

0. Ukrainians Lose Their Crops - Story Preface

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When the Soviets denied there was a famine in Ukraine, man-made or natural, a Cardinal from Austria, Theodor Innitzer—who was also the Archbishop of Vienna—began an awareness-raising campaign in the West. This image is from the Innitzer Collection, online via the Holodomor Research & Education Consortium. It depicts children digging-up potatoes to hand-over to Soviet officials.

First—when Lenin introduces his version of Communist ideology in Russia—he, and his Bolsheviks, say that everyone gets to share. No longer is there a nobility or an elite class of people who are owners. What was once owned by the wealthy is now owned by the people.

Then the Bolsheviks, and their successors, change their minds and start to “take,” not “share.” They, and their government officials, start to take nearly everything that had once belonged to the people.

Years later, once-youthful activists remember how they tried to force people to behave the way the State wanted them to behave. It didn’t really work.

People, including Ukrainians, continue to resist. They try to take-back the property they had once owned (and, in their own minds, still owned). It is pointless, however. Officials arrive at places, such as Donetsk, and remove the possessions of village leaders.



Soviet troops try to restore order. Sometimes they shoot their weapons in their air; other times they shoot at

people's heads or hearts.

People want to live the way the Ukrainian farmers have always lived. Fed-up with government intrusion—and the taking-policies of a repressive outside regime—people respond to ruinous taxes by refusing to work. When they do work, they cannot meet the government's unrealistic grain-production quotas.

The regime blames the farmers, for low production rates, but the Soviet government is selling Ukraine's grain outside the country. Ukrainians believe that the Soviets have a plan, to blame the farmers—to blame the Kulaks—for low-production rates.

To insure higher production, Russian operatives raid Ukrainian homes. They go house to house, taking the people's food. They raid the cellars. They raid the barns. They dig holes in the ground, looking for hidden barrels of food.



People try digging holes in their floors, to protect their food supplies. Farmers go to the cities, where they sell heirlooms so they can buy bread to live.

A survivor of the Holodomor, Kateryna Panchenko—who lived in the Kharkiv region of Ukraine—recalls what could happen to people if they hid food:

They took away everything. If they found food, they took it away. This was a decision by the [Communist] Party and the government. If you hid some food, they could send you to Siberia. (see Holodomor: Ukrainian Genocide in the Early 1930s, at page 18.)

In 1932, Stalin accuses Ukrainians of subverting his plans. He sends trusted people—112,000 Russians—to guard the grain and protect what is now declared to be State property. If these guardians see a child, trying to pick a grain of wheat, they see someone committing a crime. The law is called "Misappropriation of Socialist Property."

It is the grain quotas which drive this effort. Not only do all state quotas have to be met, grain has to be set aside for more quotas. People are not paid. They are prevented from finding work elsewhere.

Farms begin to suffer. People are disciplined. Government trucks pull-up to the winnowing machines where government workers take everything—including the chaff.

People begin to suffer from starvation. Ukraine is filled with grain—lots of grain—but the government does not allow the grain to be used by the growers and their families.

The government removes fathers from their homes. Mothers start to throw their children onto trains, heading for cities, with the hope that someone would save them.

The children, who arrive in the cities, have bodies that are swollen from hunger.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Ukrainians-Lose-Their-Crops-Bitter-Harvest-Story-of-t>

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See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Ukrainians-Lose-Their-Crops-Bitter-Harvest-Story-of-the-Holodomor>

Media Stream



Children Finding Food for Soviet Authorities

Holodomor Research & Education Consortium, Part of the Inntizer Photo Collection; photo by an unnamed photographer

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Officials Confiscate Food from Ukrainian Families

Photo, by an unnamed photographer, depicts Soviet officials confiscating food hidden by a Ukrainian farmer. Maintained by the National Museum, in Kiev, the image is part of "Memorial in Commemoration of Famines' Victims in Ukraine." It is online via the [Holodomor Research & Education Consortium](http://www.holodomor.org/).

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Officials Confiscate Possessions from Ukrainian Families

Photo, by an unnamed photographer, depicts Soviet officials confiscating possessions from a Ukrainian village's leaders. Maintained by the National Museum, in Kiev, the image is part of "Memorial in Commemoration of Famines' Victims in Ukraine." It is online via the [Holodomor Research & Education Consortium](http://www.holodomor.org/).

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