red Army soldiers and secret police went door-to-door, farm-to-farm, taking all crops, all livestock, all poultry — down to the last grain, the last cabbage, the last chicken. Soviet troops then sealed off the borders to prevent the Ukrainians from getting out, as well as to prevent relief supplies and foreign eyewitnesses from coming in. Entire towns and villages starved to death.

During the month of November, Ukrainian communities throughout the world are commemorating the 75th anniversary of this monumental atrocity that touched every Ukrainian family. In Ukraine, President Viktor Yushchenko will open the International Forum — My Nation Will Live Forever, on November 22 in Kiev, as the culmination of a five-day commemoration that began on November 18. Attending will be government representatives from more than 40 nations, including the presidents of Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Macedonia, Georgia, Latvia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina. President Bush has named a delegation led by the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, William Taylor, Jr., to represent the United States.

Russia's President Medvedev Refuses to Attend

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev turned down the invitation to attend extended by President



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Yushchenko, denouncing the event as part of an ongoing campaign by Kiev to exploit a historic tragedy for "contemporary political ends."

"The thesis about the 'premeditated famine' — the genocide of the Ukrainians — is being strongly repeated," Medvedev said in a letter sent to Yushchenko. Medvedev went on to say that this fit into a pattern of policies by the Ukrainian government aimed at antagonizing relations between Russians and Ukrainians.

Also notably absent among the invitees will be Alyaksandr Lukashenko, the president of Ukraine's neighbor, Belarus. Lukashenko's iron-fisted regime has earned a reputation as "Europe's last communist dictatorship," and he has rarely deviated from the Kremlin line on foreign-policy matters.

In the United States, the U.S. House of representatives has passed a resolution commemorating the Holodomor victims. House Resolution 1314, introduced by Rep. Sander Levin (D-Mich.), passed the House by a voice vote on September 23. The resolution reads, in part:

Whereas in 1932 and 1933, an estimated seven to 10 million Ukrainian people perished at the will of the totalitarian Stalinist government of the former Soviet Union, which perpetrated a premeditated famine in Ukraine in an effort to break the nation's resistance to collectivization and communist occupation;

Whereas the Soviet Government deliberately confiscated grain harvests and starved millions of Ukrainian men, women, and children by a policy of forced collectivization that sought to destroy the nationally conscious movement for independence;

Whereas Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin ordered the borders of Ukraine sealed to prevent anyone from escaping the man-made starvation and preventing any international food aid that would provide relief to the starving;...

Whereas nearly a quarter of the rural population of Ukraine was eliminated due to forced starvation, while the entire nation suffered from the consequences of the prolonged lack of food;....

Resolved, That the House of Representatives solemnly remembers the 75th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine (Holodomor) of 1932-1933 and extends its deepest sympathies to the victims, survivors, and families of this tragedy.

The European Parliament and other national parliaments have also passed resolutions commemorating the Holodomor victims. For Ukrainians, this long-awaited recognition and remembrance has come not a moment too soon. The relatively few remaining survivors of the famine holocaust are rapidly dying off. And the nation does not want the memory of what happened during those horrific years to die with them. "It is the Ukrainian American community's duty to share this tragic page of history with the world and ensure that the catastrophe that befell Ukraine will never happen again," says the [Ukrainian Congress Committee of America](#), one of the leading groups organizing Holodomor commemoration events in the United States.

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Resources on the Ukrainian Famine

[*Harvest of Despair: The Unknown Holocaust*](#), a powerful documentary by director Slavko Nowitsky, includes photos and film footage of the Holodomor terror, as well as interviews with famine survivors and foreign eyewitnesses, including British journalist Malcolm Muggeridge.



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Other resources include:

[*The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*](#) by Robert Conquest

[*A Hunger Most Cruel: The Human Face of the 1932-1933 Terror-Famine in Soviet Ukraine*](#) by Anatoliy Dimarov, Yevhen Hutsalo, and Olena Zvyhayna

[*Execution by Hunger: The Hidden Holocaust*](#) by Miron Dolot

Photo: <http://www.archives.gov.ua/Sections/Famine/photos.php?35>



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