THE GREAT FAMINE IN UKRAINE
FROM 1930 TO 1933:
AN INSTRUMENT OF NATIONALISM THEN AND TODAY

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ABSTRACT

The Great Famine in the Soviet Union lasted between the years of 1930 and 1933. The devastation peaked in winter of 1932 and continued throughout 1933. Statistics which accurately represent the tragedy are impossible to find due to Stalin's deliberate erasure of records. These records would have depicted a scene of mass murder. It has been estimated that the Famine took around eight to ten million lives. Five to six million of these citizens belonged to the Ukrainian SSR. This occurred because of Stalin's direct targeting of the Ukrainian state in order to industrialize and modernize the Soviet Union in an unrealistic time frame. Thus, for maximum results, he instituted a system of collective farming throughout the USSR which most severely affected the peasants of the Ukrainian countryside. When the peasants rebelled, refusing to be manipulated by the Soviet Regime, Stalin punished the peasantry for their defiance by instituting a man made famine through the exportation of harvested crops out of Ukraine. Furthermore, he prohibited the provision of aid, as well as the emigration of Ukrainian peasants from the countryside. This resulted in the mass starvation of the Ukrainian peasantry, killing millions of innocent victims. More recently, the topic of Holodomor, the Famine in Ukraine, has resurfaced as a politically polarizing issue. Russia refuses to accept its role in the mass murder of Ukrainian people, while Ukraine asserts the Russian role as an intentional exploiter of Ukraine. Their refusal to acknowledge Holodomor represents an example of Russian authority's inability to recognize Ukraine as an equal sovereign nation.
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As the youngest of three boys, Anatoly Makohon would often accompany his oldest brothers Pavol, Ivan and Wasyl to collect any food they could find. The children would sneak into the fields to grab wheat at night. Once the Russian authorities learned of their scheme, they started shooting. The guards didn't care about their lives, and many village children died from bullet wounds. No one cared back then, everyone had their own tragedies. Once the guards grew tired of wasting bullets, they poisoned the fields to teach the peasants a lesson. After Oleg died from eating poisoned grain, the Makohon children avoided the fields that had been poisoned by the Russian guards. They searched for other food, however scarce. Instead the children collected dead horse meat and porcupines. When there were no horses or porcupines left to eat, rumors spread throughout the village of cannibalism. He did not believe them. His friends and neighbors would never resort to such drastic measures. They stayed strong; they believed the famine would end.

Anatoly Makohon died during the Great Famine. His older brothers, Ivan and Wasyl along with his little sister, Maria, died shortly after. His parents and grandparents also starved to death from 1932 to 1933. Only his older brother, Pavlo, survived and lived to tell their stories.¹

Between 1930 and 1933 the Soviet Regime murdered approximately ten million people in retaliation for resisting their oppressive rule. The Soviets used these deaths to institute a strict communist system. It is believed that over six million of those killed were Ukrainian villagers. They starved alone in their villages. The food they harvested was confiscated and sent to Soviet headquarters. They were forbidden from leaving their villages, writing letters, and asking for help. They could do nothing but starve.

The history of the 1930s is one of political mass murder. Some victims were shot, some were tortured, but most died from the lack of food. The Soviet authorities took everything; the grain, the animals, money, and private possessions. They searched peasant houses, dug through their fields, interrogated the peasants, and, if anything was found, beat them. The guards poisoned the fields and arrested those who resisted. Few returned to the villages after their arrest, while those who returned died shortly after. Children were very susceptible to the effects of the famine. They swelled up from hunger and died. Cannibalism became more common as the famine continued. Illegal vendors sold human flesh on the black market. People tried to escape, but the authorities prevented them from entering the train stations in order to keep the brutalities of the regime a secret, even from their own people. The stronger ones walked across the railroad tracks to the cities. However, as time passed, corpses littered the area as people weakened by the famine wasted away. Those lucky to make it into the cities arrived with nothing. They had no access to bread rations or connections to labor. These situations forced them to beg in order to survive. Since the people in the city had little to spare, peasants died in the streets. Peasant corpses distressed the population because they served as a shocking

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reminder of the Soviet Regime's brutal tactics. In retaliation, the peasants were persecuted, beaten and sent to the death barracks. Again, peasant children were punished the most severely for frightening the populace with their skeletal appearance. The Soviet authorities picked up around a hundred peasant children a day, sending them to the death barracks where they died of hunger, alone. Some children pleaded to be left outside, so they could die in the open air. Others were too weak to plead; they died quietly. They died alone.

Meanwhile, Stalin forged ahead with his ambitious Five Year Plan. This relied on Ukraine to feed the Soviet Union and provide grain for exportation. Stalin and his advisors estimated that, to obtain maximum results, collective farming provided the most effective means for feeding the Soviet Union. Although collective farming was implemented throughout every Soviet region, collectivization affected Ukraine the most severely. Stalin envisioned his Empire's salvation by fully utilizing Ukrainian territory. Stalin believed that he could "break the rules of traditional economics, rescue his country from poverty and isolation, and remake the continent in his own image." Ukraine's fertile lands and millions of agricultural laborers fully dedicated to the Soviet plan would, in Stalin's eyes, nourish the Union in its effort to surpass Western production. He was a powerful dictator and expected complete obedience. He failed to realize that Ukraine would not submit to his authority.

To fully understand the reasons for Ukrainian resistance, one must learn the interlinked histories of the Ukrainian and Russian states. Ethnically similar and geographically positioned at the border of Russia and Poland, Ukraine has historically been identified as a Russian territory. Due to Russian influence in the global market, Ukraine's achievements were perceived as having occurred under the umbrella of Russian affairs. Although Russia firmly believes in Ukraine's

4 Ibid., 19.
status as an entity of Russia, they fail to treat Ukrainians and their state with humanity and respect. They expressed this attitude to the utmost extent during the Holodomor. The Ukrainian SSR coined the term Holodomor to signify the famine in Ukraine during the early 1930s. The literal translation of Holodomor means “murder by hunger.”

To achieve collectivization the Soviet Regime implemented a strict dekulakization policy, banishing the kulaks either to Siberia or less prosperous areas within Ukraine. The kulaks consisted of the “wealthy” peasants, a group the Russian state depended on. Under NEP, Bukharin repeatedly emphasized the importance of trusting the economy to the sober and disciplined peasant elite. However, the new Soviet mentality adhered to different principles, ascribing to the primary objective of rapid industrialization of agriculture at any cost. Thus, in a matter of months, the kulaks lost their status as respected citizens and became enemies of the state. They were the first to be targeted and thereby set the foundation for later abuses. The kulaks represented a policy that Stalin disapproved of and were, consequently, annihilated.

Once the wealthy peasants were removed from society, collectivization was enforced and peasants throughout the region were forced into collective farms. Ukrainian peasants were skeptical of the new policy, seeing no benefit to forfeiting all their personal property in favor of the collective lifestyle. Further still, these new regulations most heavily focused their reforms on the Ukrainian state, another example of Russian abuse and manipulation against the Ukrainian people. As many times before, in response to oppression by the Russian authorities, Ukrainians rebelled. They hid their grain, slaughtered their animals, and sold their belongings. They resisted the Soviet Rule as steadfastedly as possible, but they underestimated the extremes of Stalin's ambition. Sensing dissent, Stalin decided to permanently suppress the peasant resistance.

Soviet authorities gathered all the crops, emptied houses, burned fields, stole valuables, harassed individuals, and searched their houses until nothing remained. The peasants had no recourse. Stalin took every precaution to ensure the containment of his acts to the Ukrainian countryside. Like the kulaks before them, the Ukrainian peasants faced a death sentence. In those years, Ukrainians learned a valuable lesson. Their land and their people will always be exploited by the Russian authorities, and any form of resistance would result in fatal consequences.

This thesis considers the recent work by Timothy Snyder on the atrocities committed in Eastern Europe during the Soviet and Nazi regimes. In his book *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, Snyder shifts away from the statistical analysis of the era by highlighting the plight of the individual victim during the murderous reign of both dictators. Additionally it utilizes the work of Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, Roman Serbyn, *The Famines in Ukraine*, and Hiroaki Kuromiya, *The Voices of the Dead: Stalin's Great Terror in the 1930s*. Their work emphasizes the suffering of the individual and the atrocities endured by common citizens during the Stalin Regime. Consequently, due to the personal analysis in their work, my thesis strays away from a stereotypically Soviet interpretation of the Famine, as summarized in Davies and Wheatcroft's book *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*. Their work and the Russian perspective on the Famine rejects the idea of an intentional famine. They argue that Stalin never intended for the death of millions and the Famine largely resulted from situational crop shortage. The results of evidence collected from secondary sources, statistics, and personal survivor interviews imply a deliberate scheme to annihilate any opposition to Stalin's decisions. Based on the theory of Russian Imperial domination, many sources about the Orange Revolution and Ukrainian election process betray a marked Russian influence within the Ukrainian system. Based on this perspective, I studied the works of Marta Dyczok, *Ukraine:
Movement Without Change, Change Without Movement, Mikhail Molchanov, Political Culture and National Identity in Russian-Ukrainian Relations and Cathy Young, Remember the Holodomor: The Soviet Starvation of Ukraine, 75 Years Later, to fully understand the impact of past tragedies in Russo-Ukrainian relations and the role of Holodomor in a resurgence of cultural memory due to the current political climate.

In this thesis I argue that Russia's mentality of exploitation has prevailed in Russo-Ukrainian relations and continues to have an influence on current politics. During the fall of the Soviet Union, Ukraine declared independence from the Russian Federation. This has been especially difficult for the Russia government to accept since Ukraine's secession signified the dismantling of its extensive Empire. Following Ukraine's separation, the other colonies quickly seceded. It is thus apparent that Ukraine is essential to the Russian Federation. Besides clear economic and geographic benefits — surplus of oil in southern Ukraine and its strategic location between Russia and Western Europe — Ukraine's independence invalidates Russian imperial status. Without Ukraine, Russia lacks identity as a global power and must compete internationally without the added benefits supplied by Ukraine. The Ukrainian territory is vital to the Russian state, and Russia has a strong incentive to reincorporate Ukraine. To achieve this goal, Russia has extensively worked towards recovering Ukraine by creating a strong economic and political dependence. Besides blatant manipulation and resistance towards a productive relationship, the Russian government refuses to grant Ukraine the independence they have rightfully earned. They continue to regulate Ukrainian policies by implementing a strong pro-Russian parliament, as is exemplified through the current political situation.

Due to Russia's increased attempts at undermining Ukraine's sovereignty, there has been a resurgence in cultural memory. Collective rehearsal of the memory of the famine encourages
resistance against Russian attempts to infringe upon Ukrainian sovereignty. The Holodomor serves as a continual reminder of the atrocities committed by the Russian government against the Ukrainian people and of their attitude of neglect towards Ukrainian lives. Russian refusal to recognize the severity and specificity of what occurred in Ukraine between 1930 and 1933 proves their negligence in acknowledging a distinct Ukrainian culture. Thus, Russian efforts to reintegrate Ukraine only serve Russian interests and would prove detriment to the nation state of Ukraine.
PART I: THE YEARS BEFORE THE FAMINE

Russian and Ukrainian history begins with Kievskaya Rus. The close proximity of the two overlapping nations has occasionally resulted in camaraderie and solidarity. More commonly, however, the proximity begets political and social hostility. Today, the sentiment of animosity mixed with fellowship remains a prevalent trait among both Russian and Ukrainian peoples. Ukraine has sought independence through the assertion of their varied culture and heritage as being vastly different to that of their close neighbors. Although Russia has noticed these cultural differences, Ukraine's abundant resources have caused Russia to prioritize its observation. Independence and solidarity has been a topic of conflict that throughout history has driven an impermeable stake between the two nations that continues to influence decisions and politics.

The inception of this conflict can trace its origins back to the founding of an Imperialist nation on Kievskaya Rus. Russians believe that their history began when the Scandinavian Vikings conquered the Blacks Sea's north coast, Kievskaya Rus. This theory runs in direct contrast to the claims of Ukrainian history. At the turn of the nineteenth century, Ukrainian nationalists and historians alike have claimed that Kievskaya Rus is part of current day Ukrainian territory on the Dnieper River. Therefore, they believe that the accomplishments of Kievskaya Rus belong to Ukrainian history and that Russian history has unjustly monopolized and absorbed these feats. Many Ukrainians view this as a confirmation and symbol of Russian Imperialism.
today. Prior to the construction of each nation's modern identity, hostility and conflict existed. Ukrainians value their history and cherish their strong sense of historical solidarity. For example, a typical third grade curriculum includes learning about Ukrainian history, beginning with Kievskaya Rus. Children, from a young age, grow up valuing their history and embracing their past. Historical accomplishments continue to prove instrumental in Ukraine's social and political psyche. Additionally, Ukrainians value their history and characterize it as a distinctive national possession. The original Ukrainian community was believed to have been founded by three brothers, Kyi, Shcheck, and Khoriv, and a sister, Lybid. The significance of their discovery is capitalized by the strategic location of the Ukrainian nation on the Dnieper River. This legend is relevant because of its perpetuation throughout history. Modern Ukrainian historical literature signifies the birth of Ukraine through these nationally heroic figures. The folk elements of the tale, instead of detracting from the validity of the story, only heighten Ukrainian solidarity and help to further engrain the story within the culture.

Russian history starts with an identical legend. They value the folk tale as a symbol of their history and recognize the importance the tale holds as a basic foundation of the Russian empire, as well as the nation's current territorial and political accomplishments. Elements of this tale have simultaneously been used to both strengthen the Ukrainian identity and motivate the vast Russian empire towards national stimulation and productivity. The discovery of the Kievskaya Rus in today's Western Ukraine, along with further expansion into the Vladimir-Suzdal and Novgorod regions, extenuated the importance of the brothers' actions. The Kievan policy of acquiring new lands signifies to Russia the nobility of their expansionary ambitions. A strong and vast territory is viewed as critical by both the Russian government and the people.

7 Ibid., 18-22.
Since the earlier Slavs prevailed over numerous attacks from Asiatic tribes, until the Mongol Era from 1240 to 1450, Russia viewed itself as a resilient country capable of defeating and resisting invading armies. Soviet historians further dissected the triumphant tale of Russian origins by claiming that early Slavs followed a Marxian scheme. This plan created a utopian environment of equal and collective labor which resulted in the maximization of resources. By creating and re-embracing a socialist past, Soviet historians promoted communism through a falsified memory. Soviets argued that this period is a primitive form of communism because of collective land and goods. Today, historians have distanced themselves from this socialist theory and instead focus on the expansion and progress accomplished by their founders.

The difference in their historical interpretations exemplifies the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. Similar to the creation myth, symbolizing the emergence of Russian and Ukrainian states, the official history of these two nations follows an identical pattern of fact accompanied by vastly diverse interpretations. While Russians view the emergence of Kievskaya Rus in Western Ukraine as symbolic of Ukraine’s place within the Russian Empire, Ukrainians view this fact as proof of their natural independence. The emergence of Kievskaya Rus in the region of Western Ukraine furthers the claim that the three brothers set out to discover Vladimir-Suzdal, founded Ukraine and Novgorod separately from the Galicina-Volhynia region, and discovered the land which today encompasses the Russian Empire. The separation of Galicina-Volhynia from Vladimir-Suzdal and Novgorod is a vital element of Ukrainian history that signifies Ukrainian separation from the Russian Empire. The separation represents Ukrainian independence and established the Ukrainian community as an independent entity.

Further recordings of Russian and Ukrainian history in the Kievskaya Rus Era, from 850

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to 1240AD, are more accurate and less controversial than the founding tale embraced by the Russian and Ukrainian states. Historians believe that a Viking chieftain sailed down the Dnieper River in the ninth century and established his rule in Kiev (Ukraine's contemporary capital), followed by a succession of territorial expansions. After the chieftain's original settlement in the ninth century, Kievskaya Rus continued to develop as a federation consisting of a dozen Slav-Varangian principalities ruled by princes of the House of Riurik, stationed in Kiev and Novgorod. Although Kievskaya Rus represented a weak federation lacking a single army or administration, a few princes such as Oleh, Ihor, and Sviatoslav the Conqueror must be noted for their continued effort towards strengthening the Kievskaya Rus through unification of the Eastern Slavic Tribes and subsequent territorial growth.

A significant transition from a pagan society to a religious, clergy dominated entity occurred in 988 when Prince Vladimir I converted Kievskaya Rus to the Orthodox Christian Church. The significance of the church's establishment not only contributed to and helped define a developing culture, but the church also represented an anti-soviet symbol after 1918. In twentieth century historiography, Bolsheviks struggled mightily to destroy this symbol in an attempt to erase even the most insignificant stream of resistance to their ideology. Religion today continues to play a significant role both culturally and symbolically in Russian and Ukrainian society. With the fall of communism, religion gained a certain degree of importance and practicable legitimacy, viewed as an entity which directly attempted to combat Soviet influence and policy. After the fall, Ukraine returned to practicing the Eastern Orthodox religion, with a minority worshiping under Ukrainian Greek Catholicism. Although the strong return to faith expresses the dissatisfaction and resentment felt towards oppressive Soviet measures, in the present day religion symbolizes the divide within the country. Allegiance to

the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is divided between the Moscow Patriarch and Kiev Patriarch, further illustrating the national impasse and divided allegiance between Ukraine and Russia.

After the Mongol invasion, Kievskaya Rus slowly became a vassal of the Mongol Empire. However, the fourteenth century experienced many rebellions and insurrections against the Mongol rule, separating and incorporating most of Ukraine under the dominion of Polish-Lithuania. By 1569, under the Union of Lublin, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth absorbed several eastern territories, submitting Ukraine to the Polish administration. Ukrainian nobles converted to Catholicism and adapted a Polish lifestyle while Ukrainian peasants remained loyal and separate, continuing to worship under the Eastern Orthodox Faith and the Uniate Church. Ukrainians, who retaliated against serfdom, were coined as the Ukrainian Cossacks by the ruling class and distinguished their passion and martial skills in battle. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth utilized the Ukrainian Cossacks' rebellious traits for protecting its borders against the Tatars and in wars against the Muscovy state. Thus, by securing national borders, Ukrainian people became an essential attribute to the Polish-Lithuanian state, helping strengthen and solidify the empire.

In 1653 the Ukrainian Cossacks retaliated against the Polish-Lithuanian regime by allying with the Muscovy state in retaliation to the oppression experienced by ethnic Ukrainians under Polish-Lithuanian rule. The Ukrainian Cossack leader, Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky, instigated an uprising against the Polish-Lithuania Commonwealth that escalated into a six year long Ukrainian insurrection against Polish rule. In 1654, a settlement was reached under the Pereislav Agreement reinstating the territory that is considered modern day Eastern Ukraine under Muscovite rule. This consensus resulted in a dramatic power shift for both the Russian Empire

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11 Ibid. 5-10.
and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. While present day’s Eastern Ukraine was part of the Commonwealth, Poland-Lithuania had been the predominant military power in Eastern Europe. Tsar Ivan IV’s unsuccessful attacks on the Commonwealth during the Livonian War in 1557-82 and the later Smolensk War of 1632-1634, resulted in temporary Polish occupation, from 1605 to 1612, of the Muscovy state, which illustrates the might of Polish-Lithuania. Following Ukraine’s defection from the commonwealth, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth lost their access to the Baltic Sea and their prominent military position of strength against Ukrainian Cossack raiders. The loss of Ukrainian Territory proved detrimental to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, resulting in an irreversible decline of power and status.

For Muscovy, the newly gained association with Ukrainian territory under the Pereislav Agreement brought strength and significant agricultural benefits to their empire. Ukraine’s strategic location on the Black Sea provided Russia with access to future southern expansion, while its connection to Central European enabled trade opportunities. When Ukraine became a satellite of the Russian empire, the newly acquired resources allowed the Muscovy state to expand and establish a powerful empire.

In the years following the Pereislav Agreement, the Muscovy Empire strengthened their hold on the Ukrainian state, converting Ukrainian land from satellite status to property of the Russian Empire. The Agreement clearly stated that the Ukrainian State was to be solely governed by Ukrainian Cossacks and allowed to maintain the religious status as a constituent of the Ukrainian Church. By 1658, four years after the formation of the Ukrainian-Russian alliance, the Pereislav Agreement retained little to no value. Russian inspectors ruled on Cossack land, Russian soldiers continuously confiscated Ukrainian land, and the Ukrainian

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12Basarab, xii-xv.
13Ibid., xiii.
Church consistently combated hostility and discrimination by the Muscovy Empire. The Russian tendency towards centralization of power quickly overtook any push to maintain pleasant relations with the Ukrainian Cossacks.

Peter the Great’s reign (1682-1725) coincided with Ukrainian re-establishment within the Russian Empire. He modernized, expanded and transformed Russia into a major power. While historians attribute his accomplishments to education and driven motivation, the impact of the newly acquired Ukrainian territory must not be neglected. With this newly acquired land, Peter had access to European influences, allowing his modernization efforts to succeed and prosper. However, the main Ukrainian contribution to Peter the Great's modernization efforts were the services of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Due to the Cossacks local knowledge and proficiency in battle, they were valuable warriors. Their compulsory service under Peter the 1st provided the tsar with an elite cadre of fighting men to guide and lead battles. The Cossacks battled in Crimea, Turkey, and Sweden with little to no remunerations from the tsar while providing an invaluable service to the empire. After numerous protests and uprisings against the financial neglect displayed towards Cossack warriors, Peter I consented and in the year of 1722 founded the Little Russian College to organize Ukrainian financial affairs.

Peter the Great's establishment of the Little Russian College symbolizes the traditional Russian mentality towards Ukraine. The resources Ukraine provided to the Russian people were essential to the Empire’s success. The land and the Ukrainian people were beneficial to Russia, while the interests and modernization of Ukraine remained irrelevant to the Russian plan. This ideology is portrayed by the name of Peter the Great's governmental department responsible for Ukraine's finances, Little Russian College. The name of this department symbolizes Peter's, as well as the Russian, attitude towards Ukraine and Ukrainians. They believe in a moral and social
Ukrainian inferiority that promulgated an obligation of service and mien of obsequiousness towards the Empire. For example, Dmitrii Bantysh Kamensky recorded Ukrainian History in his comprehensive historic work; however, it is important to note the title of his work, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* [History of Little Russia],\(^{14}\) which further illustrated Ukraine's second-rate status in Russian memory. From these examples it becomes apparent that Russians view Ukraine as the little brother of Russia, prone to rebellion but still a subservient part of the Russian Empire. This mentality has carried over to the present era.

In 1754 the Senate abolished the border between Russia and Ukraine, making Ukrainian areas subject to the Russian tariff system. By 1756, the Senate became responsible for Ukrainian affairs, further incorporating the Ukrainian territory into the Russian state. In 1764 the Ukrainian gentry submitted a petition, "The Petition of the Gentry" to Elizabeth's successor, Catherine the II, 1762-1796, asking for a separate parliament, or *Rada*, and establishing Ukrainian universities in Kiev and Baturyn. Unlike Empress Elizabeth, Catherine had no desire to respect the Ukrainian gentry's wishes. She retaliated by discharging Rozumovsky and appointing General P.A. Rumiantsev as the governor-general of the Little Russian College. As her power grew, Catherine enforced increasingly radical changes. In 1781 all symbols of Ukrainian government were abolished and forbidden. In 1783 Russian serfdom was introduced, binding formerly free peasants to the land while Ukrainian Cossack military units were converted into regular infantry. Finally, in 1786, Ukrainian monasteries were secularized and turned into state property.\(^{15}\) Thus, through radical centralization and secularization of power, Catherine finished Peter the Great's process of complete Ukrainian absorption.

Like in Russia, Ukrainian peasants became legally bound to their respective lands and

\(^{14}\) Basarab, 81.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 18-21.
landlords. This edict established a life of slavery, requiring lifelong servitude from the peasants. The empire crushed minor rebellions to enforce its recent declarations. By binding the peasants to their land, Russian authority secured agricultural production. The implementation of serfdom most greatly affected Ukrainian people. Since the territory today known as Ukraine was largely composed of fertile land, serfdom mostly affected ethnic Ukrainians because of the high percentage of ethnic laborers. Thus, the policies essentially targeted the ethnic Ukrainian group due to their agricultural lifestyle.

After the emancipation of the serfs in 1851, and the Revolution of 1905, a new plan was implemented towards promoting industrial growth. Tsar Nicholas II appointed Pyotr Stolypin in 1906 as Prime Minister of Imperial Russia to promote agrarian reforms. Stolypin abolished the commune, promoting the privatization of farming by creating a new class of independent farmers. Stolypin argued that the “government should put its wager on the strong and sober,” thus believing that educated, driven workers, later known as the kulaks, could provide the solution to agrarian problems. In the Ukrainian countryside, responsible peasants prospered by transforming hard work into economic growth. A steady increase of wages for the industrious kulaks, due to Stolypin’s agrarian reforms, allowed Russia to prosper economically and compete in the international market by realizing its agricultural potential through the abolition of serfdom.

These changes did not prevent the Bolshevik revolution in November of 1917. Realizing the Russian Empire’s weakened state, Ukraine quickly seized the opportunity for independence. The Ukrainian Rada ascended to power in Kiev with full support from the Bolsheviks, who favored nationalistic movements against the Old Russian Regime. Unfortunately, as the Bolsheviks power increased, the less they emphasized the promised independence message. The Soviets hastily retracted their supportive outlook towards nationalist movements and restored a

16Mackenzie and Curran, 91.
wholly subservient communist rule in Ukraine. This decision abruptly terminated Ukraine’s struggle for independence. Similar to the tsars before them, the Soviets viewed Ukraine as a valuable resource, and held no intentions of granting them their promised independence.

After the Bolsheviks took over they immediately destroyed the old state, confiscated state and church lands, negated political parties, and restructured the economy in an attempt to irradiate the old political order and erect a new one. In 1921 the Bolshevik policies became more drastic and severe, leaving little room for rebellion. The Soviets quickly erected systematic terror, extreme economic policies, and a sentiment of acute hostility towards the West. The Bolsheviks, throughout the entire USSR, quickly succeeded in their destructive mission, although steps were implemented to reconstruct and rebuild the empire.17 Thus, the years from 1921 to 1927 display the efforts towards construction through a memory of recovery, compromise and a potent power struggle.

During the Civil War, Lenin implemented drastic economic policies but quickly retracted them, fearing fatal consequences. Convinced that the Soviet regime could only survive if the villages were split into two hostile camps, the authorities encouraged the “committee of the poor” to confiscate surplus grain, creating an impermeable divide between prosperous and poor peasants. In response farmers hid their grain and sold it on the black market. Farmers’ incentive fell, and agricultural production decreased by half from the previous year.18 The peasant resistance to collectivized farming foreshadowed the peasants’ rebellion of Stalin’s policy for collectivization in the early 1930s.

In 1921, Lenin realized that a tactical retreat was necessary to save the regime and ended grain requisitions while approving a fixed tax. During this New Economic Policy, rich peasants

17Mackenzie and Curran, 177-181.
18Ibid., 190-192.
once again were allowed to prosper while wages recovered to their prewar level. Unemployment, however, remained a grievous problem. As represented by his neglect towards administering collective farming, once in power Lenin realized how poorly he understood managing an industrial society. By 1920 he sadly conceded that, “We have to administer the proletariat state with the help of people belonging to the class we have overthrown.”\cite{19} Lenin further acknowledged exaggerated revolutions as dangerous and advocated careful economic construction. Unfortunately, little came of Lenin’s realization. Four years later he died, and his power fell into the hands of a ruthless dictator, Joseph Stalin, who fundamentally altered Soviet history.

Joseph Stalin came into power as Lenin’s devoted disciple. Embracing that image, Stalin ordered monuments to be erected of Lenin and urged that the leader’s body be embalmed and placed on public display in a tomb on the Red Square in Moscow. By cleverly exploiting the cult of Lenin, Stalin won public acclaim. Lacking public prestige, Stalin created a crucial alliance with Nikolai Bukharin, a Soviet politician. Bukharin’s policy supported the NEP, a conservative stronghold against the Left opposition which favored economic growth through private industry.\cite{20} However, Bukharin realized the merits of rapid growth through state controlled programs. Stalin also eventually decided that state centralization would provide better prospects for economic growth. After he quickly exiled the Leftist opposition, he instituted their plan for rapid economic industrialization. Stalin proclaimed that the 1926 stagnation was intolerable. Consequently, he imposed oppressive taxes on private producers. He supported this policy by encouraging short term sacrifice for future benefits.\cite{21} Rich peasants once again withheld their grain and sold it on the black market. Stalin considered rebellion as a personal

\cite{19} Mackenzie and Curran, 201.
\cite{21} Mackenzie and Curran, 238.
affront. In response, he closed down free markets, denounced hesitant officials, seized grain from peasants, and established the Five Year Plan, aspiring to implausible performance standards. In 1933, the party officials proclaimed that the first Five Year Plan had succeeded. For the people of the Soviet Union, nothing seemed further from the truth. Employment, the standard of living, wages, and housing conditions fell severely while malnutrition and disease took over ten million lives in under three years. For the people, the Five Year Plan was a tragedy.

The Five Year Plan and other economic changes instituted by Joseph Stalin affected Ukrainian territory to the greatest extent. The sequential mortality rate of five million deaths substantiates the vast neglect and malevolence shown towards the population of ethnic Ukrainians by the Soviet Union. Ukraine provided one of the greatest resources for the USSR, in terms of both fertile land and geographic location. Like numerous leaders before him, Stalin exploited Ukrainian land for the benefit of the centralized Russian regions while refusing to provide basic care and infrastructural support. Instead of contributing to the development of Ukraine, Stalin created dependence by crippling the region both socially and economically. He did not tolerate any form of dissent and treated each criticism as if it were an open insurrection. Russian authorities, operating under the supposition of inferiority, believed that Ukrainians lacked the work ethic and intelligence to realize the full potential of their agriculture; therefore, any lack of self-sustenance, regardless of the demands placed by the state onto the region, fell to the responsibility of the people. To the Soviet authorities and Russian people alike, Ukraine was simply a vassal of the Soviet Union. Thus the five million Ukrainian deaths, rationalized by Russian sentiments of superiority towards Ukraine, remain a justified price for the progressive plan of Soviet modernization.

22 Mackenzie and Curran, 241-250.
PART II: THE YEARS OF THE FAMINE, 1930 - 1933

In the first half of the twentieth century the territory today known as Ukraine suffered a serious of famines. The most catastrophic of these famines was the Holodomor of 1930-1933. From the evidence available today, it has become apparent that the Ukrainian Soviet Republic produced enough grain to support all of its inhabitants; however, due to the confiscation of this grain over five million Ukrainians died of hunger. Stalin's Regime categorized Ukrainians as second rate citizens and thus forced them to sacrifice crop yield for the success of the Soviet modernization plan.

Under Stalin, the Soviet Union underwent rapid economical change. Once the economy recovered to its former financial levels, Stalin launched the “Second Socialist Offensive” to achieve rapid industrialization and forced collectivization of agriculture. These efforts were vital for Soviet modernization by establishing the USSR as a major industrial super power. The Great Industrialization Debate of 1924 to 1928 encompassed a range of varying perspectives over the employment of rapid industrialization. Stalin had at first sided with Bukharin, who supported USSR's gradual economic shift towards socialism. Eventually, even Bukharin realized the Soviet state required a more rapid economic growth to take advantage of the global market. As Bukharin's policies shifted towards a more aggressive campaign, Stalin quickly expelled the Left party, headed by Trotsky, and “stole their plank of rapid industrialization.” Stalin's objectives, however, were far less realistic then those of the Left. His futile machinations created systemic shortcomings which resulted in the loss of millions of lives.

24Ibid., 239.
In 1928 Stalin adopted a policy of forced agricultural harvest collectivization. Since successful peasants could afford to withhold their grain and await higher prices, the state failed to obtain sufficient amounts of grain to finance industrialization projects. Although collectivization served as the primary program with the ability to solve the Soviet economic issues; neither Lenin, nor Stalin, before 1929, approved of forced collectivization. In 1921 when Lenin had adopted Bukharin's NEP, he had warned the party that “amalgamation of millions of small farmers in any rapid way would be absolutely absurd,” yet Stalin, in 1928, neglected this earlier advice and pushed for the implementation of the Five Year Plan. In 1929 Stalin abruptly secured resources for industrialization and began counteracting peasant resistance to his newly implemented and oppressive policies. Within seven weeks, the Soviet authorities had coerced about half of the peasantry into serving for the collective farming system. A change that Lenin had recommended be enacted over several years, Stalin completed in under two months. Stalin's impatience demanded immediate results regardless of the consequences of his unrealistic aims.

Agriculture would enable Stalin's ambitious projects by sustaining both an urban population and creating a competitive export system. The Ukrainian territory of the Soviet Union had the most fertile land, far more arable than that in northern Russia. Stalin quickly realized that by exploiting Ukraine's land and confiscating the grain harvested by Ukrainian peasants the Soviet government would have means to support their modernizing plans with greater efficiency. Stalin also realized that the Ukrainian peasantry would oppose this rapid movement towards collective communities. Maintaining their traditional stance towards a controlling Russian Empire, Ukrainian opposition towards the destruction of peasants' traditional lifestyles became

25Mackenzie and Curran, 240.
nationalistic in nature. Peasant and nationalistic resistance coalesced against the Politburo policies championed by Stalin during the years of hardship.\textsuperscript{26}

Stalin initiated the first Five Year Plan on December of 1927, but did not fully institute the plan until 1929.\textsuperscript{27} Stalin realized that the existence of a wealthier class of peasants could prevent the successful actualization of collectivization, and thus could not continue to exist. In 1929 the Politburo, under Stalin's orders, announced full dekulakization. Because of this decision, Soviet officials deported, killed, or forced wealthy peasants into Soviet-run collective farms. Since the Ukrainian peasants provided the foundation of Soviet agriculture, the USSR ensured complete dekulakization in these regions.

Soviet authorities began the process of strict dekulakization under the decree of February 1930 titled "On Measures of the Elimination of Kulak Households in Districts of Comprehensive Collectivization."\textsuperscript{28} The general sentiment of the Soviet policy introduced victimization of the kulak class within Soviet culture. This came with the explicit intent of annihilating them as a class, similar to the policy against the bourgeoisie in 1918.\textsuperscript{29} Thus, with Stalin's shift in policy towards the annexation of agricultural land for Soviet use, wealthy peasants were inverted from well respected positions in the community to enemies of the state.

Dekulakization had a variety of consequences for wealthy peasants. Peasants with a kulak classification were divided into three subdivisions. Wealthy, however, was a relative term in Ukraine and the definition changed daily. An average kulak household in the 1930's "averaged

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 118.
1.4 horses, 1.8 cows and 1.2 sheep. A testimony of a typical kulak household represents the meager lifestyles of Ukraine's richest peasants.

"He has a sick wife, five children, and not a crumb of bread in the house. And that's what we call a kulak! The kids are in rags and in tatters. They all look like ghosts. I saw the pot on the oven—a few potatoes in the water. That was their supper tonight."

The kulaks were also starving, just slower than everyone else.

During dekulakization the most dangerous adversaries to Stalin's autonomy were either executed or exiled to special settlements in northern Russia. A second category of exiles were transported to less prosperous areas of Ukraine, while class three enemies were allowed to stay in their village but were stripped of their land and prohibited from joining the collectivization effort. All three categories made survival difficult, especially after the onset of the famine. Life even in the more prosperous regions of Ukraine left little hope for providing a sustainable lifestyle. For families exiled to different regions of Ukraine, the situation proved more dire due to the less agreeable land and more hostile neighbors. However, deportation to northern Russia remained the harshest punishment, since few survivors returned from the frozen tundra.

Although Siberia had always been a common exile destination, during Stalin's reign it gained further notoriety. Forced relocation to northern Russia resulted in millions of deaths. The frightful conditions in freight trains, be it overcrowding or malnutrition, affected young children and the elderly to the greatest extent, resulting in an extremely high mortality rate. The infant mortality rate rose to almost one hundred percent due to the poor conditions. One deported kulak summarized the peasant's perspective on the consequences of their deportation and the "rightful" punishment they received. "On 18 April my daughter died. The three year old

30 Mackenzie and Curran, 123.
31 Ibid. 118.
“criminal” had paid for her parents’ and grandparents’ crimes.”  

Records today reveal that of the deportees a quarter to a third perished, a majority of which were children. The Party justified to itself the mass murder by claiming that, “Not one of them (the deported peasants) was guilty of anything; but they belonged to a class that was guilty of everything.” Stalin’s hatred disseminated amongst the Politburo and local authorities, encouraging prosecution of innocent citizens in an effort to eliminate the kulak class.

The circumstances failed to improve following arrival in the Far North. A high proportion of these exile settlements were in North and North East Siberia, which now became predominately populated by Ukrainian peasants. The population varied dramatically depending on the number of new arrivals and the survival rates of current occupants. New arrivals were either packed into existing settlements or were forced to create a new settlement. In Nadezhdinsk, the kulaks force-marched for four days to their new home in a vast forest. Upon arrival a GPU official climbed a stump and shouted, pointing towards the woodlands, “Your Ukraine is right here, those who try to escape will be shot.” Other kulaks were marched between Petropavlovk and Lake Balkash into empty country. A German Communist exilee describes the unceremonious welcome.

They were just some pegs stuck in the ground with little notices on them saying: Settlement No. 5, No.6 and so on. The peasants were brought here and told that now they had to look after themselves. So then they dug themselves holes in the ground. A great many died of cold and hunger in the early years.

By antagonizing the more industrious, wealthier class of peasants, the Soviet regime successfully carried out a full scale dekulakization, deporting thousands of peasants to northern Siberia and

32 Conquest, 143.
33 Ibid., 143.
34 Ibid., 139.
35 Ibid.
successfully obliterating a relatively prosperous class of Soviet workers.

Through dekulakization several thousands of Ukraine's vital agriculturalists were eliminated from Ukrainian society. Confiscated property from the kulak ultimately provided more land for the collectives. This new strategy created several benefits for the regime: it provided property to the collective farms, created a plethora of cheap labor, removed natural leaders from the Ukrainian peasant opposition, and engaged class struggle within villages.36 These rapid changes also instituted Russian authority and clear oppression of the Ukrainian peasantry, incurring nationalistic resistance. History had conditioned the Ukrainian people to struggle for the right of property, and they faced this same challenge yet again due to the new Soviet policy.

The peasants not only refused to join the collective farms, but they also burned their crops and slaughtered their animals in order to prevent property confiscation. This tactic was widely embraced throughout Ukraine because of nationalistic tendencies and resentment of the Soviet Union's abusive regime. These actions only proved to infuriate Stalin. He waged war against the peasants, intentionally starving them into acquiescence. His tactics are represented in Kossior's speech in 1930 to a Ukrainian Central Committee's activist.

The peasant is adopting a new tactic. He refuses to reap the harvest. He wants the bread gain to die in order to choke the Soviet government with the bony hand of the famine. But the enemy miscalculates. We will show him what famine is. Your task is to stop the kulak sabotage of the harvest. You must bring it in to the last grain and immediately send it off to the delivery point. The peasants are not working. They are counting on previously harvested grain they have hidden in pits. We must force them to open their pits.37

This testimony of comrade Kossior is highly revealing of Stalin's intentions. Seeing that the peasants refused to obey his direct order, he responded to their rebellion with severe force –

37 Conquest, 221.
terror through starvation. This testimony reveals that the upcoming famine occurred not from a
crop shortage or due to a bad harvest but instead was an intentional act facilitated by Joseph
Stalin in direct response to Ukrainian peasant disobedience. The peasants refused to cooperate
with his wishes, and he punished them until they learned to obey.

Through dekulakization and collective farming, the USSR succeeded in exporting
significant amounts of grain while also gaining a dominant position in the global economy. The
total export of grain averaged around: 5.8 million tons in 1930, 4.7 million tons in 1931, 1.6
million tons in 1932 and 2.1 million tons in 1933. Meanwhile from 1930 to 1933 Ukraine
endured its deadliest famine, killing six million Ukrainians with an additional four million
throughout the Soviet Union. While the Soviet economy exported millions of tons of grain,
Stalin's grain reserves never fell below 1.5 million. A million tons of grain is the basic minimum
for feeding five million people in one year.38 Over 7.5 million could have been saved had Stalin
allowed access to the Soviet reserves. Although the Soviet Economy proliferated its interests on
the global market, few steps were taken in repairing the destruction forced collectivization had
wreaked on rural Ukrainian villages. Stalin's decision to withhold grain while securing full
control of Ukrainian agriculture gives little reason to believe that Holodomor happened because
of a simple grain shortage. Rather, his authoritarian actions provide ample evidence of an
intentional man-made famine.

Stalin obtained first hand knowledge of the dire situation during his travels through
Ukraine for a vacation in June of 1930 at the resort town Sochi on the Black Sea.39 Thus Stalin
personally encountered Ukraine's despondent situation. He witnessed the thousands of starving
men, women, and children dead and dying on country roads, village centers, and train stations.

38 Serbyn, "The Famines in Ukraine," 5.
Unable to further disregard the Ukrainian famine, Stalin created an alternate excuse for the suffering he witnessed. In his letter to Lazar Kaganovich, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine, on September 11th of 1932, Stalin wrote stating that the Ukrainian people were pretending to be starving in order to plot against the Soviet Regime. They were using their famine as a weapon to undermine the progressive Soviet approach. Stalin insisted that the Ukrainian nationalist agenda constructed the fraudulent famine in order to embarrass Soviet headquarters and sabotage the Five Year Plan. These “innocent victims” who constructed a “rotten cover-up” for the Ukrainian party should be penalized for their destructive behavior. This provided added incentive for authorities to abuse and assault the victims of Stalin’s oppressive regime.

Thus Stalin pressed on, utilizing the constructed fear of mass starvation. Under collectivization Ukrainian peasants forfeited everything; property, nationality, religion, family, and, finally, their right to life. Yet the obvious misery of the Ukrainian countryside further infuriated the ambitious dictator. Convinced of malicious intent, Stalin believed the Ukrainians to be engaged in rebellious activities, categorizing many as spies. Stalin watched these spies intently and created harsh restrictions to prevent any real possibility of dissent. Any strong family ties or personal beliefs challenged his autonomy. Religion was outlawed. Children were instructed to inform on their parents; husbands on their wives. Paranoia and distrust seeped even into the family unit. Marriage rates, along with the population statistics, declined tremendously. Authorities used familiar ties to extract information from the citizens. Rape occurred so often that it became normal. A well known Soviet song condemns this treatment by exclaiming.

40 Snyder, 37.
My country is big
It has many prisons and camps
I know no other country
Where they goal wives and mothers

This song emphasizes the common use of rape as a tool for extracting information. After an arrest, official interrogators completely dehumanized the offender. They authorized divorce warrants to divide families. Husbands were circulated across the prison network; wives were exiled and children sent to orphanages. Through this demoralizing process Soviet citizens were deprived of two traditional pillars of life: family and religion. With no one to emotionally bond with except the government, the state became the family and Stalin took the place of a father and God like figure. Stalin's duty – as dictator, father and God like figure – was to protect his people. Thus, even if the famine of the 1930s was solely due to the grain shortage, it was his responsibility for providing relief to his people. Yet since crops continued to be cultivated for both the state and export economy during the worst years of the famine, it becomes clear that Stalin used this famine to punish the disobedient Ukrainian population.

These rapid changes resulted in catastrophic consequences for Soviet Ukrainian rural societies. To a greater extent than Soviet Russian peasants, Ukrainian peasants held their property on a more personal level. Accustomed to centuries of struggling with Polish and Russian landlords, Ukrainians remained wary of Soviet intentions. Peasants linked property with survival, and the Soviet domination instilled fear in every Ukrainian home.

Along with crop requisition and destruction of the family, loss of religion affected the rural village by removing a reliable institution. Although communism instilled strong atheistic principles, Ukrainian rural society remained tenaciously religious. They were strong Christian

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42 Kuromiya, 199.
43 Ibid., 185.
believers of the Orthodox faith and held extreme suspicion towards any rejection of God's existence. Consequently, many peasants presumed that by joining the collective farm they would enlist or cooperate with the agents of the devil. A peasant summarized this point by explaining the reasons preventing him from joining the collective farm, "I do not want to sell my soul to the devil." Because of their deeply religious Orthodox Faith, Ukrainians also believed that communism defied God and their religion, and, therefore, their culture.

As Soviet authorities stripped the Ukrainian peasants of their natural leaders and institutions—the kulaks, religion, language, nationality, and family life— the peasants rebelled, having foreseen Stalin's draconian political model. Instead of willfully abandoning their crops, livestock and possessions, the peasants resisted. They burned their crops, slaughtered their animals and silently fought the Soviet regime. Ukraine lost everything. The hard working intelligent farmers were exiled or shot, the remaining crops were confiscated, and when the early frosts of 1930s struck, people began to starve.

In the years between 1930 and 1931, famine spread throughout the Soviet Union. In the previous years, Ukraine had supplied 7.1 million tons of crops for the Soviet Union. Stalin was determined to have the same yield regardless of the poor harvest. During the years between 1931-1932, Stalin insisted on receiving the same 7.1 million tons. At this time that amount consisted of 45 percent of the total crops harvested. Even though aid was provided by the Soviet powers to the victims of the famine, it was insignificant. Further still, Ukrainian peasants were prohibited from leaving their cities or emigrating from the territory today known as Ukraine. State security officials arrested millions on freight cars, at train stations, and at city entry points to be either returned home or banished to the GULAGs. Either route amounted to a

44 Snyder, 29.
death sentence.

The Ukrainian villages suffered far more then the cities. This is not to say that the urban population did not feel the consequences of the famine. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian people waited each day for a simple loaf of bread in cities ranging from Kharkiv to Dnipropetrovsk. People stood in line from two in the morning until late into the night. Forty thousand waited each day, including children, war veterans and pregnant women often to weak to stand. They were so desperate to keep their place, so afraid of starving to death, that the people often clung to the belts of the one's directly in front of them. But even in their desperate state, the city dwellers felt fortunate. They had hope for survival, while those in the country lacked even a small chance.

To maintain the falsified image of the Five Year Plan's comprehensive success, Stalin prohibited Ukrainian peasants from seeking any aid, either from within Soviet borders or internationally. He assumed that if the famine gained publicity inside the Soviet Union various regions throughout the empire would contribute aid to Ukraine and other areas heavily affected by the famine. Having aid sent to Ukraine would undermine Stalin's power by allowing the peasants to believe that their rebellious activities could continue. Stalin used propaganda to convey an illusion of content from collectivized farming to the parts of his Soviet empire unaffected by the famine. Additionally he forbade peasants from leaving their villages or seeking refuge in the cities by implementing an internal passport system and also setting up border control at every rail station. While railroad stations represented symbols of industrialization in nineteenth century Russia, they also bore witness to the atrocities experienced by Ukrainian villagers during the Holodomor. Starved peasants killed themselves

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46 Snyder, 22.
by jumping in front of trains. Peasants who were dismissed from railroad stations hung themselves on nearby trees. Hungry peasants would follow railroad lines to the cities only to faint from weakness on the tracks. Women held up "to carriage windows horrible infants with enormous wobbling heads, sticklike limbs, swollen, pointed bellies," in the vain hope for their children's salvation. They begged strangers to take their babies, to save them from a certain death sentence.

The Soviet authorities undertook severe measures to restrict the flood of refugees from the famine areas into the cities. Although most of the arrests can be attributed to Ukrainian or North Caucasus's peasants moving from villages to Moscow and Volga regions, the OGPU was also instructed to arrest any peasants moving from Ukraine to the North Caucasus or from North Caucasus to Ukraine as "counter-revolutionary elements." Stalin's order to arrest peasants coming not only into Russia but also Ukraine proves that he wanted to restrict information from leaving villages ravaged by the famine and disseminating throughout the USSR.

During Stalin's reign, peasants were once again tied to the land and prohibited from migrating away from their village. Due to these restrictions, it became clear that Stalin, under the cover of communism, reverted the peasantry to a new form of serfdom. Additionally, by creating a new Ukrainian serfdom in the countryside, Stalin also managed to prevent the importation of international aid to these impoverished communities. He realized the necessity of border control after experiencing the effects of humanitarian aid during the previous Soviet famine of the 1920's. The Soviet population in the early 1920s was severely depleted after World War I and the Civil War of 1918 to 1920. The two wars, as well as the uncertain political climate, had depleted agricultural capacity and ruined the crop production in several regions of

48 Snyder, 23.
49 Davies and Wheatcroft, 426.
Russia, as well as in southern Ukraine. Due to the country’s devastated economy, Lenin pressed Ukraine for increased crop requisition. Southern Ukraine endured the hardest hit by the increased taxation. Immediately, Ukrainians and Russians alike called for help. Tikhon, the Patriarch of Moscow, called for aid from Russian churches in the West. Maxim Gorsky called on intellectuals and Georgy Chicherin, the People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, wrote messages to various heads of state in America and Western Europe. Help arrived almost immediately. The International Committee of Red Cross sent 90,000 tons of food to Ukraine, but the League of Nations sent nothing. The United States of America, however, was responsible for organizing and administering a majority of the aid. With a significant Jewish community in southern Ukraine, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee pressured the American Relief Administration to organize and distribute food. Thus, the ARA administered the sending of food parcels of which were mostly bought by American individuals, organized in the United States and then distributed by the ARA in Ukraine. In addition to food and clothing parcels, the ARA set up soup kitchens and helped restore grain cultivation. One and a half to two million Ukrainians died in the famine; however, without the help of the ICRC and the ARA, the death toll could have been far greater.\(^{50}\)

Ten years later, the prominent role of humanitarian aid was remembered by citizens and officials alike, and Stalin felt determined to prohibit foreign aid and its chance to undermine his power and reputation. Therefore, securing his borders topped his list of necessary actions. The difficulty of completely securing borders, however, is exemplified by Russia's history. As the Russian Empire fell, Poland including the territory today known as Western Ukraine, Estonia, Finland, Latvia and Lithuania emerged as separate states when Georgia and some of Ukraine

\(^{50}\)Serbyn. “The Famines in Ukraine,” 2.
were reabsorbed into the new empire. Thus, after the shift, families were divided between borders, and most Ukrainians continued to communicate with their friends and families on the Polish-Ukrainian side. Stalin knew that such communications could undermine his power and thus took extreme measures to sever these ties. Unfortunately, too often this strategy resulted in the execution of all those suspected of communicating with the enemy, also known as their family, across the border. Memoirs and data records present extensive evidence of ordinary citizens who were accused of "counter-revolutionary activity", how they admitted to this activity, after torture and other coercive measures, and then were executed for the crime. Dzvinchuks, Shirers, Al'bovas and Bagniuks maintained communications with their relatives in Poland and met a common end in a Soviet mass grave. They symbolize hundreds of families who fell due to Stalin's paranoia and desire to maintain complete control of the peasantry. Some cases tell the stories of families who defended themselves even after being faced with intimidation, threats and physical torture. Although some were still executed, such as Dzevitskaia, a few women survived after their husband's death, such as Sosnovskaia-Budnitskaia and Kurovskaia, and lived to tell their stories.  

Border security is further exemplified by the meager humanitarian actions that did occur in the early 1930s. When the famine struck, thousands of ethnic Germans lived in the USSR who needed help. With the minimal information sifting through Soviet borders, the German government sent aid through Catholic Evangelical Churches and a charity group called Bruder in Not. Contact with these charity groups, as well as with foreign consulates, proved to result in fatal consequences. Too often citizens suspected of having relations with foreigners were then

52 Kuromiya, 163.
forced to justify their actiona. Unfortunately, from a Soviet perspective, the very attempt to justify innocence proved their guilt and thus led to extensive of arrests and executions.

Soviet authorities worked to deliberately hide the famine from the outside world. They barred foreign journalists from the famine areas, and instead gave foreign writers and politicians tours of villages with plentiful harvests. As the famine intensified, fewer areas were shown to foreigners, until, finally, their entry became expressly forbidden. Although the people of the USSR did not call for aid or humanitarian relief, it was evident to the global community that the policies of the USSR resulted in the extreme mistreatment of certain groups of people. The United States and the Western Powers, however, refused to acknowledge this major human rights violation, perhaps due to their own economic problems. Also, there was decreased initiative based perhaps on the fatigue resulting from the aid sent during the previous Ukrainian. Thus, Western negligence helped enable Stalin to create a man made famine and to assert his power over a demolished population.

The atrocities of Holodomor can never fully be retold. Stalin prevented the collection of any evidence. Deaths were so common that they failed to be recorded and Soviet propaganda created an image of well-ordered, buoyant collective system with a promising future. Even though the American and European authorities understood the complications of the Soviet regime, the Soviet government stationed foreign journalists only in Moscow. The United States and the Western Powers had far greater problems with the rise of Hitlers despotic regime and crippling economic issues. The plight of the Ukrainian people and the atrocities of the Famine were barely noticed and soon forgotten for anyone not personally connected with the situation.

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By providing the majority of Soviet grain crops, Ukrainians became an integral cog in the Soviet machine. Because of this, Stalin targeted Ukraine in order to secure the Soviet food supply and strengthen his tenable rule in this region. Ukraine did not willingly surrender itself to the Soviet rule but instead fought against collectivization. Since Ukrainians resisted the Soviet campaign, Stalin condemned this territory as a nationalistic region, and because of this nationalistic ideology, he categorized the region as an enemy of the state. Thus when bad weather prevailed in this already severely wounded area, instead of offering adequate help, Stalin confiscated forty to forty-five percent of the harvest and arrested those who tried to escape the region. Ukraine, the most important agricultural territory of the USSR and highly adamant about its nationalistic sentiments, felt the full extent of Stalin’s wrath, burying around six million people in a mere three years.
PART III: THE YEARS AFTER THE FAMINE

Nationalist movements against imperial overlords left an indelible mark on twentieth century history. The national sovereignty produced by shifting territorial borders and the dismantling of empires due to nationalistic dissent signaled the emergence of a new era of independence and self-government. These themes are evident in the Soviet Bloc, an empire often categorized as too large and ineffective to persist. With the economic collapse that prevailed toward the end of the twentieth century, USSR not only suffered a clear defeat against the United States in the arms race, but was also demoted to a lesser status in Western economic markets. These devastating setbacks caused Soviet citizens to lose hope in the reality of a prospering economy. The financial instability, when coupled with a weakening Soviet government, promoted further disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990 and 1991. A series of Soviet republics seized the initiative and moved towards national sovereignty by declaring independence from the USSR. By the end of 1991 Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Georgia, Belarus, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Armenia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had seceded. These secessions negated the Russian Federation's status as an empire. The events of 1991 reshaped and devastated Russia's position in the global markets. This resulted in a persistent, continuous conflict to regain their lost identity and dominance.

Although the fragmentation of the Soviet Union ultimately crushed Russia's imperial aspirations, Ukraine's dissent proved to be the hardest insolence to accept. Ukrainian territory has been essential to Russian rule since the formation of the Russian state. Besides clear
economic benefits such as access to oil in Crimea and fertile agricultural zones, Ukraine provided Russia access to Eastern Europe. Further still, without Ukraine, Russia ceased to be an empire. Russian colonialism hinged on Ukrainian acquiescence because of Ukraine's historic subjugation by Russian authority. If a group ethnically similar to Russia with a similar language, history and religion chose to dissent, the remaining republics believed that independence provided their solution as well. Thus Ukraine continues to be an essential component of Russian history. Ukrainian resistance disfigures Russian justification for maintaining its status. Without Ukraine, Russia lacks identity as a major power and must globally compete without the added benefit supplied by Ukraine. These new and uncomfortable changes forced Russia to view the fall of the Soviet Union in a negative light. This gives Russia further incentive to suppress the separation of Ukraine in an effort to make it economically dependent on the Russian Federation.  

The importance of acquiring and maintaining Ukrainian territory is exemplified throughout Soviet history. The Bolsheviks understood the importance of Ukrainian territory to the Russian empire and conceived immediate plans for the utilization and control of Ukraine. This is particularly ironic since Lenin's message was directed to the "oppressed masses, which will form their own government." This message seems to perfectly encompass the Ukrainian population's desire for self-governance as an independent state. Lenin's profession of independence and self-determination promoted the belief that the Bolshevik revolution granted natural political freedom to all, including the Ukrainians. Lenin thus supported a Ukrainian rebellion against the Russian Empire. He encouraged the lower classes to rebel against the

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55 Mackenzie and Curran, 168.
Russian Empire and fight for their freedom. However, Lenin and the Bolsheviks gradually understood the importance of Ukrainian resources to the Russian regime. This realization forced them to quickly retract their initial offer. The collection of the eastern portion of the Tsarist Ukrainian land into Soviet Russian territory forced part of the Ukrainian people to forfeit their land and new freedom to the machinations of a more powerful state. Using Ukraine as a resource, Russian authorities under the Soviet Union exploited Ukraine, forcing Ukrainian peasants to manufacture food for the entire Soviet Union. This exploitation resulted in the Great Famine and the loss of around six million lives. Additionally, the use of Ukraine as a buffer zone between Russia and Nazi aggression further proves this theory. The Soviet Union continued to utilize Ukraine's strategic location long after the World Wars. The government exerted influence and control over Eastern and Central Europe during the Cold War. They also utilized Ukraine and its people as a security zone for deflecting American nuclear assets in Turkey, thus preventing the targeting of Russian locations.  

Russia is severely dependent on Ukraine for economic and strategic benefits. However, it also exemplifies how, throughout Russian rule, Ukraine has continuously been exploited for Russian benefit. Ukraine has acquired no aid or support for its state or people. This relationship with Russia provides minimal benefit to Ukraine.

Currently this mentality is represented in Russia's continued mistreatment of the sovereign national state of Ukraine. When Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, neither Russia nor the rest of the world was prepared for this drastic shift in power. After Ukraine's secession from the Soviet Union, Russia could no longer retain the Union, resulting in the creation of fifteen new states and the fragmentation of the Russian

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empire. Further still, Ukraine's separation shifted the western border further east and limited Russia's access to the Black Sea.\textsuperscript{57} This resulted in greater separation from Europe, alienating Russia from the Western world and eliminating a key strategic buffer zone. Moreover, Ukraine's secession created a Russian identity crisis. The city of Kiev links Ukrainian and Russian history. These states encompassed a nearly identical ethnic race; therefore, Ukraine's separation questioned the legitimacy of a Russian empire. This doubt was experienced by Russian colonies, such as in the Caucasus, by the West, and most importantly, by Russians. This identity crisis resulted in Russian manipulation of and disregard towards Ukrainian sovereignty.

To achieve their goal of Ukrainian subjugation, Russia manipulated Ukraine's scarce energy supply to foster a complete dependence on the Russian Federation. Russia was fully aware that the restriction of Russian oil could destroy Ukraine's economy. Exposing this weakness allowed Russia to manipulate oil prices and coerce Ukrainian cooperation on a variety of issues.\textsuperscript{58} Through these tactics, Russia hoped to emphasize Ukraine's dependence on Russian oil and use this subservience to encourage the reestablishment of Ukraine under Russian control. This strategic manipulation and oppression is ubiquitous within Russia's policy towards Ukraine.

Historically, Ukraine has defended itself against abusive Russian policies. Unfortunately, these defenses have generally resulted in further abuse. Today, however, Ukraine plays a much more vital role in international affairs, enabling more efficient acts of resistance. After Russia manipulated energy prices to Ukraine's detriment, Ukraine retaliated by shutting off the pipeline linking Russian oil with major European markets. This represented an international conflict in which Ukraine held a dominant geographic negotiating position. Despite the option for

\textsuperscript{57}Dyczok, 124.  
\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., 126.
permanent compromise, Russia decided against a productive relationship with Ukraine because of its Imperial designs. Any permanent compromise would signal to other regions and would-be colonies that Russia lacked the influence to exercise complete control and would thus encourage open revolt. Today the energy crisis has gained publicity and serves as a microcosm of Russian – Ukrainian relations. Although both nations depend upon the other, their history prohibits them from maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship. This attitude results in hostility and severe consequences for both states.

Today, oil prices and access to clients in the West remains a problem for both nations. Hoping to reconcile the failing relationship between the two states, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych signed an agreement in April of 2010 attempting to pacify the volatile and polarizing energy crisis. Since Ukraine cannot afford the rising expense of natural gas, Russia agreed to lower gas prices by thirty percent. In exchange Ukraine has signed an agreement extending the Russian lease on a major naval base in the Ukrainian Black Sea port in Sevastopol for an additional twenty five years. The agreement provided a temporary compromise in the power struggle between Russia and Ukraine.

Unfortunately agreements between these two nations seldom manifest themselves as permanent solutions. Today the situation continues to deteriorate. Russia has yet again raised its price on energy in Ukraine, sinking the Ukrainian economy while only succeeding in creating further hostility and conflict. Without accountability, Russia continues to abuse its superiority, manipulating the oil crisis to gain further economic control of Ukraine. Russian policies have continued to promote the conflict between and separation of Russia and Ukraine.

Russian manipulation of Ukraine is not limited to the economy. Another example of

59 Dyczok, 126-127.
60 Joseph and Nadia Kiryk, interview by Helen Fisun, (March 4, 2011)
Russian manipulation and abuse of Ukraine's sovereignty is emphasized in Russia's prevalent role in the Ukrainian parliament. Governmental affairs and parliamentary decisions remain under Russian control. Russia influences laws and regulations enacted over the Ukrainian nation. Its access to the governments remains a direct result of the Soviet Union's gradual demise. As Orest Subtelny quotes in *Ukraine: A History 3rd edition*, Ukraine experienced, "No revolution just a collapse, the slow, painful disappearance of a way of life of ordinary Ukrainians. Since the transition from communism came without violence, it allowed the former Soviet elite to remain in place."\(^6\) Despite the separation from the Soviet Union, the new Ukrainian government held little promise for reform because it did not provide true representation. However, Ukraine did manage to create a democratic form of government. This government instigated significant changes and illustrated a more Ukrainian outlook on policy and conventions. Unfortunately, the changes were hindered by an insurmountable obstacle, Russian dominance of parliamentary circles. This strategic positioning from within the Ukrainian parliamentary branch further promoted Russian authority. This position allowed Russia to manipulate and exploit Ukrainian independence through the national government. Russian access to Ukrainian governmental affairs is a major tool for the implementation of Russian decisions throughout Ukraine. This encouraged an even stronger dependence on Russia by alienating Ukraine from the Western world.

Russian authority in the Ukrainian Presidential Election illustrates Russian control of the parliament. Furthermore, the fraternization and rapport between the Ukrainian and Russian presidents illustrates the dependent relationship engendered by Russia. Initial Russian intervention was initiated during Leonid Kuchma's presidential term. During his time in office,

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from 1994 until 2005, Kuchma increased Russo-Ukrainian ties by endorsing Ukraine's partnership in the CIS, Commonwealth of Independent States, a successor entity of the USSR. Although participation in the CIS may contradict Ukraine's immediate interests, the President encouraged his country's participation in the Commonwealth. This is further exemplified by Kuchma's personal participation in the CIS.

Notably, in January 2003 Kuchma was elected as Chairman of the CIS, becoming the first non-Russian to hold that post. Later that year proposals to form a 'single economic zone' with Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia became increasingly popular, and were approved by the Verkhovna Rada in September, on the conditions that participation did not contravene the Ukrainian Constitution. By furthering the Russian economic agenda Kuchma demonstrates that the Ukrainian political system is easily manipulated to the benefit of special interests. Kuchma's actions confirm a Russian political presence within the Ukrainian system.

Kuchma's distaste for Ukrainian nationalism and local tradition is not only evident in his foreign policy initiatives, but also manifested itself as a natural prejudice. During his term Kuchma spoke exclusively in Russian and refused to learn the Ukrainian language. Further still, Kuchma referred to Russian as an official language despite objections from a majority of the Ukrainian population. His refusal to both acknowledge and speak Ukrainian reflected poorly on a newly sovereign republic and served to blatantly disrespect the long desired independence of the Ukrainian people. Thus, through his disrespectful attitude towards the Ukrainian population, he further emphasizes the alienation of the Soviet elite in the Ukrainian government from a significant portion of the general public.

Kuchma's collaboration with the Russian government during his term inevitably

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63 Subtelny, 607.
strengthened Russo-Ukrainian ties. However, Kuchma's behavior pales in comparison with the chaos that followed his term. The presidential elections held in November of 2004 posited two potential candidates. Victor Yushchenko represented the strong, nationalistic, Western Ukrainian constituency while Victor Yanukovich supported a more Eastern Ukrainian perspective through his strong Russian sentiments. He also represented the eleven million Russians living in Eastern Ukraine as well as a significant portion of Ukrainians from the eastern part of Ukraine. The race quickly deteriorated from a professional electoral contest to a hostile conflict. As Yushchenko gained acceptance and popularity throughout the nation, his opposition grew tenser and attempted drastic measures to counter his surge in support. From firsthand accounts and various clips from the documentary *Orange Revolution*, it seems that Yushchenko was constantly watched and followed during his campaigning and daily life. As his popularity rose, and his threat to a Russian - controlled Ukraine increased, the Russian government is believed to have resorted to more serious tactics. In early September of 2004, Yushchenko, suddenly, became seriously ill and was diagnosed with dioxin poisoning.

The tragic events of September, 2004, were only a precursor to the final injustice of the 2004 elections and of Russia's continued injustices towards the Ukrainian state. The first round of elections resulted in a 49.4 percent win for Victor Yushchenko over 45.9 percent for Victor Yanukovych. The second round of the same election process, however, proclaimed Yanukovich's victory over Yushchenko by 4.5 percent. These results affronted the voting public. The outcome was flagrantly affected and geared towards the success of the pro-Russian candidate. The documentary evidences numerous examples of Russian electoral manipulations, acid spills, bribery, force and fraud to garner votes for Victor Yanukovich.64 These tactics completely delegitimized the election practices and results reported by the poll monitors. This

concerted effort to boost electoral support for Yanukovich served to disenfranchise Ukrainian voters and demean their democratic ambitions.

The fraudulent and cruel nature of those in power is a reality Ukrainians have endured for generations. This nature, however, is so prevalent throughout Ukraine that many citizens have learned to yield to the harsh realities of their situation without incurring the punishment that is generally inflicted on dissidents. However, in the fall of 2004, the nation challenged the acceptance of fraud and bribery common to official elites. For the first time, the Ukrainian people, from all statuses and social groups, coalesced in order to fight against Russian influence for their right to vote.

The following day, as a response to the electoral corruption, citizens throughout Ukraine collectively rose up in peaceful rebellion. On November 22\textsuperscript{nd}, around 8:00 AM, nearly five hundred people arrived at the Maidan in downtown Kiev to support electoral integrity and the rightful president. At 10:00 AM, three to four thousand people had gathered on the Maidan. At noon, the congregation numbered eighty thousand. In the following days, millions flocked to downtown Kiev from surrounding areas. With them they brought food, tents, and warm clothing. Millions stood in the cold, waving orange banners, and chanting Yushchenko's name. Inside the parliament, politicians waved blue banners and congratulated Yanukovich on his victory. The contrast of the scene inside the parliament in comparison to the streets of Ukraine reflected the dire political division within the country. One of the many protestors in the Maidan during the Orange Revolution commented to a reporter on the lack of democracy in Ukraine.

There is no fairness in this country. There is no democracy. What kind of democracy can there be if over there are the Special Forces? If a bunch of buses came from Russia? What fairness, what democracy?\textsuperscript{65}

Democracy and the Ukrainian peoples' freedom to vote were withheld by Russian elites and their controlling interest in Ukraine. This quote illustrates how Russia disenfranchised Ukrainian popular opinion during the election. The people believed that their right to democracy had been violated by Russian ambition. In order to combat this infringement on their freedoms, Ukrainian people had no recourse left besides open revolt.

On the seventh day of the protest, the armed forces were sent into Kiev to disband the revolt. They were stopped by a road block consisting of ten protestors and one car. Instead of following orders, the soldiers joined the revolt. The court system ruled against the unlicensed voting procedures and decided in favor of the people. In the third round of elections, Yushchenko won by 51.99 percent of the votes. In comparison, Yanukovich only received 44.9 percent. In 2005, Victor Yushchenko was inaugurated as the third president of independent Ukraine, put in power solely by the people.

Unfortunately, soon after Yushchenko began his term in office, the parliament voted Victor Yanukovich in as the prime minister. Due to the decreased role of the president as voted by the court during the Orange Revolution, little change actually occurred. With a pro-Russian parliament under Victor Yanukovich, the Ukrainian legislature remained indifferent to the people's needs. The underrepresentation of Ukraine's population in the government remains a key issue for obtaining total independence.

Corrupt elections and economic manipulation are prominent examples of Russian policy. Throughout history, Russians have intimidated and violently oppressed Ukrainians. This legacy of brutalization resonates within the Ukrainian national consciousness to this day. In order to continue their policies of Ukrainian absorption, Russia must deny the legitimacy of these past events.

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crimes so as not to exacerbate this problem. The paradigm of Russian brutalization is depicted by the Great Famine of 1930-1933. Thus the memory of this brutality remains prevalent in Russo-Ukrainian relations today.

During the past decade Russia has remained increasingly hostile towards the growing awareness of the atrocities committed in Ukraine during the 1930s. Stalin had implemented extensive precautions to ensure that news of the famine would neither spread out throughout the Soviet Union nor leave the Soviet borders for international recognition. The Soviet Union destroyed evidence of the six million deaths in Ukraine while also fabricating data to cover up their acts. For sixty five years, the memory of the famine remained buried and thus received neither the recognition nor the respect it deserved.

With the fall of the Soviet Union, various confidential archives became available. These archives hinted at the atrocities permitted and committed by the Soviet Regime. For the first time, the public became fully aware of the brutality inherent to Stalin's power. Within his realm, Stalin, backed by the clout of the Soviet Union, conducted a complete annihilation of the Ukrainian state in order to modernize and benefit the Soviet Union. As with numerous examples before and after this event, Ukraine served as a sacrifice to benefit the Russian Empire at the expense of millions of Ukrainian lives.

Russia's concerted effort to annex Ukraine, especially after 2004, recalls to the national consciousness previous Russian attempts of hegemony. Holodomor represents the image of Russian oppression, while their aggression has recalled the painful memory of past Soviet crimes against the Ukrainian people. In response to the Ukrainian popular sentiment, the Russian Federation has taken every initiative to obfuscate the meaning and intentions behind the man

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made famine. The Russian government has dedicated significant resources to the removal of nationalistic feelings promoted by memories of the Holodomor.

During Victor Yushchenko's term, January 2005 until February 2010, the president created initiatives promoting awareness of the horrors endured by the Ukrainian countryside during the early 1930s. He introduced the Holodomor into every high school and college curriculum, created a National Memorial Book, formed a single register of Holodomor-related documents, produced feature films and documentaries, and issued a commemorative stamp and envelope of the events of 1932-1933. The president also submitted a bill to the Verkhovna Rada and the European Union alleging criminal liability for denying the Holodomor. Most importantly, Victor Yushchenko set a date, November 23rd, as Holodomor Remembrance Day to honor the victims of the Great Famine. President Yushchenko's efforts granted a proper commemoration for the millions of victims who had endured yet received no recognition for their suffering.

However, in February of 2010 Victor Yanukovich, backed by the pro-Russian Eastern Ukrainians, the Russian government, and the parliamentary elite, was inaugurated into office as the fourth president of Ukraine. In support of a strong Russo-Ukrainian allegiance, Yanukovich has fostered solidarity with both the Russian Federation and the Communist Party of Ukraine. Yanukovich repeatedly condemned Yushchenko's efforts at remembering the tragedies of the past. He strongly believes that while it is important to pay homage to all of the victims of Stalin's regime, Ukraine must also forget its own past atrocities in order to benefit from relations with the Russian Federation. Meanwhile, the Russian government continues to deny the cruelties of the Great Famine. The Russian Foreign Ministry has recently accused certain political circles within Ukraine of insulting the memory of non-Ukrainian victims of the famine.
Furthermore, the current Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, declined an invitation to attend the Holodomor Remembrance Day in Kiev, dismissing the event by saying that the “so-called Holodomor is an immoral attempt to give a shared tragedy a nationalistic spin.” Thus, to this day, the Russian government refuses to pay homage to the millions of Ukrainian lives in an attempt to further integrate Ukraine within Russian policies. The official Russian position endeavors to conjoin Ukraine with Russia in order to capitalize on Ukraine's resources and regain Imperial status.

Ukraine's secession from the Russian Federation damaged Russia because it signified the dismantling of its extensive Empire. Following Ukraine's separation, the other ethnic colonies quickly followed suit with their own independence movements. Since 1991, Russia has extensively worked towards recovering Ukraine by creating a system of economic and political dependence. The energy crisis illustrates the economic manipulations conceived by Russia as a means of installing this dependence. Additionally, the Russian government continues to regulate Ukraine by proxy through a strongly pro-Russian parliament. The defeat of the Orange Revolution demonstrated Russia's dedication towards implementing and sustaining these economic and political influences within Ukraine. At this junction, history provided an important link to cultural and national heritage, and Holodomor represented the gold standard for Ukrainian persecution at the hands of Russian policies. The refusal to commemorate the victims and accept responsibility confirms that Russia does not intend to value Ukraine as a cultural identity, but instead plans on reaping its natural resources with little regard for its people.

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CONCLUSION

Due to Russia's increased efforts to annex the Ukrainian state and undermine Ukrainian sovereignty, there has been an increased resurgence of national memory. Russia has consistently mistreated Ukraine and used its people and resources for the benefit of the Russian empire. This mentality is best exemplified by the mass human rights atrocities committed by the Russian regime on the Ukrainian people during the Great Famine of 1930 to 1933. Therefore, Holodomor has entered the forefront of the Russo-Ukrainian discussion serving as a case study for Russian maltreatment of its colonies. The increased Russian hostility towards growing international awareness of the monstrosities committed by the Soviet Regime on Ukraine during the 1930s, and President Medvedev's refusal to commemorate Ukrainian victims of Holodomor, further illustrates their recalcitrance at honoring Ukrainian sovereignty. The occurrence of Holodomor and subsequent denial by the Russian government confirms the attitude of superiority which results in a policy of subjugation towards Ukraine.

While Ukrainians have always been persecuted under Russian dominion, the Holodomor is an exceptional case of violence and brutality against the Ukrainian nation. Stalin's policies of collectivization targeted the Ukrainian countryside due to its agricultural capacity. To maximize industrialization and modernization efforts, Stalin relied on Ukraine to provision the entirety of his state. Stalin launched a campaign of collectivizing the Ukrainian peasantry in an effort to attain maximum agricultural yield from Ukraine. To his dismay, Ukraine protested. They quickly realized the inequality of the new policies and refused to submit to the oppressive regime. Instead they retaliated by slaughtering their animals, selling their crops and refusing to
join the kholkoz. They chose to fight the Soviet Regime, to their detriment, as opposed to succumbing to Stalin's edict.

The mass killings in Ukraine extended far beyond the explicit denial of food in the Ukrainian countryside. Perhaps Stalin's gravest sin wasn't even the man made famine that ravaged the country; perhaps his cruelty is most evident in his prohibition of any means of escape. Stalin ordered the arrest of any peasants leaving Ukrainian villages and entering either Ukrainian cities or regions outsides the Ukrainian SSR. He forbade communication with family and friends outside Ukrainian territory, too often resulting in the execution of ordinary citizens suspected of counter-revolutionary activity.

The Soviet authorities took extreme measures to hide the famine from the outside world. Additionally the Soviet Union was a valuable ally against Hitler, thus allowing their atrocities to be overlooked by the rest of the world. Today, similar to the time of Holodomor, due to Russia's political status, the international community refuses to acknowledge or confront Russian abuses against the sovereign national state of Ukraine. Ukraine must continue to tolerate the Russian Federation's political and economic abuses that are administered solely to create a Ukrainian dependence on the Russian state, which further separates Ukraine from the West.

The historical relevance of the Holodomor persists to this day. Russia's pattern of behavior towards Ukraine throughout history, exemplified by Holodomor, serves as a reminder against the negative consequences of imperialist ambitions. However, although Holodomor serves as a case study of Russian exploitation of Ukraine, it is more imperative that we remember the victims of this horrible era as human victims more than as Ukrainians. The abuses they suffered varied from person to person; however, the end result was generally
consistent. At the end, they were robbed of their most precious possession, the right to live.

It is imperative to recognize and commemorate these victims because of the circumstances they endured and the price they had to pay as human beings.
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