

**THE 1932-1933 HOLODOMOR VICTIMS' OFFICIAL COMMEMORATION AND
POLITICS OF MEMORY IN CONTEMPORARY UKRAINE**

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Abstract

This thesis is a case study of the 1932-1933 Holodomor victims' official commemoration in 2006-2009 in Ukraine. In 2006 the Parliament of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada) passed the Law proclaiming the 1932-1933 Holodomor (Great Famine) genocide of Ukrainian nation. It started an official campaign on the Holodomor victims' commemoration. In my thesis I explore the content of commemorative practices, main images and notions used in official discourse.

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Introduction

The notion of ‘Holodomor’ as a mass famine in the UkrSSR in 1932-1933 emerged in public discourse during the second half of the 1980s. The term itself initially was used by publicists from the Ukrainian Diaspora in Canada. Under pressure from the Ukrainian community abroad, it was brought to the Soviet Ukraine where the topic of famine had been prohibited before. Ukrainian historians and publicists started a public campaign to recognize the famine and to collect materials about it. There was a call to people to submit their personal testimonies and material about the famine. Georgiy Kasyanov, a Ukrainian historian, investigating the Holodomor debates since the very beginning, wrote that a definitive work, *33rd: the Famine. The National Memorial Book* published in 1991 was based on “the first experience of addressing to the national ordinary consciousness as to an alternative of official history”.¹ Since that time, the topic of *Holodomor* has been constantly present in the public discourse. However, it never received as much attention as during the presidency of Victor Yushchenko from 2004 until 2009. Yushchenko launched a large campaign to have the Holodomor recognized as genocide of the Ukrainian people on an international level. This transformed the concept of the Holodomor and signified a new stage in Ukrainian memorial policy.

Currently, there are numerous debates and arguments about it, which involve different groups of Ukrainian society and many players abroad. Obviously, this issue is highly politicized in Ukraine. The *Holodomor* campaign created patterns used nowadays separately

¹ Kasyanov Georgiy, A Plundered Tomb: 1932-1933 Famine in the Ukrainian Historiography, Politics and Mass Consciousness, in *Ab Imperio*, 2004 (3), p. 260.

from the original context. Its main mottos and images have been transformed in order to be applied to the current political conflicts².

The *Holodomor* seems to remain one of the most important words concerning contemporary memorial policy in Ukraine, even though the current high-ranking Ukrainian officials tend to reject the discourse offered by Yushchenko's campaign³. As well as the *Holodomor*, the notion of *World War II* takes one of the main places in the memorial discourse in contemporary Ukraine. Moreover, most recent shifts within the political establishment were signified *inter alia* by promotion of this topic to the first place in memorial polics. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine proclaimed 2010 as the Year of veterans of the Great Patriotic War in Ukraine.⁴ I believe that celebration of numerous anniversaries related to the 'Great Patriotic War' in 2010 must be considered as an attempt to establish a counter-identity opposed to the one based on the *Holodomor*.

What is the "Holodomor"? The word "Holodomor"⁵ denotes a man-made famine in Soviet Ukraine in 1932-1933 as a part of a famine in the Soviet Union. The famine covered the territory of contemporary Ukraine except for 7 western regions, which were under Poland by that time (Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Volyn', Rivne, Chernivtsi, and Zakarpattia) and Crimea, which belonged to the Russian SSR at that time. As I will show later, during the presidency of Victor Yushchenko official commemorations emphasized genocidal nature of the 1932-1933 famine. But after 2009 high-rank Ukrainian politicians changed this tendency into rejecting this statement.⁶

² For example, the notion of Holodomor is now applied in public discourse to the debates about the new Ukrainian tax code and a system of community facilities.

³ A term used by a Canadian historian John-Paul Himka in his article *How Many Perished in the Famine and Why Does It Matter?*: http://www.brama.com/news/press/2008/print/080202himka_famine.html.

⁴ See Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of April 19, 2010: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=919-2010-%F0>.

⁵ In Ukrainian: Голодомор, «морити голодом», means "to kill by hunger".

⁶ See an interview with Timothy Snyder: <http://www.istpravda.com.ua/articles/4cc380a3748af/> (in Ukrainian).

The issue of genocidal nature of the 1932-1933 divided scholars into two main camps. Raphael Lemkin, an actual author of the concept of genocide applied firstly to the perpetrators of the Holocaust at the 1945-1946 Nuremberg trials, was the first scholar who defined the 1932-1933 famine as a “classic example of genocide”. He argued that the famine directed against Ukrainian peasantry along with annihilating Ukrainian intelligentsia and Ukrainian church should have been considered as a special measure to destroy Ukrainian nation as a whole.⁷

Declaring in his early studies that the famine was mass murder, Robert Conquest later rejected the statement that Josef Stalin organized it intentionally to kill Ukrainians. Robert Davies and Stephen Weatcroft shared with Conquest an idea that Stalin used the famine only for his specific political purposes.⁸ Davies and Weatcroft also doubted that “Stalin believed that the deaths from famine in the first half of 1933 had served the function of getting rid of an adequate number of class enemies”.⁹

Meanwhile, the 1932-1933 famine is officially recognized as genocide of Ukrainian people in 22 countries.¹⁰ On November, 2003 by the Joint Statement of the United Nations on the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor) it was proclaimed that the 1932-1933 famine in Ukraine “turned to be a national tragedy for the Ukrainian people”.¹¹ In 2008 the European Parliament recognized the 1932-1933 famine as a crime against humanity.¹² In 2010 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe passed the resolution commemorating the victims of the Great Famine (Holodomor), stating that:

⁷ Verstyuk Vladyslav, Why Do Ukrainians Call the Holodomor Genocide? in <http://www.memory.gov.ua/ua/publication/content/841.htm?lightWords=%D0%BB%D0%B5%D0%BC%D0%BA%D1%96%D0%BD>.

⁸ Davies Robert, Weatcroft Stephen, Debate: Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-33: A Reply to Ellman, in in Europe-Asia Studies, vol. 58, # 4, June 2006, p.629.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 630.

¹⁰ See the full list: <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/5280.html>.

¹¹ See full text of the Statement: http://www.artukraine.com/famineart/ukr_un_decl.htm.

¹² See full text of the EP resolution: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=en&type=IM-PRESS&reference=20081022IPR40408>.

One of the most tragic pages in the history of the peoples of the former Soviet Union was the mass famine in grain-growing areas of the country which started in the late 1920s and culminated in 1932-33.

Millions of innocent people in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine, which were parts of the Soviet Union, lost their lives as a result of mass starvation caused by the cruel and deliberate actions and policies of the Soviet regime.

In Ukraine, which suffered the most, the peasantry was particularly hit by the Great Famine and millions of individual farmers and members of their families died of hunger following forced “collectivization”, a ban on departures from the affected areas and confiscation of grain and other food. These tragic events are referred to as Holodomor (politically-motivated famine) and are recognized by Ukrainian law as an act of genocide against Ukrainians.¹³

The issue of death toll is still debatable among scholars, mainly, because of lack of records. Very often statistics on the starvation was concealed by local authorities. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union some historians estimated total fatalities at 12 million Ukrainians.¹⁴ After the NKVD archives became available, this number narrowed down. Robert Conquest in his famous book *The Harvest of Sorrow* stated that the death toll of the 1932-1933 famine was estimated at 5 million people.¹⁵ Timothy Snyder states that scholars must be very diligent and avoid exaggerations, since many deaths were not recorded. He

¹³ See full text of the resolution: <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta10/ERES1723.htm>.

¹⁴ Rosefielde Steven, Excess Mortality in the Soviet Union: A Reconsideration of the Demographic Consequences of Forced Industrialization, 1929-1949, in *Soviet Studies*, #35 (July 1983), pp. 385-409.

¹⁵ Conquest Robert, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine*, New York, Oxford, Edmonton, London, 1986, p. 89.

estimates a number of victims at 2.8 million people.¹⁶ Currently Ukrainian scholars provide numbers ranging from 5.5¹⁷ to 6 million victims.¹⁸ At the same time, the Institute for Demography and Social Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine assesses a number of the famine victims as 3.4 million people.¹⁹

Similarly, causes of the famine make a subject for debates. As it was already mentioned, some scholars do not regard the famine as intentionally aimed at denationalizing Soviet Ukraine. Thus, they indicate forced industrialization and accompanying economic problems as main causes of starving. Those historians, who emphasize man-made nature of the famine, state that it was caused by planned actions, first and foremost by the 1932-1933 grain requisition quotas, excessive in comparison with other territories of the Soviet Union. According to Robert Conquest, in 1930, 7.7 million tons of grain (33%) were confiscated. A year later, only 18.3 million tons were collected, but the quota demanded 7.7 million tons (or 42%). It “left the peasants with hardly enough grain to survive the winter and only half the seed grain needed for the following year”.²⁰

On August, 1932 the Sovnarkom passed the decree, also known as the *Law of Five Spikelets*, according to which people who collected the leftovers of grains in the collective fields were subjected to death by shooting or in special cases sentenced to 5-10 years of prison as violators of socialist property. In all cases the property of a violator was confiscated.

¹⁶ Snyder Timothy, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, New York, 2010, p. 53.

¹⁷ Marochko Vasyl, Movchan Olexandr, *The 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine*, Kyiv, 2008 (published in Ukrainian).

¹⁸ Kulchitskiy Stanislav, *The 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine as Genocide*, Kyiv, 2008 (published in Ukrainian).

¹⁹ *The Holodomor of 1932-1933 – Genocide of Ukrainian People*, Kyiv, 2008, p. 39.

²⁰ Conquest Robert, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine*, p. 221-222.

Michael Ellman estimated a number of those who were charged by this law at 200,000 people; 11,000 of them were sentenced to death.²¹

Since December, 1932 the “blacklisting” was applied to those Ukrainian villages and separated collective farms which did not execute grain quotas. It is widely quoted that to be on the “black list” meant:

1. Immediate cessation of delivery of goods, complete suspension of cooperative and state trade in the villages, and removal of all available goods from cooperative and state stores.
2. Full prohibition of collective farm trade for both collective farms and collective farmers, and for private farmers.
3. Cessation of any sort of credit and demand for early repayment of credit and other financial obligations.
4. Investigation and purge of all sorts of foreign and hostile elements from cooperative and state institutions, to be carried out by organs of the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate.
5. Investigation and purge of collective farms in these villages, with removal of counterrevolutionary elements and organizers of grain collection disruption.²²

Besides, it was forbidden for peasants from the starving territories to move from their villages and collective farms to other regions of the Soviet Union in search for aid. The GPU set special blockages to prevent traveling from Ukraine according to the special decree of January 23, 1933. Buying train tickets for peasants was not possible without prior issue of special permission. In case they left territory of Ukraine they would have been arrested.²³

²¹ Ellman Michael , Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-33 Revisited, in Europe-Asia Studies, Vol. 59, # 4, June 2007, p. 668.

²² From the Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine on Blacklisting Villages that Maliciously Sabotage the Collection of Grain (December 6, 1932), in Chaykovskiy Anatoliy, Reader on Theory of State and Law, Kyiv, 2003, p. 465 (published in Ukrainian).

²³ The Instructive Letter of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine on Inadmissibility of Mass Departures of Collective and Private Farmers from Ukraine, in The 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine: as Viewed by Historians, as Told by Documents, Kyiv, 1990, p. 192 (published in Ukrainian).

In such conditions Ukrainian peasants were rendered themselves, while the central government provided no help to starving people. As Stanislav Kulchitskiy claims, the food aid was sent to Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk regions only on February 7, 1933. A day later the government passed a decree which claimed each case of starving to be resolved immediately. On March 20, 1933 Stalin issued another decree calling to distribute additional food aid in villages and small towns on the starving territory of Ukraine.²⁴

The thesis will be devoted to the investigation of contemporary memorial policy in Ukraine concerning commemoration of the Holodomor victims and Second World War. I will focus on the official memorial discourse which is reflected through the legislative background and main state products in memorial area such as commemorative ceremonies, official editions and textbooks, national awards etc produced and reproduced in 2004-2011. In the chapter devoted to the second issue I will also investigate how Soviet memorial places are attached to the present official war narrative in Ukraine, how they function in it.

Structure. The thesis will contain two chapters. The work will start with a theoretical chapter where I will analyze main concepts of memory studies concerning collective traumatic events and postwar memorial politics in the post-Soviet countries and in Ukraine in particular. In the second chapter a detailed analysis of the Holodomor campaign will be provided.

Literature review. The main work which should be mentioned on the Holodomor topic is a fundamental work of a Ukrainian historian Georgiy Kasyanov *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, published in 2010.²⁵ Kasyanov puts his main focus on the role of professional historians in the formation of public

²⁴ Kulchitskiy Stanislav, The 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine as Genocide, p. 137-138.

²⁵ Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography* (*Danse macabre: Голод 1932 – 1933 годов в политике, массовом сознании и историографии*), Kyiv, 2010 (published in Ukrainian).

discourse and memorial politics. How do historians participate in politics? What is historical memory and is it shaped by politics and current memorial discourse? These are the main questions an author answers in his book.

Kasyanov answers these questions investigating the image of the 1932-1933 great famine constructed both in political-ideological (public) and scholarly discourses in the late 1980s – beginning of the 2000s in Ukraine. The author considers the *Holodomor* as a key symbol for rethinking the Soviet period in Ukraine, constructing the new variant of the collective memory, and contemporary nation-building projects. It came from the situation when a given topic was prohibited for the almost whole Soviet period, being an ideological taboo, and then suddenly appeared both in the inner and international discussions in the second half of the 1980s.²⁶

Among others the book gives a detailed overview of historiography on the famine and history of the *Holodomor* notion itself. The author surveys latest two and the half decades, focusing mostly on the political aspects and much less on the commemorative practises, especially during so-called Yushchenko's campaign. The value of this book can not be overestimated as far as there were no many attempts to establish neutral discourse on the *Holodomor* issue. It is also very significant for my topic, since it indicates main images which could be traced in official commemoration in Ukraine in 2006-2009.

²⁶ Ibidem, pp. 5-6.

Chapter 1. Theoretical framework

1.1. Memory and Identity

The American historian Michael Roth states that “in modernity memory is the key to personal and collective identity”.²⁷ To avoid generalization, we should indicate what memory and what identity we refer to in our case.

Kerwin Klein states that “the most popular genealogies of our current memory discourse begin in the nineteenth century and piece together a lineage descending through Freud and Halbwachs and into our current texts”.²⁸ Presenting history of *memory* scholars usually mark Maurice Halbwachs who developed his theory of collective memory in the 1920s as one of the most important starting points for shifting “the discourse concerning collective knowledge out of a biological framework into a cultural one”.²⁹ In opposition to the Freudian theory Halbwachs emphasized connection between memory and a group, for him “the specific character that a person derives from belonging to a distinct society and culture is not seen to maintain itself for generations as a result of phylogenetic evolution, but rather as a result of socialization and customs”.³⁰ Halbwachs stated that individual memory is defined by different social groups (for example, “families, neighborhood and professional groups, political parties, associations”³¹), “each individual composes a memory which (...) is (a) socially mediated and (b) relates to a group. Every individual memory constitutes itself in communication with others”.³²

²⁷ Klein Kerwin Lee, On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse, in *Representations*, No. 69, Special Issue: Grounds for Remembering (Winter, 2000), p. 135.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 132.

²⁹ Assmann Jan, Collective Memory and Cultural Identity, in *New German Critique*, No. 65: Cultural History/Cultural Studies (Spring-Summer, 1995), p. 125.

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 125.

³¹ Ibidem, p. 127.

³² Ibidem, p. 127.

But as Klein notes, “we speak quite often of collective memory but seem not to mean what Maurice Halbwachs meant by this term”.³³ Following Amos Funkenstein, the U.C. Berkeley history professor engaged *inter alia* in Jewish history of the 20th century, Klein states that “Halbwachs often engaged in a “hypostatization of memory” in which collective memory seemed but a modernist synonym for the bad old Romantic notions of the “spirit” or the “inner character” of a race or a nation”.³⁴ Even if Klein asserts that *identity* is one the words not belonged to a “secular, critical practice”³⁵ in historiography we still associate it with this sociological dimension of *memory* offered by Halbwachs. In general, we regard identity in the context (as a basis, reason or result) of group affiliation.

Investigating evolution of *memory* Patrick H. Hutton in his book *History as an Art of Memory* states that Halbwachs, as well as Freud, made *memory* a significant notion.³⁶ But even then *collective memory* was not so popular among historians. Not until the 1960s could the great Philippe Ariès employ Halbwachsian theory as a framework for a historical monograph, *L’homme devant la mort*.³⁷

Klein indicates *Perception of Jewish history*, published by Amos Funkenstein in 1993, as “the most self-conscious attempt to connect the archaic sense of memory with our new structural equations”.³⁸ Warning that historians must use the notion of collective memory carefully, “since only individuals are capable of remembering”, Funkenstein suggests such definition of *collective memory*:

Collective memory..., like “language”, can be characterized as a system of signs, symbols, and practices: memorial dates, names of places, monuments and

³³ Klein Kerwin Lee, *On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse*, p. 135.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 135.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 145.

³⁶ Hutton Patrick, *History as an Art of Memory*, University of Vermont Press, 1993, p. 189.

³⁷ Klein Kerwin Lee, *On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse*, p. 133.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 133.

victory arches, museums and texts, customs and manners, stereotype images (incorporated, for instance, in manners of expression), and even language itself (in de Saussure's terms). The individual's memory – that is, in fact, the act remembering – is the instantiation of these symbols, analogous to "speech"; no act of remembering is like any other.³⁹

As we can see, this definition is close enough to the famous concept of *leux de memoire* provided by French historian Pierre Nora. Klein suggests that for Nora memory is "an archaic mode of being that had been devastated by rationalization" quoting his statement that "we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left".⁴⁰ So, *leux de memoire* emerge as an embodiment of memory no longer existed where this memory could be recalled.

Our attempt to answer the question about objects and subjects of this process brings us to Jan Assmann's theory. In fact, his two-level concept of cultural memory somehow corresponds with Nora's approach. Assmann distinguishes "communicative" or "everyday memory" which "includes those varieties of collective memory that are based exclusively on everyday communications".⁴¹ According to Assmann, this memory has a "limited temporal horizon".⁴² Whereas cultural memory, "a collective concept for all knowledge that directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation",⁴³ is far from present days. Moreover, "cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through

³⁹ Ibidem, p. 133.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 127.

⁴¹ Assmann Jan, *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*, p. 126.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 127.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 126.

cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)".⁴⁴

Assmann stresses "three poles" of his theory – memory, culture and the group.⁴⁵ On this basis one of the most important characteristics of cultural memory for him is "*the concretion of identity*" or the relation to the group".⁴⁶

Cultural memory preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity. The objective manifestations of cultural memory are defined through a kind of identificatory determination in a positive ("We are this") or negative ("That's our opposite") sense.⁴⁷

Assmann connects this feature of cultural memory with some other, such as "*its capacity to reconstruct*" (instead of preserving the past); "*formation*" (the "objectivation or crystallization of communicated meaning and collectively shared knowledge"); "*organization*" (or institutionalization of communication within the group); "*obligation*" ("a clear system of values and differentiations in importance which structure the cultural supply of knowledge and the symbols").⁴⁸ But still all of them result from the first one. The cultural memory, as it is recognized by Assmann, is a basis for a group identity.

Further Assmann claims that "the binding character of the knowledge preserved in cultural memory has two aspects: the *formative* one in its educative, civilizing, and humanizing functions and the *normative* one in its function of providing rules of conduct".⁴⁹ For Assmann these functions do not seem to be problematic, whereas Klein warns, using the

⁴⁴ Ibidem, p. 129.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 129.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 130.

⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 130.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, pp. 130-131.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 132.

words of Charles Maier, of the “surfeit of memory” concerning *identity*.⁵⁰ From Maier’s point of view, “memory appeals to us because it lends itself to the articulation of ethnoracial nationalisms that turn away from the cosmopolitan discourses of history”.⁵¹

On our point of view this process not necessarily should be regarded in a negative way. If to follow Assmann’s theory, “the group bases its consciousness of unity and speciality upon this [group] knowledge and derives formative and normative impulses from it, which allows the group to reproduce its identity”.⁵² So, first of all, the notion of identity should not necessarily be connected only with a nation as a group. Historians apply *identity* to different groups (as we mentioned in case of Halbwachsian theory) not always reaching the level of a nation. The second contradiction to Klein’s narrative in this case is that it is impossible to speak about cosmopolitan discourses of history as the main ones. This statement of him could be regarded as too idealistic.

Hence, we define *cultural* (using the term of Assmann) *memory* as a basis for group *identity*. Cultural memory (or *objectivized culture*) is collection of texts, images, monuments, names, and any other “objects” through which group identity could be recalled into a general narrative. Appeals to all these “objects” allow members of a group to recognize themselves and each other as member of a certain, given, community. On this issue Aleksandr Etkind notes that processes of cultural amnesia or remembrance and commemoration are never unconscious.⁵³

⁵⁰ Klein Kerwin Lee, *On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse*, p. 143.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 143.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 128.

⁵³ Etkind Alexandr, *Time to Compare Stones: Post-Revolutionary Culture of Political Sorrow in Contemporary Russia*, in *Ab Imperio*, 2004, No. 2, p. 48.

1.2. Memory and Trauma

Origins of the modern theory of collective trauma could be traced foremost in the historiography of the Holocaust. Collecting evidence and documentary database started already with the Nuremberg Trials in 1945-1946. However, this topic was excluded from the European public discourse and suppressed in the newly formed state of Israel for a certain period. Dina Porat, a professor at Tel Aviv University, states that the Jewish community in Palestine, watching the escalation of the Nazi regime, perceived the extermination of Jews as a confirmation of the statement that the life of a Jewish diaspora necessarily would end up tragically.⁵⁴

There was a question for few first decades after the war how to define survivors both practically and symbolically. Yael Zerubavel identifies ambivalent attitude of Israeli society towards survivors and the Holocaust even after introducing of Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel in 1951. As Zerubavel points out, commemoration both of the Shoa and uprisings in ghettos, victims and heroes demonstrated that armed response to the Nazis was considered as a heroic part of Jewish history, while the Shoa itself belonged to unheroic.⁵⁵ At the same time survivors got tired of their otherness and needed some time to forget and cure.

The Holocaust studies emerged in the middle of the 1960s. The *Holocaust* as a notion became widely spread through the publications of Nobel Prize laureate Elie Wiesel which were devoted to Jewish culture and Nazi crimes during the Second World War. Wiesel emphasized sacral meaning of the Holocaust for Jews. He also argued that Shoa belonged to those events in the history of mankind which could not be described and imagined.

⁵⁴ Porat Dina, Attitudes of the Young State of Israel toward the Holocaust and Its Survivors: A Debate over Identity and Values, in *New Perspectives on Israeli History*, New York University, 1991, p. 158.

⁵⁵ Zerubavel Yael, Death of Memory and Memory of Death, in *History and Collective Memory*, Moscow, 2008, p. 197.

This statement became even more debatable in the mid-1980s after Claude Lanzmann's *Shoa* based on rousing testimonies of survivors and former Nazis. This film evoked wide response all over the world. In France it initiated public debates between a French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard from one side and Jacques Rancière and Georges Didi-Huberman from the other. Later Lyotard presented his point of view in his book *Heidegger and "the Jews"* published in 1988 and translated into English in 1990.

Later the notion of *collective trauma* became applicable not only to the Holocaust studies. Case studies on collective trauma include now mass crimes, atrocities, genocides not only in relation to their victims, but also perpetrators. Bernard Giesen, a German sociologist and historian, investigating the role of collective traumatic experience in German nation building, states that *trauma* and *triumph* define outside limits of group experience and limits of its self-determination, as well as birth and death determine limits of personal experience.⁵⁶

Widely speaking, *trauma* could be regarded as discontinuity, thus, *collective trauma* is an impact that destroys social connections within a certain group or community. Also *collective trauma* is a shock emerged from awareness that a certain group or community is not a source of effective support for each its member anymore, shock emerged from destroying of a certain collective *we*.⁵⁷

At the first half of the 1990s Jeffrey Alexander, an American sociologist, suggests a notion of *cultural trauma* as opposed to a so-called psychoanalytical approach. According to a cultural approach

⁵⁶ Giesen B. National identity as Trauma: The German Case, in *Myth and Memory in the Construction of Community*, Bruxelles: Bo Strath, 2000, p. 229.

⁵⁷ Alexander Jeffrey C., Towards a Theory of Cultural Trauma, in *Cultural trauma and collective identity*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, p. 12.

Trauma is a socially mediated attribution. The attribution may be made in real time, as an event unfolds; it may also be made before the event occurs, as an adumbration, or after the event has concluded, as a post-hoc reconstruction. [...]. Traumatic status is attributed to real or imagined phenomena, not because of harmfulness or abruptness per se, but because they are believed to have abruptly, and harmfully, affected collective identity.⁵⁸

Naturally, trauma may be a result of fantasy, of things that never happened, as well as of events that happened. So, the main features of *traumatic memory* – its elisions, interruptions and reinventions – do not correlate specifically with an event, but rather characterize the workings of memory in general⁵⁹.

1.3. Politics of Memory and the Communist Past

First of all, we must reach an understanding what is politics of memory itself. As we already observed, individual and collective memories are considered to be social constructions. Interacting, individual and collective memories reflect and reshape each other. Being influenced by dominant discourses, individual memories influence on them as well. Richard Ned Lebow, an American political scientist, observed that “those discourses and their contents, in turn, are generally created by elites and counter-elites to justify themselves and to advance their political, economical, and social goal”.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibidem, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Hodgkin Katharine, Radstone Susannah, Remembering Suffering: Trauma and History, in *Contested Pasts: the Politics of Memory*, London, 2003, p. 97.

⁶⁰ Lebow Richard Ned, The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe, in Lebow Richard Ned, Kansteiner Wulf, and Fogu Claudio (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, Durham and London, 2006, p. 4.

Therefore, under politics of memory we understand discourse of memory (or constructions of the past) implemented with measures “initiated, supported, approved, encouraged, and financed by the state”.⁶¹ These constructions answer are employed to be a basis for national identities, since;

Memories and the policy lessons they generate or sustain shape our responses to the present. They also influence external perception of and responses to a nation, and accordingly have powerful implications that extended beyond national borders.⁶²

As Lebow observes, politics of memory is a process with a large number of social actors, individuals and government officials, involved in it. These actors have access to various resources and mobilize them in order to achieve their purposes. They “act in a political and cultural setting where other influences, many of them unpredictable or unforeseen, help shape the consequences of their behavior and the ways in which debates evolve”.⁶³

Investigating fundamentalist strategies in European memory politics, Wolfgang Kaschuba, a German cultural studies scholar, argues that politics of integration, which is considered to be one the main tendencies in contemporary Europe, means at the same time politics of difference. European politics of remembrance are constructed in order to allow

⁶¹ Ivanova Elena, Constructing the Collective Memory of Holocaust in Ukraine, in *Ab Imperio*, 2004, # 2, p. 385.

⁶² Lebow Richard Ned, *The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe*, p. 4.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

European region to profile itself clearly. In this context, European countries, Kaschuba claims, tend to develop dominant narratives and regimes of remembrance.⁶⁴

Observing commemoration of the World War II, Stefan Troebst, Professor of the University of Leipzig, divides European cultures of remembrance into four groups:

“First, the Soviet-nostalgic-host Russia; second, the anti-Soviet camp in East-Central Europe; third, a disoriented Germany, which after decades of being excluded from Allied celebrations viewed its participation in the Moscow ceremonies as something like an international rehabilitation; and, fourth, Western European societies clinging in this instance to a culture of remembrance less continental than Atlantic”.⁶⁵

For the title of his article about culture of memory in post-Communist countries of Eastern Europe Stefan Troebst used a metaphor borrowed from a Hungarian writer Peter Esterházy about a carpet which covered problems of managing the totalitarian past in the former Communist states. Troebst quotes peremptory words of Esterházy:

*Problems, even if we dare to name them, are immediately swept under the carpet and denied. “What sort of a carpet? We have no any. It was stolen by Communists”.*⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Kaschuba Wolfgang, Iconic Remembering and Religious Icons: Fundamental Strategies in European Memory Politics, in Pakier Małgorzata, Străth Bo (eds.), A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance, New York, Oxford, 2010, p. 68.

⁶⁵ Troebst Stefan, Halecki Revisited: Europe’s Conflicting of Remembrance, in A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance, New York, Oxford, 2010, p. 60.

⁶⁶ Troebst Stefan, “What Sort of a Carpet?” The Culture of Memory in Post-Communist Societies of Eastern Europe. An Attempt at General Description and Categorization, in Ab Imperio, # 4, 2004, p. 42.

In recent few decades, an issue of politics of memory concerning post-Communist region has got a numerous scholar literature. As Troebst notes, differentiating historical culture and culture of memory, the latter is a result exactly of politics of memory which introduces certain symbols into public consciousness. Therefore, in his opinion, current Eastern European culture of memory is a successor of historical politics of which was provided by Communist parties before 1989-1991.⁶⁷

As well as Troebst, Wolfgang Kaschuba, states that remembrance and historical politics are indistinguishable. He suggests exploring historical politics on five practical levels. First of all, it is public discourse in mass-media on memory and the past; then, it is spatial and territorial construction of representation and symbolization, which could be explored through places of memory and monuments; symbolical struggle for signs and symbols; the forth is canon of rituals and practices; and the last is a list of figures which transfer memory, such as school textbooks on history.⁶⁸

Exploring types of remembrance in Eastern Europe, Troebst claims that after 1989 (1991 in some cases) two components of memorial culture – its public (or political) and individual – started interacting with each other. But this interaction was intruded by political pluralism which replaced the party monopoly on memory. This leads to emergence of various forms of memory not stricktly linked to a state or individual basis. In this case, it became important to appeal to the pre-Communist past and to a range of imperial and national histories deposited by emigrants and diasporas.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 44.

⁶⁸ Kaschuba Wolfgang, *Geschichtspolitik und Identitätspolitik. Nationale und ethnische Diskurse im Kulturvergleich*, in B. Binder, W. Kaschuba, P. Niedermüller (Hrsg.), *Die Inszenierung des Nationalen. Geschichte, Kultur und die Politik der Identitäten am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Köln, 2001, p. 24. On this occasion, I wish to thank my Ukrainian college Victoria Yaremenko for translation.

⁶⁹ Troebst Stefan, "What Sort of a Carpet?" *The Culture of Memory in Post-Communist Societies of Eastern Europe. An Attempt at General Description and Categorization*, p. 46.

Along with national, regional and imperial history, the Communist period is considered to be one of the most important components in Eastern European politics of memory. Nonetheless, if states in this region shared common experience of dictatorships, they do not share common culture of memory nowadays. Stefan Troebst distinguishes four types of culture of memory, and, therefore, politics of memory in Eastern Europe. As the first type he classifies Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, which arrived at the consensus about the totalitarian past and where this past is considered as alien, including an ethnical level.⁷⁰

The second type includes countries where the Communist past is still debatable, such as in Hungary, Poland, and Czech Republic. At the time, the House of Terror in Budapest, the Museum of Communism in Prague, and the Museum of Communism, initiated by the Solidarity Foundation in Warsaw, provoked disputes in given societies. Also Troebst relegates to this type Ukraine as well considering it as a country where the memory and remembrance became a battlefield for establishment.⁷¹

The third type is marked by apathetic attitude to the Communist period in history. From one side, Communism is considered to have been “bad” and “alien”, but from the other side it provided modernization, therefore, it is not “so bad”. Among such countries Troebst lists Bulgaria and Romania, also Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. Significantly, Troebst points out, the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and of the Resistance in Sighetu Marmației, Romania is more famed in Europe, than in Romania itself.⁷²

Finally, the fourth type includes countries with the continuity of the Communist and present elites, when the new establishment not only came from the old, but also is in alliance

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 51.

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 53-54.

⁷² Ibidem, p. 54-55.

with it. These are Russia, Moldova, and Belarus, elites of which explicitly use the Communist models of memorial practices.⁷³

In my turn, I want to notice that a place of Ukraine in this typology is extremely debatable. Exploring history's functioning in post-Soviet Ukraine, a Ukrainian publicist and historian Andriy Portnov indicates in it some elements of Soviet mythology, populism, and nostalgia, which compose so-called post-Soviet identity, marked by tonelessly articulated ideas. This type of identity is significantly indifferent to the national question, but at the same time crucially opposed to ethnic forms of nationalism.⁷⁴ Depending on current political situation, this type of identity becomes more dominant in Ukrainian official memorial discourse.

Observing commemoration of Communism in contemporary Eastern Europe, mainly in Hungary, Romania, and Poland, Péter Apór, a Research Fellow for Past in Central European University, suggests that “physical objects play a significant role in the relationship to the recent past”.⁷⁵ Hence, Apór claims, commemoration of Communism in Eastern Europe is characterized by obsession with relics and “the frenzied demolition of old statues, the erection of new monuments and the mushrooming of museums dedicated to the terror or tyranny”.⁷⁶

Pertaining to the different type in terms of politics of memory, Russia and its culture of remembrance differently manage its physical objects of memory. Alexandr Etkind observed a significant divergence between textual and memorial narratives on the Communist past in Russia. While Communism in contemporary Russia is remembered mainly through literal

⁷³ Ibidem, p. 55.

⁷⁴ Portnov Andriy, Exercises with History Ukrainian Style (Notes on Public Aspects of History's Functioning in Post-Soviet Ukraine), in *Ab Imperio*, 2007, # 3, p. 109.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 234.

⁷⁶ Apór Péter, Commemorating Communism in Contemporary Eastern Europe, in Pakier Małgorzata, Stråth Bo (eds.), *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, New York, Oxford, 2010, p. 234.

representations, such as famous Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, there are no museums and memorials that would represent the totalitarian past *per se*.⁷⁷

Exploring politics of memory in Russia, Anatoly Khazanov observes that “the crimes committed during communist rule play an insignificant role in the attitudes toward the Soviet past of the majority of Russians. The problem is not ignorance, but rather indifference, or an intentional desire to ignore the dark sides of the Soviet past”.⁷⁸ Communist crimes, Khazanov states, are present in collective memory of Russian ethnic minorities and remembered in the former GULAG centers, such as Vorkuta and Magadan, but not of ethnic Russians.⁷⁹

In his opinion, one of the main reasons for such situation is in the political situation in contemporary Russia. Political power has a strong, sometimes even decisive, influence over collective memory and remembrance in Russia. Whom to commemorate and whom to forget is selective. And this can be said not only individual memories, but also about a nation and the state. Individual members of a group “may make special efforts to promulgate their accounts of the past, but the modern state stands apart in the level of resources and authority it can master when creating a usable past and restricting competing efforts”.⁸⁰

Unlike in many Central European countries, in Russia the perpetrators, torturers, and executors of the Communist crimes remain unidentified. Lustrations have never been provided; and secret services were never put under any sort of public control. “On the contrary, Khazanov claims, in some ways they extended their influence over society.”⁸¹

⁷⁷ Etkind Alexandr, *Time to Level Stones: Post-Revolutionary Culture of Political Mourning in Contemporary Russia*, in *Ab Imperio*, 2004, # 2, p. 54.

⁷⁸ Khazanov Anatoly, *Whom to Mourn and Whom to Forget? (Re)constructing Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia*, in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 9, # 2-3, June-September 2008, p. 294.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 296.

⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 299.

⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 300.

Along with other scholars, Khazanov agrees that the political elite in Russia continue the Soviet providing the politics of memory similar to their Soviet predecessors’.

1.4. On the “Holodomor” notion

At the beginning of the 1980s before the 50th anniversary of the famine it was set the Famine-33 American Committee to Honor Ukraine's Victims promoted by Americans for Human Rights in Ukraine and the Ukrainian National Association. It supervised demonstrations and proclamations devoted to the famine commemoration and also produced an idea to establish a special commission on the 1932-1933 famine on the highest state level. The Committee organized a campaign calling for public letters to appeal to congressmen and lobbying the legislative project on the special commission.⁸²

Its attempts were successful and the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine started its work in 1985. It was stated that its main purpose was “(1) to conduct a study of the 1932-1933 Ukrainian Famine in order to expand the world’s knowledge of the famine and (2) provide the American public with a better understanding of the Soviet system by revealing the Soviet role”.⁸³ An American historian, a specialist on the Ukrainian history of the 1920s-1930s, James Mace was appointed as an executive director of the commission.

The commission provided public hearings in seven states, during which 57 evidences on the famine were collected. The commission members also investigated available materials on this issue during almost four years. The final report was delivered to the US Congress in

⁸² Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, p. 20.

⁸³ See the full text of the bill on establishing the commission to study the 1932-1933 famine caused by the Soviet Government in Ukraine (HR 4459 in the House of Representatives, S 2456 in the Senate) <http://www.ukrweekly.com/old/archive/1984/148419.shtml>.

1988. The commission recognized the fact of the 1932-1933 famine in Ukraine with millionth victims. It was stated that official allegations on causes of the famine provided by the Soviet authorities were false. The commission also defined Josef Stalin and his closer supporters as main culprits of genocide against Ukrainians in 1932-1933.⁸⁴

According to Kasyanov, main reasons which made the topic of the 1932-1933 famine appeared in the public discourse were changes both in foreign and internal policy of the USA at the beginning of the 1980s, when the Soviet Union was proclaimed the “evil empire”; successful adaptation of the DP generation⁸⁵ in the North American society, and, therefore, danger of the cultural assimilation. In these conditions the 1932-1933 famine was supposed to become a significant historical symbol, a core for the newer historical identity.⁸⁶

At the end of the 1980s the international political situation had been changed again, this time not in favour of such topic. But in 1986 a famous British historian, publicist and writer Robert Conquest published his significant book *The Harvest of Sorrow*.⁸⁷ Taking into account the authority of Conquest among scholars, it became impossible to ignore the issue of the 1932-1933 famine. His book started academic debates among Western historians and became very popular among students interested in the Soviet history popularizing a given topic considerably.⁸⁸

In 1988 the International commission of inquiry into the 1932–33 famine in Ukraine started its work. It was invited by the World Congress of Free Ukrainians and consisted of

⁸⁴ See the full list of the Commission findings in: US Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine 1932-1933: Report to Congress, United States Government Printing Office, 1988.

⁸⁵ The notion of *displaces persons* marks the post-war generation of emigrants from Eastern Europe and the Baltic region to the North America.

⁸⁶ Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, pp. 18-19.

⁸⁷ Conquest Robert, *The Harvest of Sorrow. Soviet Collectivization and the Terror Famine*, New York, Oxford, Edmonton, London, 1986.

⁸⁸ Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, pp. 23-24.

many well-known respected specialists on international and criminal law from Sweden, Great Britain, Belgium, France, Argentina, USA and Canada.⁸⁹ It was expected from the commission to give conclusions about evidence of the famine, its causes, consequences and culprits in order to develop findings of the US Commission.

The commission confirmed the famine stating that it was caused by excessive grain requisitions for the state. It indicated forced collectivization, dispossession and struggle against traditional Ukrainian nationalism as main preconditions of the famine. It was stated that Ukrainian nation was an object of the cruel policy of the Soviet authorities. At the same time the commission pointed out that the term “genocide” was not applicable to the 1932-1933 famine, since it was not organized systematically in order to annihilate Ukrainian nation.⁹⁰

The counter-commission supervised by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was established in the Soviet Union in 1986 in order to refute conclusions of the US Commissions. The members got informed on Mace’s commission work and also an access to archival materials classified before. Soon it became obvious that those materials only confirmed the fact of the famine. On December, 1987 Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, a leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, recognized the fact of the 1932-1933 famine in his speech devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Soviet power. It was a first time when a term “famine” appeared in speeches of the party officials in charge.⁹¹

Owing to that, the topic of the famine finally went public within the Soviet Union. Georgiy Kasyanov indicates that it became equal to the Chornobyl problem considering the

⁸⁹ International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932–33 Famine in Ukraine: Final Report, Toronto, 1990, p. 1.

⁹⁰ See: International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932–33 Famine in Ukraine: Final Report.

⁹¹ From the Speech of the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine on the Ceremonial Meeting Devoted to the 70th Anniversary of the Soviet Power, in Political Leadership of Ukraine (1938-1989), Moscow, ROSSPEN, p. 442 (published in Russian).

level of public attention. According to Kasyanov, all Ukrainian magazines, except children's, published certain materials, such as abstracts from Conquest's book, recollections, evidences, and literary works; archival materials; scholar reports. There were also special columns set in some magazines where mostly mourning rhetoric was used.⁹²

In 1990 the first collection of materials *The 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine: as Viewed by Historians, as Told by Documents* was published in the Soviet Ukraine.⁹³ Significantly, it was discussed during the special session of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine on January, 1990. A month later a special decree of the CC CPU was adopted calling the detailed investigation of the famine issue in order to avoid deformations in the party course. That year the topic *Collectivization and the 1932-1933 Country Famine* was included to the State Program of Historical Research Enhancement, Advanced Teaching and Promoting of UkrSSR history. It signified the end of the prohibition on the famine topic on the official level.⁹⁴

The 1990 year was crucial for the whole communist system. Georgiy Kasyanov states that in 1990 the Communist Party lost the "war for history", and the sovereignization of Ukrainian historical narrative in parallel with political sovereignization was successfully finished. During previous few years history became a battlefield between orthodox communists who defended "achievements of socialism" and revisionists who wanted to expose "crimes of Stalinism". This led to nationalization of history when national history was separated from formerly common space and time. Common past recently represented as

⁹² Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, p. 29.

⁹³ The 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine: as Viewed by Historians, as Told by Documents, Kyiv, 1990 (published in Ukrainian).

⁹⁴ Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, p. 30.

transnational history of the Soviet Union now became divided both in independent ideological practices and people's consciousness.⁹⁵

Apparently, the famine along with repressions was considered as a discredit to the current political regime. As Kasyanov describes, at the turn of the 1980s these issues were mentioned in almost each public speech called to criticize the Soviet system. It was a good opportunity to emphasize foreignness of the Communist system and ideology for Ukraine which attempted to destroy Ukrainians as a nation.⁹⁶

At the end of the 1980s Stanislav Kulchitskiy, a prominent Ukrainian historian, initiated a project on collecting evidences of the famine. He published a list of questions in the nationwide newspaper *Country News* calling its readers to send back their answers about grain requisitions and resistance to it; repressions against those party members and kolkhoz chairmen who did not execute extra grain collection; cases when local authorities provided helping measures; "blacklisted" villages; contacts of city residences with starving people etc.⁹⁷

As the response on his call Kulchitskiy got nearly 6,000 letters. Some of them were selected for the book *Famine-33: People's Memorial*. Mainly they pictured people dying in their houses. Volodymyr Manyak and his wife Ludmyla Manyak-Kovalenko, editors of the book, performed evidences literary depreciating its initial value as of historical sources.⁹⁸ At the end of the Soviet epoch this book consolidated the representation of the "great famine" brought from the diaspora.

⁹⁵ Kasyanov Georgiy, *Ukraine-1990: Battles for History*, in *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie*, 2007, # 83, p. 81 (published in Russian).

⁹⁶ Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, p. 30.

⁹⁷ Kulchitskiy Stanislav, *The 33d: a Famine*, in *Country News*, 1988, December, 9 (published in Ukrainian).

⁹⁸ Mace James, *Genocide in Ukraine is Proved*, in *Day*, 2003, November, 22 (published in Ukrainian).

The 1932-1933 Famine and Independent Ukraine. Official recognition of the 1932-1933 famine in independent Ukraine started from the first president Leonid Kravchuk's decree "On the 60th anniversary of the holodomor in Ukraine" in 1993.⁹⁹ It set a Day of Sorrow and Remembrance of the Holodomor Victims on September, 1993. Actually, it was the first legislative act which brought the notion of the "holodomor" on the official level. There were no many details in the decree, except the statement that it was adopted commemorating "millions of innocent victims of the 1932-1933 holodomor in Ukraine", but etymology of the term "holodomor" itself codified information about causes, consequences and symbolical limits of this phenomenon.

Naturally, the presidency of Leonid Kravchuk was marked by attempts of rapid revaluation of the Soviet period in historiography and in public discourse. On September, 1993 Kravchuk participated in the international conference "The 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine: Causes and Consequences" which acknowledged concernment of the authorities in this topic. Participants, mostly politicians and public activists, discussed the famine in context of nuclear status of Ukraine, political status of Kyiv and Sevastopol, and heritage of the Soviet Union, which demonstrated a high level of politicization of this issue.¹⁰⁰

The next president Leonid Kuchma paid less attention on the ideological rhetoric. The decree of the Cabinet of Ukraine devoted to the 65th anniversary of the famine, passed during his presidency, followed the text of Kravchuk's decree.¹⁰¹ But at the same time exactly

⁹⁹ See full text of the Decree: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=38%2F93> (in Ukrainian).

¹⁰⁰ Kasyanov Georgiy, *Danse Macabre: the 1932-1933 Famine in Politics, Mass Consciousness, and Historiography*, p. 49.

¹⁰¹ See full text on: <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=1696-98-%EF>.

Kuchma established the official commemorative date for the 1932-1933 famine on the last Saturday of November making it a national symbol.¹⁰²

Concernment on the topic of the famine depended on political situation. Obtaining not much attention from the authorities during previous years, in 2003 the 1932-1933 famine became the focus of public and political interest. The 70th anniversary of the famine coincided with the pre-election year in Ukraine. In 2003 the question of the famine was discussed in the Parliament during special hearings. The Verkhovna Rada passed a special appeal to Ukrainian nation where the 1932-1933 famine was termed as genocide of Ukrainian people.¹⁰³

¹⁰² At first it was a Day of Remembrance of the *Holodomors* Victims (by the Decree of November, 26, 2008), then it was renamed into a Day of Remembrance of Victims of the *Holodomor* and Political Repressions (by the Decree of October, 31, 2000). Finally, Kuchma named it as a Day of Victims of the *Holodomors* and Political Repressions (by the Decree of July, 15, 2004).

¹⁰³ See full text of the Proclamation: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=789-15>.

Chapter 2. Official Commemoration of the Holodomor Victims

2.1. *The Holodomor Law (2006)*¹⁰⁴

Ukraine's parliament adopted the Holodomor law in 2006. Adoption of the law officially was regarded as completion of the complex process, but we could regard it also as the symbolical beginning. The law confirmed the martyrological narrative of *Holodomor*. The law had a detailed preamble which is a unique phenomenon for the contemporary Ukrainian legislation. Except the Holodomor law, the Constitution only has a long introduction.

It was stated in the preamble that the Holodomor law commemorates “millions of compatriots who became victims of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine and its consequences” and condemns “the crimes of a totalitarian regime”. Also the law articulated the concept of “the Ukrainian nation” (Український народ) and “its eternal traditions, spiritual culture and ethnical originality”.

It was stated that the Holodomor was genocide of Ukrainian people. Public denial of the Holodomor was prohibited and claimed as an unlawful act. At the same time there is no criminal responsibility for it¹⁰⁵. This incompleteness is very significant for Holodomor discourse on the whole.

The law also required state authorities and local governments:

- to participate in organization and realization of the state policy in area of restoration and preservation of Ukrainian national memory;

¹⁰⁴ The full text of the law: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=376-16>.

¹⁰⁵ The legislative project for the criminal responsibility had been revoked in November, 2007. See, please: http://gska2.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb_n/webproc4_1?id=&pf3511=29881.

- to promote consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness and culture; to spread information about the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine and abroad; to provide an investigation of the Holodomor tragedy in Ukrainian schools;
- to take steps in order to commemorate the Holodomor victims, including memorial buildings;
- to provide for scientific and public institutions, scientists and particular citizens an access to archival materials referred to the Holodomor.

2.2. Publications of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory

The Holodomor law also defined the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory as a central executive power agency specifically authorized in area of restoration and preservation of Ukrainian national memory. The Institute was established few months earlier and proclaimed as “a main instrument of Ukrainian memorial policy”.¹⁰⁶

The institute implemented state policy which controlled local governments and reported to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine according to its executive status. In fact, it was a power agency similar to a ministry. But its title referred to a scientific area. The fact that such an organization did not get a ministerial status executing ministerial functions signifies the unavailability of Ukrainian officials to accentuate the break with other memorial discourses present in Ukrainian society.

¹⁰⁶ See Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of July 5, 2006: <http://www.memory.gov.ua/ua/publication/content/876.htm>.

In 2008, the Institute of National Memory published two main editions devoted to the Holodomor, a booklet based on the exhibition and a brochure with the same title *The Holodomor of 1932-1933 – Genocide of the Ukrainian People*. Both were translated into Russian and English and were widely spread by local governments and embassies in Ukraine and abroad. These two editions represented the conception of Holodomor textually and visually.

The Holodomor of 1932-1933 – genocide of Ukrainian people (a brochure). This edition proclaimed that the Holodomor was “a man-made famine created in 1932-1933 by the Bolshevik regime of the USSR which caused the deaths of millions of Ukrainian people”.¹⁰⁷ It also stated that the truth about the Holodomor was prohibited in the Soviet Union, but it had returned to the Ukrainian people and became a symbol of an ineradicable nation. All of the main concepts of the Holodomor commemoration can be found in few paragraphs, such as “a man-made famine”, “the Bolshevik regime”, “millions of victims”, “cruelty and cynicism of methods”, “strict prohibition of the Holodomor topic”, “the return of memory about the Holodomor” and “indestructibility of a nation”.¹⁰⁸

The authors stressed the idea of the unique methods used against the Ukrainian people in few ways. It stated that “there were no analogues in scale, cruelty and cynic methods to such crime in world history”.¹⁰⁹ In authors’ opinion, the reason was that Ukraine “played a key role in formation of the Soviet Union” as they were “the largest nation after the Russians”.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Holodomor of 1932-1933 – genocide of Ukrainian people (Голодомор 1932-1933 років – геноцид українського народу), Kyiv: Olena Teliga’s Publishing House, 2008, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 2.

The 1920s were described as a period of acute problems between Russia and Ukraine in terms of economics, the military, and elimination of frontiers. It was stated that “since the initiation of the totalitarian regime of Josef Stalin the Ukrainian question became crucial”.¹¹¹ Stalin personally aimed to destroy Ukraine as a “state organism” and a “nation”.¹¹² According to the brochure, the main “kicks” were directed against the Ukrainian intelligentsia and rich peasantry. The Ukrainian nation as a victim of the Holodomor was presented as a sum of these two strata. At the same time only a small part of one chapter was devoted to the intelligentsia. In fact, by defining the Holodomor as genocide of Ukrainian people, the authors defined the Holodomor as genocide of Ukrainian peasantry which was defined as “the core of the nation, the carrier of eternal traditions and national values which conflicted with communist ideology”.¹¹³

In the chapter *Causes of the Holodomor*, the authors begin to explain their position by starting with the February Revolution which allowed Ukraine to create “an independent democratic state.” Unfortunately, the power in Russia was eventually taken by the Bolsheviks led by Vladimir Lenin during the October Revolution.¹¹⁴ Aggression against Ukraine was explained by popular trends in Ukrainian historiography that “Ukraine had been considered by the Bolsheviks as a large raw material base”.¹¹⁵

After some concessions during NEP, the Soviet leadership established collectivization which was considered by authors as “a tragedy of a Ukrainian village”.¹¹⁶ According to the

¹¹¹ Ibidem, p. 2.

¹¹² Ibidem, p. 3.

¹¹³ Ibidem, p. 5.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 8.

¹¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 8.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 10.

brochure, one million people were deported during collectivization; others lost their property, cattle, and “the dearest – father land”.¹¹⁷ The stage after collectivization was the Holodomor.

The authors estimated that the number of victims was around 10 million people. The leadership of the Soviet Union and above all Stalin were responsible for their deaths. He was “well-informed about situation in Ukraine, but exacerbated it by sending Molotov and then Postyshev in order to increase repressions.”¹¹⁸ These were three persons mentioned as culprits of the Holodomor in the relevant chapter that is typical for the Holodomor narrative. Johan Dietsch, a Swedish historian, argued:

The tragic, victimised and embattled sense of Ukrainian history is conveniently re-affirmed as Ukraine and Ukrainians are made to suffer from the timeless and evil outside force. That Ukrainians could be found not only among the victims, but also among the perpetrators of the totalitarian regime is conveniently forgotten.¹¹⁹

The Holodomor of 1932-1933 – genocide of Ukrainian people (a booklet). The above mentioned edition presented posters of an exhibition created by the Institute of National Memory. This exhibition was duplicated and shown by local authorities in all regions of Ukraine in a mandatory manner. Each Ukrainian embassy also had such an exhibition to show in 2008.

As it collected posters, this booklet was different in comparison with a brochure structure and visual materials. Obviously, there were only separated textual blocks with

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, p. 10.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ Dietsch Johan, Struggling with a “Nuremburg Historiography” of the Holodomor, in *Ab Imperio*, 2008 (3), p. 154.

appellative headers, a large number of photos, and diagrams. A booklet appealed more clearly to the international legislation presenting the *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* and the 1948 *United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. The motto of the international campaign “Ukraine remembers – the world recognizes” was presented in posters.

According to a booklet, those primarily to blame for the Holodomor rested with 8 people: Josef Stalin, Vyacheslav Molotov, Vsevolod Balitskyi, Pavel Postyshev, Mendel Khatayevich, Lazar Kaganovich, Vlas Chubar and Stanislav Kosior.¹²⁰ Except these party leaders, the main perpetrators were “the Bolshevik regime” and “the regime”. A passive voice was often used in the description of the Holodomor events.

Two posters were devoted to an issue of demographical losses. Authors cited data from different sources concluding that 10.1 million people starved to death. They chose the largest number from all. Himka called that strategy a *competition for victimhood*¹²¹ when the Holodomor transformed into “an important component of national mythology, a symbol of a special status of Ukrainians as a nation which suffered the most from the Communist regime”.¹²²

As we can see, the architects of the Holodomor campaign borrowed their strategies from the commemoration of the Holocaust¹²³. There were some attempts to present the Holodomor as the Ukrainian Holocaust even more precisely. For example, Anatoliy Podol’s’ki, a director of The Ukrainian Center for Holocaust Studies, described the

¹²⁰ Holodomor of 1932-1933 – genocide of Ukrainian people (Голодомор 1932-1933 – геноцид українського народу), Kyiv: Olena Teliga’s Publishing House, 2008, p. 31.

¹²¹ Himka John-Paul, How Many Perished in the Famine and Why Does It Matter? in: http://www.brama.com/news/press/2008/print/080202himka_famine.html.

¹²² Kasyanov Georgiy, A Plundered Tomb: 1932-1933 Famine in the Ukrainian Historiography, Politics and Mass Consciousness, p. 248.

¹²³ On this issue see Johan Dietsch’s article “Struggling with a “Nuremburg Historiography” of the Holodomor”, in *Ab Imperio*, 2008, # 3, pp. 7-26.

speech of a well-known Ukrainian historian Yuriy Shapoval at the presentation of a Ukrainian edition of Alain Besançon's book about the Holodomor. Shapoval stated that it was necessary to inform international community about "our Ukrainian Holocaust".¹²⁴ Also the title of a book line *The Ukrainian Holocaust: Testimonies of Survivors* (2007) devoted to the Holodomor edited by another Ukrainian historian Yuriy Mytsyk is very symptomatic.

Podol's'ki claims that the Holocaust studies are mostly ignored by the official history in Ukraine. He considers that it is the heritage of the Soviet science, when historians used in practice monocultural and monoethnic approach. At the same time, the symbolic baggage of the Holocaust is included into the official Holodomor narrative and reassigned according to its needs.

2.3. The Holodomor in School Textbooks

School textbooks and history courses in school are very important tools which are used to establish a framework of the official collective memory. The way that the Holodomor is presented in Ukrainian school textbooks is influenced by two main discourses. The first one is the official representation of the Holodomor. In this case, authors suggest nothing new, repeating all main statements concerning the Holodomor, and they only exaggerate the official rhetoric. For example, it is mentioned in Fedir Turchenko's textbook that "in the winter of 1932-1933 the famine knocked at peasants' doors", and "these poor [peasants] suffered from torturers of their own nation".¹²⁵ As a result, "alive were too weak to bury

¹²⁴ Podol's'kyi Anatoliy, A Reluctant Look Back: Jewry and the Holocaust in Ukraine, in *Osteuropa: Impulses for Europe*, Berlin: Osteuropa, 2008, p. 274.

¹²⁵ Turchenko Fedir, *Contemporary History of Ukraine. Part One (1919-1934)*, Kyiv: Geneza, 2002, pp. 280-281.

dead”. The rhetoric of lament sometimes was connected an image of the Dark Ages. Describing the passport system of the beginning of the 1930s, an author claimed that it made a peasant “a state serf, an object of medieval exploitation”.¹²⁶

The second discourse was inherited from the Soviet educational system. The structure of textbooks, periodization of history, titles of each paragraph and even vocabulary had not been changed radically since 1991. Thus, an event called to separate contemporary Ukraine from the totalitarian past was described in textbooks in a way usual for a Soviet school.

2.4. The National Book of Remembrance of the 1932-1933 Holodomor Victims in Ukraine (hereinafter - the National Book of Remembrance)

The National Book of Remembrance was published during 2008 in accordance with the decree № 250/2007 issued by the president of Ukraine on March 28, 2007.¹²⁷ In total the National Book consists of twenty two thousand pages that form one National and eighteen regional volumes. Thus, the geography of the Holodomor covers seventeen regions of contemporary Ukraine without the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Ternopil, Khmelnytsky and Chernivtsi regions (since in 1932-1933 were not included into the USSR).

The publication of the Book was made by local executive authorities (representatives of regional state administrations were the part of editorial collegiums of their region’s volume); they were accompanied by the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, which developed the general concept of the edition, design, and the structure of all volumes. In this light, there is

¹²⁶ Ibidem, p. 279.

¹²⁷ Decree of the President of Ukraine on the 75th Anniversary of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine (March, 28, 2007): <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/5935.html>.

no need to examine each part of the Book separately. Therefore, we will focus on the detailed analysis only of the nation-wide volume.

It is obvious that idea to create a database of victims' names and testimonies of survivors in Ukraine is not unique. For instance, in the early 1990s, the similar project took place in order to commemorate the victims of the WWII: in 1992 the Decree "On Ukraine's Memory Book" was issued by the President of Ukraine to specify names of people fell down in the World War II and places of their burial. The project has 250 volumes of martyrology.¹²⁸

In 2008, an electronic project with the same name "the National Book of Remembrance" was created. It aimed "to bring together separated and often handed in different library collections volumes of the Book of Remembrance".¹²⁹ Moreover, the phrase "the Book of Remembrance" is also used in the context of other events of Ukrainian and world history.

Every volume of the Book of Remembrance, except the National, consists of (1) an introductory article, (2) martyrology-article (which contains the list of victims of hunger, structured according to the administrative division), (3) section, which contains the testimony of survivors of the Holodomor, (4) section which contains documents of the time (usually they reproduce the original, rarely photocopies).

In part of volumes a short section is added at the end. It deals with the history of honoring the famine victims in the certain region (for example, it could be found in the volume of the Donetsk region).

¹²⁸ Decree of the President of Ukraine on the Book of Remembrance of Ukraine (May, 4, 1992): <http://tnt43.com/membook/index.php?section=about&page=4>.

¹²⁹ See Ukrainian Book of Remembrance: <http://memory-book.com.ua/>.

Since the National volume is to create the overall context for all regional volumes, it has a slightly different structure. It consists of eight chapters. The first chapter, written by Stanislav Kulchycky, has a typical title “How it was”¹³⁰. At the beginning of the chapter the historian says: “Famine in the USSR and the Kuban region was the result of the construction of communism, performed by terrorist means in the multinational country”¹³¹. Let us consider the way this claim is illustrated.

According to Kulchycky, the cause and the prerequisite for almost all events of the first half of the 20th century in Russian and later Soviet history was Vladimir Lenin. It was Lenin who “stood for the immediate liquidation of private property, commodity-money relations and the market”¹³² and it was Lenin who “made it clear why he needed a dictatorship: to build communism”¹³³. “In order to realize a utopia which was born in the mind of one person (i.e., Lenin – S.O.) it was necessary to trigger a social revolution”¹³⁴. As a result of the revolution it was founded “the party of a million as “a pass” from masses...to the committee”, and “the leader who subordinated himself the Politburo of the Central Committee became the sole power holder”¹³⁵.

In the text of the chapter Lenin acts as a single author and the initiator of all government concepts and policy until mid 1920; then he is replaced by Stalin who acquires the same characteristics. In particular, the cause of the Holodomor, according to Kulchycky, was that “Stalin was waiting for an opportune moment to attack Ukraine”¹³⁶. With a help of such logic of explanation it was created the image of “Leader” and the heads of the party whose personal

¹³⁰ Kulchycky Stanislav, *As It Happened, in National Book of Remembrance of 1932-1933 Holodomor Victims in Ukraine*, Kyiv, 2008, p. 9.

¹³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

¹³² *Ibidem*, p. 11.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 12.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 19.

decision determines the life of people and nations. The Holodomor was caused by the destruction of productive forces, and also by “dimensionless *Stalin’s* state grain storage”¹³⁷.

Kulchycky writes:

“We agree that the all-Union famine, including the situation in Ukraine, was caused by these factors. However, only in the USSR and the Kuban region the famine of the past two months of 1932 began to grow into the Holodomor with the incomparably greater number of victims”¹³⁸.

Thus, the author emphasizes the special status of the Holodomor, and at the same he responds to his opponents who “suggest the idea of equivalence, according to which the famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine was the same as in all other regions of the Soviet Union”¹³⁹.

It is noteworthy that Kulchycky systematically claims that he destroys the stereotypes of the public and corrects mistakes of previous researchers of the Holodomor that is why he often says how it was “in reality”¹⁴⁰. In such a way, the National Book of Remembrance becomes nearly the most important instrument for placing the historical narrative of the Holodomor to the memorial narrative; since 880 thousand surnames of the famine victims and eyewitness testimonies collected in its 18 volumes legitimate the history of the Holodomor, as stated in the Nation-Wide volume¹⁴¹. This function of the National Book of Remembrance is repeatedly emphasized in official discourse.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Ibidem, p. 19.

¹³⁸ Ibidem, p. 19.

¹³⁹ Ibidem, p. 19.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Kulchycky Stanislav, *As It Happened*, in National Book of Remembrance of 1932-1933 Holodomor Victims in Ukraine, Kyiv, 2008, pp. 12, 15, 19, 21 etc.

¹⁴¹ According to the statistics of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory.

¹⁴² See, for example, about “a significant evident base on genocide of Ukrainians during the 1932-1933 Holodomor of Ukraine” and about “200000 documented evidences of genocide” in Holodomor of 1932-1933 – genocide of Ukrainian people, Kyiv, 2008.

The National Book of Remembrance as the martyrology of the victims the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine - it is also a way to “increase the emotional impact ... because to find one familiar name, a person inevitably realizes that there were thousands of others who sacrificed their lives”¹⁴³.

The question of the expansion of the famine in the Soviet Union and its relation to the national composition of the population of regions was examined by Vasyl Marochko and Volodymyr Tylishchak who are the authors of the chapter “The territory of the Holodomor”. In the chapter before the lists of areas and settlements of Ukraine, who suffered by the famine, there is demographic analysis of the population. The authors mention: “Discussions on the ethnic and national composition of the rural population suffered from the famine are doomed to abstract confusion without a specific socio-demographic analysis of ethnic and “moral statistics”. The concepts of “ethnocide”, “classcide”, “sociocide”, which are used by some Ukrainian and foreign historians to assess the Holodomor, remain with modern definitions of contemporary political science. They do not reveal the real situation in the Ukrainian village 1932-1933”¹⁴⁴.

The authors equal the concepts of “Ukrainian people” and “Ukrainian Village”. According to them, “the ethnic composition of the rural population proves the undeniable fact that the peasantry constituted the social basis of Ukrainian ethnos”¹⁴⁵.

Examining in details the ethnic composition the authors emphasize that despite the fact that national minority areas suffered from the famine as well, “arguments about the

¹⁴³ Turbina Elena, Places of Memory, Monuments, and “New Democracy”, in *Topos*, 2000, # 3, p. 93.

¹⁴⁴ Marochko Vasyl, Tylishchak Volodymyr, Territory of the Holodomor, in *National Book of Remembrance of 1932-1933 Holodomor Victims in Ukraine*, Kyiv, 2008, p. 195.

¹⁴⁵ Ibidem, p. 198.

‘internationality of the hunger’ are hardly trustworthy”¹⁴⁶. Marochko and Tylishchak repeats the idea that was discussed above: “Hunger began in the autumn of 1931, and during the first half of 1932 it *gained distinct characteristics of the Holodomor*, absorbing more and more areas”¹⁴⁷.

As it is known, one of the strategies of constructing historical narrative of the Holodomor was an emphasis on the uniqueness of this phenomenon. Such uniqueness was also emphasized by a capital letter of the word.

The National volume also contained the list of documents about Holodomor, photo documents (photocopies and pictures), extracts of testimonies of witnesses, chronicle and selected bibliography. All this material was put together in order to represent each region which suffered from the Holodomor. As we see, the Holodomor memorial narrative does not cover the entire territory of Ukraine. But at the same time it claims to be the exclusive part of the history of the “Ukrainian people” in general.

On the other hand, geography of the memorial narrative, which also includes the National Book of Remembrance, covers all regions of Ukraine (regardless whether they are victims of the Holodomor or not). Full edition of the National Book of Remembrance, the graphic evidence of mass starvation of the 1932-1933, should be distributed in all regions of Ukraine, according to the prescription of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine¹⁴⁸. Full amount of copies of each volume of the National Book of Remembrance is 3000 copies. Fifteen hundred of them are sent to the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, which forms full editions. And the other fifteen hundred are kept in the region.

¹⁴⁶ Ibidem, p. 198-199.

¹⁴⁷ Ibidem, p. 199.

¹⁴⁸ Decree of the Cabinet of Ukraine on the National Book of Remembrance (January, 14, 2009): <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=22-2009-%F0>.

The lounge of the National Book of Remembrance in Kyiv on the 18th of November 2008 was a nation-wide measure. It was held with the participation of top officials and the President of Ukraine¹⁴⁹. The person responsible for the book lounge was Minister of Culture of Ukraine himself. The lounge of the National Book of Remembrance was the central event of the so called Mournful Week preceding the Day of Commemoration of Victims of the Holodomor. It was held in the “Ukrainian House” culture center, where all the other so called chamber events of the Day of Commemoration of Victims of the Holodomor were held. During the Mournful Week in the “Ukrainian House” were also presented: (1) exhibition of publications on Holodomor, which were printed during 2007-2008 in Ukraine and abroad; (2) exhibition of posters prepared by the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory; (3) exhibition of children’s drawing competition on Holodomor, held by the International Fund “Ukraine 3000” which is patronized by the ex-president Viktor Yushchenko’s wife. The screening of documentary and feature films devoted to the Holodomor also took place in the “Ukrainian house”¹⁵⁰.

The National Book of Remembrance was exhibited in the main hall of the “Ukrainian House”. Before the November, 18 the electronic edition of the book was launched with a full edition of the National Book of Remembrance.

The President Yushchenko was the first who found his relatives that died from the Holodomor in the electronic database of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine.¹⁵¹ The

¹⁴⁹ Decree of the Cabinet of Ukraine on the 75th Anniversary of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine (October, 29, 2008): http://sumy-region.gov.ua/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=213&Itemid=12.

¹⁵⁰ Decree of the Cabinet of Ukraine on the 75th Anniversary of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine (October, 29, 2008): http://sumy-region.gov.ua/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=213&Itemid=12.

¹⁵¹ The 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine (official press statement of the Secretary of the President of Ukraine): <http://web.ukrinform.com/web/Test/golodomor.html>.

ceremony of the launch of the National Book of Remembrance was partially or completely broadcasted live by some central and local TV channels.¹⁵²

2.5. The National Memorial of the Holodomor Victims in Kyiv and Other Monuments

The first monument devoted to the Holodomor was set in Edmonton, Canada in 1983 and in Ukraine in 1989.¹⁵³ At the beginning of the 1990s, the Holodomor monuments usually were created on the initiative of politics and public organizations which appealed to the “historical truth.” But later it lost its political meaning and entered into common every-day practices till the Holodomor came back to political discourse during Yuchchenko’s presidency.

According to the new Holodomor Law, monuments and memorials were set in 2007-2008 in a mandatory manner. In order to implement the law, there were 6645 monuments and memorials set during two years in 17 regions of Ukraine.¹⁵⁴ The law also included an installation of the National Memorial of the Holodomor Victims in Kyiv. The Memorial was opened in November, 2008.

Christian symbolic, mostly obeli, was widely used in monumental commemoration of the Holodomor victims.¹⁵⁵ Other type was represented by gravestones with epigraphs.¹⁵⁶ More massive monuments usually included a figure of a woman or a child, or both of them.¹⁵⁷ The

¹⁵² For example, “5th Channel”, ICTV, “Kyiv”.

¹⁵³ *Erinnerungsorte an den Holodomor 1932/33 in der Ukraine*, Berlin, 2008, p. 27.

¹⁵⁴ Data from inner reports of the Institute of national memory.

¹⁵⁵ *Erinnerungsorte an den Holodomor 1932/33 in der Ukraine*, pp. 39, 40, 41, 44, 49, 52.

¹⁵⁶ *Ebd.*, pp. 42, 50, 62, 125, 133.

¹⁵⁷ *Ebd.*, pp. 77, 133, 134, 136, 138, 165. The official emblem of the commemorative ceremonies in 2008 also included figures of a woman and a child. See, please, Picture 1.

traditional Ukrainian mournful symbols, such as bells, cranes, and candles were also used in monuments.

The main tendency for all monuments was that they symbolized grief, but did not represent culprits, causes, or circumstances of an event. The state determined the number of monuments, but it did not actually determine the image of them. Presently, a memorial narrative borrowed from the historical a statement about the mass famine, but did not borrow from the historical narrative that it was caused by people. Even the central National Memorial of the Holodomor Victims in Kyiv built especially before the 75th anniversary of the Holodomor continued this trend.

In his article *Whom to Mourn and Whom to Forget? (Re)constructing Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia*, Anatolyi Khazanov explores the commemoration of the totalitarian past. He states that there is a similar situation in Russia when “the tragic events of Soviet history do not have an adequate symbolic representation”.¹⁵⁸ A German historian Stefan Troebst exploring the East-European region ~~reckons~~ stated that the new political elite in Russia and Ukraine not only originated from the old one but also acts in alliance with the totalitarian past when new power institutions are not separated from it, thus resulting in one type of memorial culture.¹⁵⁹ This continuity is well illustrated in memorials and monuments devoted to totalitarian crimes, when those who set them are not ready to name the criminals.

Absence of appropriate representation also could be mentioned in official commemorative ceremonies which were usually connected with monuments and memorials. In 2008, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine sanctioned a list of commemorative events, in which the President of Ukraine, the Prime Minister of Ukraine and other officials took part.

¹⁵⁸ Khazanov Anatolyi, *Whom to Mourn and Whom to Forget? (Re)constructing Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia*, p. 293.

¹⁵⁹ Troebst Stefan, «What carpet?» Memorial Culture in Post-Communist Societies of Eastern Europe, in *Ab imperio*. 2004 (4), p. 56.

There were mournful processions, requiems, and prayers. Officials placed a wreath to the National Memorial of the Holodomor Victims and the President took part in a rite conducted at Saint Sophia Cathedral. Alexander Etkind, a well-known Russian historian, states that “crosses and grave stones suit to the commemoration of any death, but not exactly that which was caused by the criminal regime.”¹⁶⁰

Commemorational practices could be considered as a way how people accept their past. According to Frijda Nico, acceptance of the past is an element in constructing personal identity. It can also be created through the formation of a certain collective identity and by redefining the membership of a certain group.¹⁶¹ Nico states that commemoration represents an event as an objective reality.¹⁶² Thus, commemoration of the Holodomor represents it as mass loss of people not explaining the possible causes of it; and as a crime not mentioning criminals.

As we can see, conditions for the constant presence of the Holodomor in public discourse was created. At the same time, however, constant and obsessive pandering to this topic caused a decrease in people’s attention. Another negative trend was that legislative terms had been widely used without any legislative procedure. Mykola Ryabchuk, a Ukrainian publicist, believes that it caused the legislative nihilism in Ukrainian society.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Etkind Alexandr, Time to Level Stones: Post-Revolutionary Culture of Political Mourning in Contemporary Russia, in *Ab Imperio*, 2004 (2), p. 61.

¹⁶¹ Nico Frijda, Commemorating, in *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*, Mahwah, NJ, 1997, p. 108.

¹⁶² Ibidem, p. 112.

¹⁶³ Ryabchuk Mykola, Memorial Culture and Policy of Forgetting, in: <http://www.strana-oz.ru/?numid=34&article=1397>.

Conclusion

The 1932-1933 Holodomor victims' commemoration in 2006-2009 gives a significant case study of politics of memory in contemporary post-Communist states in Eastern Europe. A massive campaign provided by the state shows a wide range of measures which could be used in order to implement dominant memorial discourse within the state. It is a question for further explorations if this campaign achieved its goals.

Meanwhile, adoption of the Law on the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine by the Parliament of Ukraine in 2006 indicated a new stage in Ukrainian contemporary politics of memory. First of all, it introduced into Ukrainian legislation a concept of genocide concerning the history of the Communist past reinforcing it in the official memorial discourse. Secondly, this law provided a legislative basis for a large-scale commemorative campaign never happened in Ukraine before.

According to the Holodomor law, the main power agency to supervise and organize this campaign on the official level was the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory initiated by the President of Ukraine in 2005. Establishing it, the President of Ukraine Viktor Yushchenko became a first leader of independent Ukraine who certified his concernment in politics of memory. During his presidency Yushchenko also supervised all official events commemorated the 1932-1933 Holodomor victims.

During 2006-2009 the Institute of memory published few editions representing an official narrative of the 1932-1933 Holodomor. It was also a main agency which supervised publishing of the National book of Remembrance of Ukraine, a significant edition that provided evidences of "mass-murder" character of the famine. Together with other power agencies the Institute arranged the Memorial of the 1932-1933 Holodomor victims.

Along with commemorative ceremonies all these measures were invoked to represent the 1932-1933 famine narrative as of genocide, a man-made tragedy of Ukrainian nation. With the Holodomor campaign victimization of the Ukrainian national historical narrative reached its peak, since the main emphasis in it was made on the victims, but not perpetrators. As we demonstrated, it is a common tendency in the post-Communist politics of memory shared, among others, by Ukraine and Russia.

At the same time, this campaign should be considered as an attempt to cover with the Holodomor narrative the whole territory of Ukraine. At the time, when politicians in contemporary Ukraine involved in wars of memory, trying to gain political dividends from the historical events, it was an attempt to establish a narrative acceptable for all regions.

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