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The Holodomor: Death by Hunger

Marco Spann
mfsvdn@umsl.edu

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The Holodomor: Death by Hunger

Abstract

- ❖ The Holodomor was a man-made famine used by Stalin's regime against the nation of Ukraine. This deliberate famine was both politically and ethnically motivated for the purpose of progressing the Communist Revolution. Stalin believed there was a growing issue of separatism in Ukraine which threatened the unity of the Soviet Union. Stalin's regime used collectivization, a system of violent seizure of land, people, and resources, to boost industrialization within the Soviet Union as well as to terrorize Ukrainians into submission. The Soviet Union enacted strict censorship of the Holodomor, setting back conversations on it by decades. The attack on the Ukrainian nationality and ethnicity by the Soviet Union has had a lasting psychological and cultural impact on Ukrainians.

Introduction to the Holodomor

- ❖ Holodomor is the joining of holod, "hunger", and mor, "death", translating to "death by hunger".
- ❖ The Soviet-made famine in Ukraine took place between 1932-1933 and resulted in the deaths of around 3.9 million Ukrainians.
- ❖ After the start of the famine in 1929, Stalin's Regime began to implement collectivization throughout Ukraine, introducing impossibly high grain quotas in 1932.
- ❖ The Stalin Regime exacerbated the effects of the famine to put down resistance to Sovietization and collectivization.
- ❖ The Soviet Secret Police confiscated food from Ukrainian villages and deported families to Siberia.
- ❖ Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians were arrested for attempting to flee the famine in search of food.
- ❖ The system of collectivization also included mass expulsions and executions.

Why The Ukrainians?

- ❖ The Ukrainian revolution, starting in 1917, began a Ukrainian national movement of independence.
- ❖ A policy of Ukrainization in Ukraine that promoted the Ukrainian language and culture to solidify support for national independence was used by Stalin as grounds for severe Sovietization in Ukraine.
- ❖ Ukrainian nationalistic attitudes were perceived as a threat to the Communist Party, as they did not align with Stalin's goal of Soviet unity and sparked fears of Ukrainian separatism.
- ❖ The Ukrainian peasantry, wealthy Ukrainian farmers, labeled "kulaks," and Ukrainian intellectuals were seen as threats to the Communist Revolution.



A statue commemorating the victims of the Holodomor

Holodomormuseum.org



Soviet soldiers confiscating grain from Ukrainians

History.org.ua



Ukrainians fleeing their village in search of food

Education.holodomor.ca



A Ukrainian revolutionary demonstration in Kyiv, 1917.

euromaidanpress.com

Ukrainian Resistance

- ❖ Ukrainians resisted collectivization by hiding food when they were able to.
- ❖ Ukrainian peasants rebelled against the forced collectivization. These rebellions resulted in the deaths of hundreds of Ukrainians.
- ❖ Ukrainians also resisted Sovietization and censorship surrounding the famine by expressing themselves through art.
- ❖ This uncensored art was labeled "counterrevolutionary" work by the Soviet Union and was confiscated when discovered.
- ❖ Ukrainians also resisted by fighting against the erasure of their cultural identity.

Psychological Impact

- ❖ The Holodomor resulted in transgenerational trauma.
- ❖ More severe psychological trauma correlated with a decrease in storytelling related to Holodomor.
- ❖ The censorship by the Soviet authority led to avoidance of discussions about Holodomor.
- ❖ Personal avoidance of the topic by Ukrainians was also seen in those that knew less about the topic.
- ❖ Soviet censorship during and after Holodomor led to enforced denial being used as a way to suppress the memory of Holodomor which negatively impacted the ability of Ukrainians to process their trauma.
- ❖ Holodomor had the opposite intended effect in the long run. Ukrainians remained nationalistic and maintained a uniquely Ukrainian identity while under the suppression of the Soviets. And, during the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine emerged an independent nation.

Legacy of Holodomor

- ❖ Holodomor as a theme is present in more contemporary forms of art in Ukraine.
- ❖ Stories are used by Ukrainians as a way of remembering Holodomor and introducing the topic to people.
- ❖ Ukrainians use music as a way of remembering and commemorating Holodomor, with music festivals and thematic music venues creating spaces for artists to share their interpretations of the tragedy.
- ❖ These forms of art also serve as a way to combat the denial of Holodomor's genocidal nature.
- ❖ The legacy of Holodomor showcases the perseverance of Ukrainians which is still seen today in the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

...For what do you need these beautiful eyes
In any case, they will die on the steppe
The crow is sitting in the middle of the night
Pecking on the corpse.

...The rooks are flying in the clouds

They sit and caw

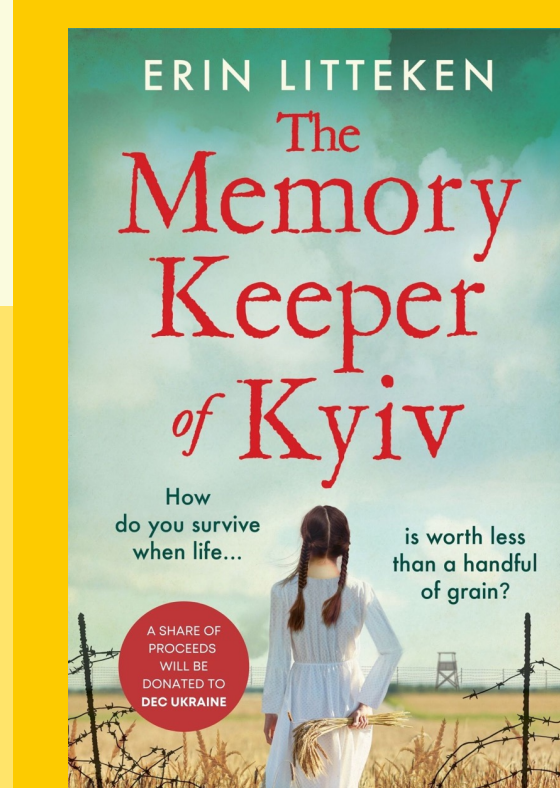
They saw heads in the houses

They peck blue eyes.

- Hryhoriy Buryk

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The Memory Keeper of Kyiv is a historical trauma-romance novel that details the trauma of Holodomor from a firsthand account of it in the early 1930's to the remembrance of it in the early 2000's

Goodreads.com