HOLODOMOR

The Ukrainian Famine of 1932–1933 as an Instrument of Consolidatory Mass Violence

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Abstract

The Ukrainian famine or ‘Holodomor’ of 1932–1933 claimed the lives of an estimated 4 to 4.5 million people. General consensus has it that the famines that swept the Soviet Union were caused largely by the collectivisation drive of the First Five-Year Plan, after which the situation in Ukraine was exacerbated by Stalin’s policies in the winter of 1932–1933. However, the underlying motives for Stalin’s actions with regard to Ukraine remain a matter of lively debate. Combining the existing literature on the initiation of mass indiscriminate violence in general and on the causes of the Holodomor in particular with novel insights from studies on authoritarian politics, I posit that the Ukrainian famine may have been intentionally aggravated because the Ukrainian leadership was considered a liability to Stalin’s rule. Rather than facing these elites head on, I suggest that Stalin weaponised the famine as a means of mass indiscriminate violence to enable the capture of local institutions and to undermine the individual support bases of his potential rivals. In this way the Ukrainian Communist Party was purged from the bottom to the top, culminating with the executions of Stanislav Kosior and Vlas Chubar and the expulsion of Grigory Petrovsky, as well as the executions of Pavel Postyshev and Vsevolod Balytsky during the Great Purges of 1937–1939.

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INTRODUCTION

Батько Сталін, подивися,	Father Stalin, look at this
До чого дожилися:	What did they live up to:
Клуня раком, хата боком,	The hut's in ruins, the barn's all sagged
Кінь в колгоспі з одним оком,	The horse on the collective farm with one eye
Ні короби, ні свині –	No cows left, no pigs at all
Тільки Сталін на стіні.	Just a picture of Stalin on the wall
Батько в созі, мати в созі.	Daddy and mommy are in the kolkhoz
Діти плачуть по дорозі,	The poor child cries as alone he goes
Нема хліба, неба сала,	There's no bread and there's no fat
Бо містцева власть забрала.	The local party's ended all of that
Не шукайте домовину –	Seek not the coffin
Батько з'їв свою дитину.	A father's eaten his own offspring
З бичем ходить бригадир –	The party man, he whips and stamps
Заганяє на Сибір.	And sends us to Siberian camps
	Excerpt from a Ukrainian children's song[1]

IN THE EARLY 1930s, the Soviet Union was plagued by a series of famines, of which survivor testimonies, secret reports, memoirs and letters tell us harrowing tales.[2] As Timothy Snyder writes,

> Survival was a moral as well as a physical struggle. A woman doctor wrote to a friend in June 1933 that she had not yet become a cannibal, but was "not sure that I shall not be one by the time my letter reaches you." The good people died first. Those who refused to steal or to prostitute themselves died. Those who gave food to others died. Those who refused to eat corpses died. Those who refused to kill their fellow man died. Parents who resisted cannibalism died before their children did.[3]

The Ukrainian Soviet Republic, commonly referred to as the breadbasket of the USSR, was amongst the regions struck hardest by the famine. At least 4 to 4.5 million Ukrainians died as a direct or indirect consequence of the Ukrainian famine (though estimations have ranged anywhere from 3 to 20 million civilian casualties).[4] At any rate, the Ukrainian famine,

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[1] Cited in: Lidia Kovalenko and Volodymyr Maniak eds., *33'i: Holod: Narodna knyha-memorial* [1933: Holodomor: National Memorial Book] (Kyiv: Radians'kyi pys'mennyk 1991) 110. (in Ukrainian.) Translation mine.

[2] See, e.g.: V.V. Kondrashin et al., *Golod v SSSR. 1929–1934: Dokumenty, Tom 1. Rossiia, XX vek: Dokumenty* [Hunger in the USSR, 1929–1934: Documents, Volume 1. Russia, 20th Century: Documents] (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond «Demokratiia», 2011) 163–165 (in Ukrainian.); V.S. Lozyts'kyi ed., *Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv: Zlochyn vlady, trahediia narudo. Dokumenty i materialy* [Holodomor 1932–1933: The crime of power is a tragedy. Documents and material] (Kiev: Heneza 2008) 37–40. (in Ukrainian.)

[3] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vintage 2015) 50–51.

[4] O. Wolowyna et al., 'Regional Variations of 1932–34 famine losses in Ukraine', *Canadian Studies in Population* 43:3–4 (2016) 175–202. Wolowyna et al. distinguish between an estimated 3.9 million 'direct losses' and 0.6 million 'indirect losses.' The former term refers to deaths that were unmistakably caused by starvation, the latter refers to "births that did not occur due to the famine". By contrast, in 2010, the Court of Appeal in Kyiv also set the direct death toll at roughly 3.9 million (3.941 to be exact) but concludes that the Holodomor caused a further 6.122 million 'lost births.' See: 'Nalivaychenko nazval kolichestvo zhertv golodomora v Ukraine' [Nalyvaichenko named the number of

or *Holodomor*[5], claimed millions of lives, and to add insult to injury, the Soviet leadership suppressed any reference to its occurrence, let alone questions about intentionality, until the mid-1980s.[6]

The trauma inflicted by this famine remains a key issue in Ukraine's history and in its relationship with Russia.[7] The Russian Federation's official position is that millions of people *throughout the USSR* "have suffered from the result of the famine caused by forced collectivisation"—the famine in Ukraine, in other words, was no different from that in the rest of the USSR and therefore cannot be classified as a genocide against the Ukrainian people.[8] By contrast, from Ukrainian independence onward, every Ukrainian president, with the exception of Yanukovych, has expressly referred to the Holodomor as a genocide.[9] Furthermore, the Ukrainian parliament officially passed a law recognising the Holodomor as a genocide and criminalising Holodomor denial and the Kyiv Court of Appeal has ruled that Stalin and several of his associates were responsible.[10] At the annual memorial in November 2016, President Poroshenko demanded that the international community would take the same steps to officially recognise the Holodomor as a genocide perpetrated by Stalin and his associates. "The famine," he said, "was an attempt to force the Ukrainian people to their

victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine], *Left Bank*, 14 June 2010. https://lb.ua/news/2010/01/14/19793_nalivaychenko_nazval_kolichestvo_zh.html (21 December 2020). (in Russian.) The high variance of death estimates can be attributed to (a combination of) a number of factors, such as differences in definitions, the politicised nature of the discussion, as well as a general lack of data. The latter is partly caused by falsification and suppression of evidence. For instance, Soviet census figures of the years 1926–1939 are incomplete or inaccessible and the ones from 1939—the first census until 1959—are clearly inflated to match the numbers stated by Stalin at the Party Congress that year. Besides, migration flows to, from and within the USSR cannot be accounted for with any accuracy in these years.

[5] Roman Serbyn, 'Editor's Foreword', *Holodomor Studies* 1:1 (2009) vii-viii. The neologism 'Holodomor' has been used since the 1980s to denote the 'artificialness' of the Ukrainian famine. Made up of 'holod' (hunger, famine, starvation) and 'moryty' (to waste, debilitate, exhaust, kill), the expression 'moryty holodom' (loosely translated as 'to exhaust someone by starvation') is found in official Soviet reports documenting the complaints by Ukrainian peasants.

[6] Andrea Graziosi, 'The Soviet 1931–1933 Famines and the Ukrainian Holodomor: Is a New Interpretation Possible, and What Would Its Consequences Be?', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 27 (2004–2005) 117–147, therein: 119. As Robert Conquest suggests, this was the Soviet regime's first major appliance of 'Big Lie' propaganda as coined by Adolf Hitler: the use of a lie so "colossal" that no one could believe that someone "could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously."' Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford University Press 1986) 308.

[7] See, e.g.: Georgii Kas'ianov, 'The Holodomor and the Building of a Nation', *Russian Politics and Law* 48:5 (2014) 25–47; Frank E. Sysyn, 'The Famine of 1932–33 in the Discussion of Russian-Ukrainian Relations', *The Harriman Review* 15:2–3 (2005) 78–82; Tatiana Zhurzhenko, '"Capital of Despair": Holodomor Memory and Political Conflicts in Kharkiv after the Orange Revolution', *East European Politics and Societies* 25:3 (2011) 597–639.

[8] 'Worldwide Recognition of the Holodomor as Genocide', *Holodomor Museum*. https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/recognition-of-holodomor-as-genocide-in-the-world/ (21 December 2020).

[9] 'Yanukovych: Famine of 1930s was not genocide against Ukrainians', *KyivPost*, 27 April 2010. https://www.kyivpost.com/article/content/ukraine-politics/yanukovych-famine-of-1930s-was-not-genocide-agains-65137.html (6 December 2020); Leonid Kravchuk, 'My ne maiemo prava znekhtuvaty urokamy mynuloho' [We have no rights to neglect the lessons of the past], in: Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi ed., *Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. v Ukraini: prychyny ta naslidky* [The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: causes and consequences] (Kyiv: Instytut istorii, NAN Ukrainy 1995) 8–11, therein: 10. (in Ukrainian.)

[10] 'Recognition of the Holodomor as Genocide', *Holodomor Museum*. https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/holodomor-is-a-genocide/ (20 December 2020). The others are Vyacheslav Molotov, Lazar Kaganovich, Pavel Postyshev, Stanislav Kosior, Vlas Chubar and Mendel Khataevich.

knees, to deprive us of our dignity, to destroy our national identity and to kill our hope for the right to create our own destiny in our own land."[11] As these words illustrate, to the 44 million people who live in the country today, the Holodomor and the questions of intentionality and accountability go to the very heart of their national identity.[12]

These same questions have been and continue to be at the core of the academic discussions on the topic. The first monograph on the Ukrainian famine appeared in 1986, from the hands of Robert Conquest. In short, his assessment was that the USSR-wide famine was caused by the rapid collectivisation drive of the First Five-Year Plan. To Stalin, the peasantry was a class that needed to be reformed in order to advance the cause of communism, which would explain why he let so many of them perish under the strict grain confiscation regime. Ukrainian peasants, however, were faced with what Conquest called a "terror-famine" unlike any other, as additional government measures aggravated their already dire situation. Conquest's explanation for these actions was that, in Ukraine, Stalin's ongoing struggle against the peasantry was intensified out of fear—warranted or not—for the emergence of a nationalist movement with the potential to unite Ukraine's political elite to its peasantry. Essentially, Conquest concludes, "[t]he Ukrainian peasant suffered in double guise – as a peasant and as a Ukrainian."[13]

Since the publication of Conquest's ground-breaking *Harvest of Sorrow*, a lot has changed in the study of the Holodomor: the official silence and secrecy of the Soviet Union concerning it has come to an end, as has the USSR itself; state archives have partially opened up; downright denial of the Holodomor has become a thing of the past; and the Holodomor now has a thriving body of scholarship dedicated to it that, according to an estimate in 2015, comprises well over 20,000 titles.[14] That said, the conclusions of these studies about what caused the Ukrainian famine are still overwhelmingly in line with Conquest's interpretation and differ but in emphasis. This is not an issue—much rather, it is a testament to Conquest's research. It is, however, indicative of a problematic trend that underlies the study of this topic: studies have predominantly focused on the question whether the Holodomor was a

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[11] Petro Poroshenko, quoted in: 'Ukraine Calls for Holodomor Famine to be Recognized as "Genocide"', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 26 November 2016. http://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-holodomor-victims-remembrance-day/28140900.html (13 April 2017).

[12] Obversely, Sheila Fitzpatrick argues that the Holodomor "has become a staple of the national myth-making of the new Ukrainian state." Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Red Famine by Anne Applebaum review – did Stalin deliberately let Ukraine starve?', *The Guardian*, 25 August 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/aug/25/red-famine-stalins-war-on-ukraine-anne-applebaum-review (12 April 2017).

[13] Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, 4.

[14] Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, 'The Holodomor of 1932–33: How and Why?', *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 2:1 (2015) 93–116, therein: 95.

genocide—and, by extension, on what was specific to Ukraine and the famine years. Yet, in doing so, scholars may have lost sight of a bigger picture.

I claim that, only by stepping away from the traditional focus on the years 1931-1933 and on the specific policies of grain confiscation, one may see that the same local institutions and machineries of violence that were captured and empowered by the Stalin regime to enforce these grain confiscations also served an ulterior function: to eliminate key political figures in Ukraine, be it several years later, during the Great Terror of 1937-1939. The chaos of the Holodomor allowed for the launch of a purge of the Ukrainian Communist Party that culminated in the Great Purges, by the end of which the complete Ukrainian government was arrested, only 3 out of 102 Ukrainian Central Committee members were alive, and Stalin's power over Ukraine was near-absolute.[15]

The main question this thesis seeks to answer is thus as follows: was the Ukrainian famine of 1931-1933 part of a longer-term strategy in which the famine was instrumentalised to enable Stalin's regime to eliminate the Ukrainian political elite during the Great Purges of 1937-1939? In essence, I argue that the Holodomor was a case of what Van der Maat recently termed "consolidatory genocide"[16] or "genocidal consolidation."[17]: genocidal or mass political violence for political consolidation.

As such, this thesis serves a dual purpose: first, by drawing new insights from studies on authoritarian politics (including Van der Maat's), it contributes to a better understanding of the Holodomor, particularly by focusing on the dynamics between the regime and the Ukrainian Soviet and Communist Party leadership.[18] Second, examining the Holodomor and all its particularities through the lens of genocidal consolidation may offer valuable insights to Van der Maat's framework.

First off is a discussion of the theoretical framework. This section includes an explanation of key definitions, a brief background section on authoritarian politics, an introduction into Van der Maat's theory, and the methodology applied in this thesis. Second is a review of the existing theories on mass indiscriminate violence and their measure of applicability to the Holodomor case. In the first main chapter I identify the elite of the Stalin

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[15] Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford University Press 1991) 232.
[16] Eelco van der Maat, 'A Typology of Mass Violence', *Peace Economics, Peace Science and Public Policy* 20:4 (2014) 685–695, therein: 692–693.
[17] Eelco van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation: Final Solutions to Elite Rivalry', *International Organization* 74:4 (2020) 773–809.
[18] The need for such research has clearly been expressed by Bohdan Klid, who calls for more studies on "the suppression and destruction of the Ukrainian elites" and "the conduct of the Ukrainian Soviet and Communist Party Leadership." Bohdan Klid, 'Why is it Important to Study the History of the Holodomor – The Genocide of the Ukrainian People', *Storìnki Istorì* 45 (2017) 162–168, therein: 167.

regime and reflect on Stalin's relationship with his ruling coalition. Particular attention is accorded to Ukrainian politicians who had a significant role at the All-Union level and to the question whether Stalin faced any elite threats prior to or during the Holodomor. Chapter II goes into the nature, chronology and perpetrators of the political violence in Ukraine based on the four steps of the process that is outlined by Van der Maat. Here I discuss specific policies that were introduced during the Holodomor and how, ultimately, these helped Stalin eliminate the last traces of Ukrainian autonomy. Key observations regarding genocidal consolidation in Ukraine are drawn together in the conclusion, along with suggested avenues for further research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Elite rivalry, consolidatory violence and how to study it

To be feared is to fear:
no one has been able to strike terror into someone
and at the same time enjoy peace of mind himself.

Seneca[19]

TO FULLY UNDERSTAND mass indiscriminate violence it is imperative to first understand the issues that may impel a dictator to adopt such drastic measures. As this thesis focuses solely on mass indiscriminate violence that is employed in response to elite competition, the second to next section expands on basic assumptions on authoritarian politics and elite-dictator dynamics; the next section goes into how, according to Van der Maat's theory, these dynamics may lead to consolidatory violence. Finally, a methodology section shall indicate how the Holodomor case will be examined to test said theory. Before delving into theory and methods, however, I shall start out with a clear definition of terms.

Key definitions

A detailed discussion of whether the Holodomor legally constitutes genocide is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that the legal notion of genocide is strict: the resolution adopted by the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide on 9 December 1948 defines genocide as a set of specified crimes "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."[20] Social or political groups are not protected under this definition. Consequently, as the Holodomor predominantly harmed the peasant class of Ukraine—i.e. a social group—treating the Holodomor as a genocide on the Ukrainian peasantry is still controversial. Indeed,

[19] Seneca, *Epistulae Morales ad Lucilum*, Robin Campbell transl. (London: Penguin Random House 2014) 228.

[20] 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide', *United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect* (9 December 1948) Art. II. https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf (12 April 2017). Supposedly, this exclusion of social classes was partly due to Soviet objections at said Convention. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, *The Spectre of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press 2003) 267.

the question whether the Ukrainian famine should be regarded as genocide has been around nearly as long as the term 'genocide' itself.[21]

I shall refrain from using the word 'genocide' in this context and will refer to the Holodomor as a case of "consolidatory mass indiscriminate violence" instead of what Van der Maat originally named "consolidatory genocide." The word "consolidatory" denotes violence employed as a means to consolidate one's power. Mass indiscriminate violence is typically explained as a type of violence that: 1) deliberately targets non-combatants; 2) targets a group (whether ethnic, racial, religious or social-political) that is not part of the ruling coalition; 3) is indiscriminate—targeting groups without regard for individual behaviour—rather than selective;[22] 4) is not aimed at political control over this segment of society; and 5) results in 50,000 intentional civilian deaths over the course of five years or less.[23]

The term 'violence' should in this context be understood in a broad sense—not only as physical violence, but also as non-physical threats bringing about physical harm: although physical violence was not in short supply in Ukraine in the early 1930s, this thesis also concerns itself with casualties attributed to starvation. This is in line with what is described in the genocide convention: "deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part."[24] Finally, whenever I use 'the Communist Party', 'the Central Committee' or similar organisational terms, I am referring to the All-Union Communist Party, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, etc., unless specified that I mean the Ukrainian Communist Party or its Central Committee.

Background: authoritarian politics and the spectre of elite rivalry

The life of an authoritarian leader is typically one of uncertainty and violence. For most dictators, Svolik wrote in 2012, "merely dying in bed is a significant accomplishment."[25] Fidel Castro's death, in this light, may be one of his crowning achievements: having spent

[21] Raphael Lemkin, the lawyer who is credited for coining the term 'genocide', *did* consider the Holodomor an example of genocide: "[the Ukrainian famine] is not simply a case of mass murder. It is a case of genocide, of destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation." Raphael Lemkin, 'Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine', in: Lubomyr Y. Luciuk and Lisa Grekul eds., *Holodomor: Reflections on the Great Famine of 1932- 1933 in Soviet Ukraine* (Kingston: Kashtan Press 2009) 235–242, therein: 242.

[22] Selective violence, in contrast, is violence targeting specific individuals on the basis of their loyalty and behaviour. This explicit distinction between "selective" and "indiscriminate" violence—although both terms have been in use since before his work—is drawn from: Stathis N. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge University Press 2006).

[23] Points 1 to 4 are inspired by Van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation'. The concept of 'mass indiscriminate violence' originates from Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2004). Point 5 is taken from: Benjamin Valentino, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay, '"Draining the Sea": Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare', *International Organization* 58:2 (2004) 375–407, therein: 378.

[24] 'Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide'.

[25] Milan W. Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge University Press 2012) 13.

almost half a century ruling over Cuba, as well as several years in retirement, Fidel Castro finally died of natural causes in 2016. Most leaders do not fare so well: for every "accomplished" dictator like Castro, the twentieth century has seen dozens of others forcibly removed from power—in many cases far from gently, and in all more promptly.[26]

Herein lies the main paradox of authoritarian rule: dictators, despite their exceptional power, are exceptionally insecure. As Wintrobe, pondering this paradox, wondered: "Was Julius Caesar not powerful? And was it not for that reason that he was killed?"[27] Indeed, dictators are at risk both *because* and *in spite* of their power. Hence, the answer to Wintrobe's question may be a plain affirmation. Power is always sought after, as it offers clear benefits to its wielder. However, in authoritarian societies power is zero-sum property: the more power is concentrated at the top, the more people live at the discretion of this power, and the more people potentially have a stake in removing their leader(s) from power. Moreover, since regularised procedures to depose a dictator are absent, opponents are likely to resort to violence or threats thereof. The leader's political survival is therefore strongly connected to his physical survival.[28]

An authoritarian leader is under constant threat from the people over whom he rules. Today this is considered a truism, as is the suggestion that this threat underpins the rationale of a dictator's policies. Yet whereas a lot of popular and academic attention has been devoted to the ruler's relationship with his people[29], most works have failed to address with due consideration a second, much bigger, threat: *the threat from within*. As recent research by Milan Svolik indicates, of all 316 non-constitutional authoritarian leader exits between 1945 and 2008, only 11% was caused by popular uprisings, whereas 68% of them was the result of a coup by the ruling coalition.[30] The most potent threat to a dictator's rule thus originates from within his own circle, while a dictator cannot rule without allowing such a circle to form. As Paul H. Lewis aptly noted:

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[26] I am excluding royal autocrats. For an overview of non-constitutional leadership exits between 1945 and 2002, see Milan W. Svolik, 'Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes', *American Journal of Political Science* 53:2 (2009) 477–494, therein: 478.

[27] Ronald Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* (Cambridge University Press 1998) 38.

[28] Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright and Erica Frantz, 'Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set', *Perspectives on Politics* 12:2 (2014) 313–331, therein: 321. The end of a dictator's tenure more often than not marks his death, imprisonment or exile.

[29] Including classics such as: Karl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1965) and Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harvest Books 1973).

[30] Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, 4–5; Svolik, 'Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics', 477–478. During these years, a total of 205 leaders were unambiguously ousted by regime insiders.

> Regardless of how powerful dictators are, the complexities of modern society and government make it impossible for them to rule alone. They may dominate their respective systems, but some of their authority must be delegated, which means that a government elite stratum is formed just below them.[31]

This is indeed the crux of authoritarian rule: in order to preserve order and govern successfully the dictator needs to empower certain actors. To secure his control over the masses, or even just their passive acquiescence, the dictator needs allied individuals to actively carry out and enforce his policies.[32] These allies make up what Svolik has termed the 'ruling coalition': "those individuals who support the government and, jointly with the dictator, hold enough power to be both necessary and sufficient for its survival."[33] The dictator needs to delegate power, but, if put into the wrong hands, this power may also very well be used against him. As the power vested in these elites makes them the dictator's most crucial allies, so too may it render them his most dangerous rivals.

A novel approach: consolidatory violence

One thing is clear: while the dictator cannot rule without his ruling coalition, he must certainly be wary of them. If one of the co-opted elites shows ill will toward the dictator, the logical step would be for him to purge that individual. However, their power, personal connections and proximity to the ruler makes it dangerous to confront these elites, as doing so could incite a coup. This is where mass indiscriminate violence may come into play.

Van der Maat suggests that mass indiscriminate violence may provide the dictator with an indirect and ostensibly less risky method of confronting elite rivals. Much like the dictator himself, his rival elites rely on their own pillars of support, be it through formal, institutional ties, or through informal, personal relations based on kinship, ethnicity or religion.[34] Consolidatory genocide targets these supporting pillars: instead of striking at the rival elite directly, this approach involves the dictator first cutting off the rival from his support and only

[31] Paul H. Lewis, 'Salazar's Ministerial Elite, 1932–1968', *Journal of Politics* 40:3 (1978) 622–647, therein: 622.
[32] This is in part inspired by the concept of 'constitutive power.' One of its famous proponents, Gene Sharp, held that "[o]bedience is at the heart of political power" and distinguished between "passive acquiescence" and "active consent." See: Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent 1973) 16. In general, the pluralistic view of power that runs through this thesis is inspired by Gene Sharp's notion of 'loci of power'. Power, in his view, does not reside in any single ruling body, nor is it intrinsic to any ruler whether individual or collective. Much rather, loci of power are numerous and dispersed among those in key positions—even, albeit to a lesser extent, in authoritarian societies. See: Gene Sharp, *Social Power and Political Freedom* (Boston: Porter Sargent 1980).
[33] Svolik, 'Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics', 478.
[34] This distinction between formal and informal ties is based on: Lowell Dittmer, 'Bases of Power in Chinese Politics: A Theory and an Analysis of the Fall of the Gang of Four', *World Politics* 31:1 (1987) 26–60.

then launching a purge of the elite.[35] This thus explains a situation in which mass indiscriminate violence may *precede* and/or *co-occur with* elite purges.

The causal process, as depicted in Figure 1, is explained as follows. The first step is to create and/or empower militias or paramilitary groups who are to employ mass indiscriminate violence throughout the region. The ensuing chaos creates possibilities to (selectively) purge lower-level party officials, local politicians and security officials without raising much alarm and leaves the dictator in a position to at once neutralise his opponents' bases of power and strengthen his control over local institutions. Finally, after this step is completed, it is relatively safe for the ruler to purge his rival elites and consolidate his power.

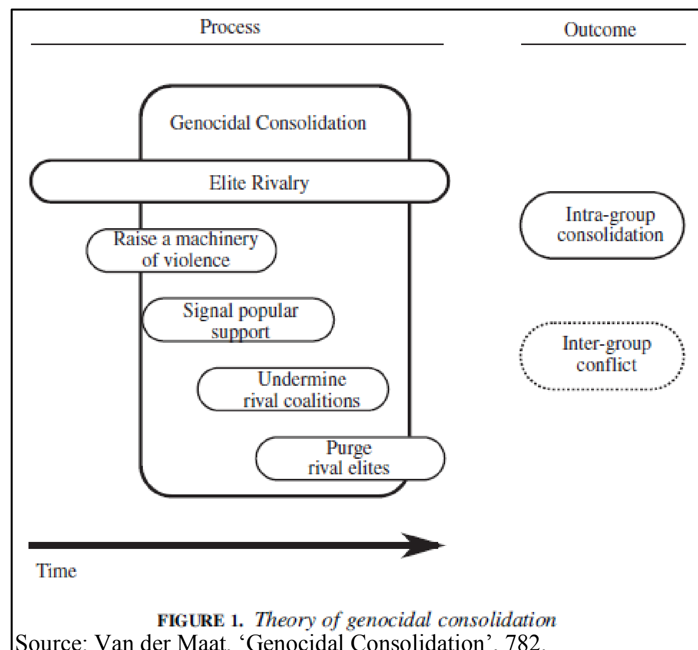

FIGURE 1. *Theory of genocidal consolidation*
Source: Van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation', 782.

In the ideal scenario, this leads to intra-group consolidation: the dictator will have routed undesirable elites from his ruling coalition, thereby diminishing the threat of coups. At the same time, widespread violence may incite popular protest or inter-group conflict. However, conform Svolik's findings on authoritarian leadership exits, a rational ruler would prefer the more remote and diffuse threat of insurgency over a swift and sudden coup. As has been pointed out by Philip Roessler, the "mobilisational costs" necessary for insurgents to successfully seize power in an armed rebellion are higher than in a coup, so the rate of success is generally much lower than with coups.[36]

Methodology: how to study consolidatory violence

This thesis serves as a case-study for Van der Maat's theory and examines whether the Holodomor can be considered an episode of consolidatory violence. The main method employed to (dis)prove this hypothesis is process-tracing. This form of research involves three steps, which shall be closely followed throughout this thesis: first, one formulates the empirical evidence one expects to observe in the case-study if the theory at hand is correct.

[35] Van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation', 779-785.
[36] Philip G. Roessler, *Ethnic Politics and State Power in Africa* (Cambridge University Press 2016) 99.

Second, the researcher collects empirical data and assesses whether this corresponds to the expected evidence. Finally, one evaluates the authenticity of the evidence.[37]

Essentially, Van der Maat's theory seeks to explain the use of mass indiscriminate violence, so first this should be clearly observed. This provides no problem, as it is clearly documented when and through which measures Ukrainian peasants were starved. What makes Van der Maat's theory distinct from existing explanations is that it is predicated on a dictator using this mode of violence to weaken threatening rival elites and consolidate his power over them. Thus, for the genocidal consolidation thesis to hold, one would have to observe 1) mass violence, 2) a high level of elite rivalry *before* the violence, and 3) a series of elite purges *after* the violence. For the theory to hold, one needs to observe the creation or capture of a machinery of violence that is *first* used to wage mass indiscriminate violence and is *finally* employed to address the elite threat.

This high level of elite rivalry is corroborated in chapter 1, where I identify the Ukrainian elites and cover their measure of power and autonomy, as well as their relationship to their support base(s) in Ukraine on one hand and to Stalin on the other. Chapter 2 goes into the steps connecting the onset of the violence to its outcome, as outlined in Figure 1: raising a machinery of violence, signalling popular support, undermining rival coalitions, and, finally, purging rival elites. In order to make justified claims about the applicability of Van der Maat's theory to the Holodomor case, however, it is important not only to clearly formulate these observable implications, but also to ensure that they are unique to this theory and cannot be considered part of any of the alternative explanations for the Holodomor. Therefore, the next chapter provides a literature review focusing on the three most common explanations for the Holodomor: communist, ethnic, and counter-guerrilla. Each section shall detail on one of these rival explanations and, by comparing the expected evidence to actual findings, establish why they do not account for the Holodomor.

[37] Derek Beach, 'It's all about mechanisms –What process-tracing case studies should be tracing', *New Political Economy* 21:5 (2015) 463-472, therein: 468-469.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing Explanations and Why They Fall Short

Force is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one.

Karl Marx[38]

The innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions.

Niccolò Machiavelli[39]

ABOUT 60 TO 150 million lives are estimated to have been lost to mass indiscriminate violence in the twentieth century alone.[40] Existing literature points toward various motives for such violence and shows that it can come in many different forms. This section covers the three most common types: communist, ethnic and counter-guerrilla mass killings.[41] These three types are chosen because, first, these account for the most and the deadliest episodes of indiscriminate civilian victimisation in recent history. Second, these are the types of mass killing most frequently discussed in the academic literature. Hence, these explanations, along with the novel theory of genocidal consolidation, form the primary body of theory to which this thesis contributes. Finally, these three models of mass violence have each been used to explain the Holodomor and thus form a good basis for further research. First the general premises of each model are discussed, after which they are assessed as a possible explanation for the Holodomor in particular. This division allows for a clear assessment of what is lacking in existing explanations of the Holodomor and what further study of the particularities of this famine may contribute to our understanding of mass indiscriminate violence in general.

Communist mass killings and leadership ideology

Communist mass killings have by far claimed the most lives, with estimations of the total death toll ranging anywhere between 60 million to 110 million civilians over the past century.[42] Heeding Machiavelli's words in the epigraph, any transformation of society, no

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[38] Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*, S. Moore and E. Aveling transl. and eds. (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications 2011 [1906]) 804.

[39] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (London: Penguin Books 2004) 24.

[40] Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2004) 1.

[41] Valentino, *Final Solutions*. See chapter 3, "The Strategic Logic of Mass Killing", in particular. Valentino names a total of six different types, among which these three are considered the most relevant ones in recent history; the other three types listed involve territorial, terrorist and imperialist considerations.

[42] J.M.G. van der Dennen, *The 'Evil' Mind, Pt. 1: Genocide* (Universiteit Groningen 1999) 88. Note that especially imperialist mass killings (e.g. of Native Americans and Australian Aboriginals) have been particularly lethal throughout history. Much less so, however, during the past century.

matter the cause or objective, invariably sparks resentment among those who did well under the old conditions. The collectivisation drives typical to communism raise tensions amongst and between those that stand to gain and those that stand to lose from them. However, though social tensions are a necessary condition for mass killing, they are not sufficient. These tensions have existed and continue to exist in all societies, communist or otherwise, and rarely lead to this level of conflict. Contrary to what the term 'communist mass killing' may suggest, the acute levels of violence in, for example, the Soviet Union, China and Cambodia seem to be outliers rather than the norm; the prevalence of communist ideology does not by definition result in bloodshed—let alone in indiscriminate civilian victimisation. The term 'communist' mass killing thus implies too much similarity and continuity between different communist regimes.

What, then, might explain the exceptional violence in these socialist states? Some scholars place the blame on individual leaders' agency instead of the structural features of communism.[43] In essence, this school of thought subscribes to Conquest's suggestion that, "everything that happened during these years is ultimately derived from the peculiar mentality of Stalin."[44] Indeed, biographies—even thorough psychological analyses—of infamous dictators like Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong and Pol Pot abound for this particular reason.[45] At a glance, what seems to set these three notorious leaders apart from ostensibly less malign rulers is their strong conviction that communism as an end justifies all means. They shared a tendency to choose communism over compromise, even if this engendered killing thousands, sometimes millions, in the process.

That said, extreme leader ideology is incomplete as an explanation for mass indiscriminate violence and quantifiably problematic in general. While ideology certainly limits the positions one can take without betraying one's ideals, an ideological leader is still left with different ways to confront a challenge and, when choosing one option over another, will likely take into account non-ideological considerations as well. There is thus no way of

[43] Curiously, this goes against the general social-historical turn in scholarship on the Soviet Union: whereas until the 1960s the government or individual leaders were generally considered the source of all that transpired in the USSR, historians from that time onward started paying more attention to the agency of workers, peasants and soldiers and society at large. See: Steven A. Smith, 'The Historiography of the Russian Revolution 100 Years On', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 16:4 (2015) 733–749.
[44] Robert Conquest, *Inside Stalin's Secret Police* (Stanford University Press 1985) 3. Conquest's comments relate to 1937–1939, the years of the Great Purges.
[45] See: Marina Stal, 'Psychopathology of Joseph Stalin', *Psychology* 4:9 (2013) 1–4; D. Rancour-Laferriere, *The mind of Stalin: A psychoanalytical study* (Ann Arbor: Ardis 1988); Jacques Andrieu, *Psychologie de Mao Tse-Tung* (Brussels: Editions Complexe 2002); Robert S. Robins and Jerrold M. Post, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), especially: ch. 10, "Paranoia in Power: Pol Pot, Idi Amin, and Joseph Stalin".

establishing whether ideology is the determining variable and whether a more violent approach necessarily corresponds to stronger ideological conviction.

There are no tangible objective indicators to quantify a ruler's degree of conviction; one is left merely with the leader's statements and policies, which can be said to be circumstantial indicators at best. Any public statement that displays strong ideological conviction may just be a veneer to cover more pragmatic considerations about personal advancement or survival. If, on the other hand, one is to measure the strength of a ruler's ideological commitment by the policies to advance that ideology, one would have to refer, at least implicitly, to the outcome of his policies—including their lethality. However, if one is to attribute a dictator's deadly policies to his cherished radical beliefs, these violent outcomes of policy would effectively form both the *indicators* and *effects* of ideology. Hence, a strictly ideological explanation exposes one to both speculation and circular reasoning. The (imperfect) information one *can* infer from 'ideological' statements and policies accounts neither for comparative differences in terms of intensity, timing and location, nor for the occurrence of mass violence in the first place.[46]

The Holodomor as communist mass killing?

As genocide scholar Norman Naimark writes, "perhaps the most obvious thing to say about the Holodomor is that it is a case of what can be classified as Communist genocide."[47] It is easy to see where Naimark comes from, as the famines of the early 1930s were a result of Stalin's rapid collectivisation of agriculture, one of the main components of the ambitious First Five-Year Plan (1928-1932). This critical juncture in Stalin's reign has been typified as a "revolution from above." Collective ownership of land, which had long been one of the defining ideals of communism, was turned into a central policy objective, and this was inextricably linked to the struggle against independent farmers, or 'kulaks.'[48] As long as there were independent farmers, the Soviet Union would remain communist in name only, so these kulaks were considered 'class enemies' or 'enemies of the revolution.'

Insofar as it motivated Stalin's plans for the rapid collectivisation of the Soviet Union that led to famines, communist ideology can indeed be seen as the cause of Holodomor. However, it does not follow from communist rationale alone why such a disproportionate

[46] This paragraph draws from: Van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation', 777.
[47] Norman M. Naimark, 'How the Holodomor Can Be Integrated into Our Understanding of Genocide', *East/West: Journal for Ukrainian Studies* 2:1 (2015) 117–131, therein 123.
[48] While the term "kulak" was originally used to describe affluent, independent farmers, from 1918 onward it also included farmers who refused (in a broad sense of the word) to cooperate in grain confiscations. The term was increasingly used in propaganda and political rhetoric to denote threats to the regime, whether real or constructed. Richard Pipes, *Communism: A Brief History* (Random House Digital Inc., 2001) 39.

number of Ukrainians starved to death as a result of them. The reason why this collectivisation was rushed so much and had such drastic consequences in the first place, particularly in Ukraine, should be sought elsewhere. The collective production and central redistribution of food was likely rushed to support the other component of the Five-Year Plan: the USSR's rapid industrialisation. This rapid industrialisation was, in turn, informed by a fear—real or otherwise—of outside influence and impending war, as well as by a desire to show the world the successes of communism.[49]

As an overwhelmingly agrarian society, Ukraine was necessarily at the centre of the First Plan's adjustments. However, as research shows, the region had already largely been collectivised by the time the famine hit the Ukrainian countryside, and was in this regard even ahead of the Russian Soviet Republic.[50] As such, there was no longer a strong presence of the kulaks Stalin so despised, which could have explained the strict measures taken in Ukraine from late 1932 onward. In order for this communist interpretation to hold true, one would expect a relatively strong presence of kulaks in Ukraine, but this clearly was not the case.

Why, then, was Ukraine targeted disproportionately, and why at that moment? Besides, if it were indeed Stalin's design to eradicate the class of kulak farmers, why would farmers—kulak or not—be starved irrespective of their compliance with the collectivisation policies? If anything, it would seem counterproductive to starve one's main food suppliers amid an industrialisation drive. While it is obvious that communism provided the backdrop to the events that happened in these years, it is equally evident that other factors besides ideology decided the peculiar fate of the Ukrainian republic. Was there another reason to view Ukrainians as class enemies?

Ethnic mass killings

Some of the most violent conflicts in recent history can be described as ethnic mass killings—the Armenian genocide, the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide being the most well-known examples. The narrative of the early 1990s suggests that when different ethnic, religious and national groups are at odds—sometimes holding onto "ancient hatreds" passed down over millennia[51]—this manifests itself in particularly bloody conflict. Such ethnic conflicts have

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[49] The international context of Stalin's considerations with regard to Ukraine remains relatively underexamined and is typically only mentioned as an aside. For a nonetheless elucidating example, see: Hiroaki Kuromiya, 'The Soviet Famine of 1932–1933 Reconsidered', *Europe-Asia Studies* 60:4 (2008) 663–675, therein: 673–674.

[50] Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 220. By mid-1932, before the crucial measures that so direly aggravated the situation in Ukraine were taken, 70% of Ukrainian peasants lived in kolkhozes, as opposed to 59.3% in Russia.

[51] Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (New York: St. Martin's Press 1993).

become a popular research topic since the Cold War, as the Balkan wars seemingly indicated a shift toward a new type of conflict based upon matters of identity.[52]

This narrative has since been met with profound criticism. Foremost because the motives for mass killing are believed to be more complex than mere animosity. Whereas scholars tend to agree that the Balkan and Rwanda killings occurred primarily along ethnic lines and that its perpetrators displayed irrational group behaviour, it is suggested that the senior initiators of these conflicts had concrete political incentives.[53] As the Human Rights Watch report of 1995 indicates, leaders tapped into existing divisions to further an external cause: "time after time the proximate cause of communal violence is governmental exploitation of communal differences."[54] Indeed, ethnic hatred is seldom the primary incentive for the senior organisers of mass killings, even though the executioners of their policies may genuinely hate the target group or simply like "killing for killing's sake."[55]

In addition, scholars have pointed out that ethnic tensions and differences are commonplace in and amongst societies. Although violence may occur in deeply divided societies, mass killings remain very rare.[56] By the same token, an ethnic component seems to be in play during virtually every conflict, especially as a conflict progresses and grief grows. Yet there does not seem to be a direct causal link between ethnic differences and violence being employed against civilians.[57] Like ideology, the level of ethnic division, if it can be measured in the first place, cannot seem to explain the timing and intensity of mass violence against civilians whenever it occurs.

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[52] For an interesting discussion on how "new wars" are "fought in the name of identity" and on the actual novelty of this aspect, see: Mary Kaldor, 'In Defence of New Wars', *Stability* 2:1 (2013) 1–16, therein: 1–2. It is also in this context that Samuel Huntington's came up with his influential 'clash of civilisations' thesis, in which he posed that "[t]he fault lines between civilisations are replacing the political and ideological boundaries of the Cold War as the flash points for crisis and bloodshed." See: Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Clash of Civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs* 72:3 (Summer 1993) 22–49, therein: 29.

[53] V.P. Gagnon, Jr., 'Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia' *International Security* 19:3 (1994) 130–166, therein: 164.

[54] Human Rights Watch, *Slaughter among Neighbors: The Political Origins of Communal Violence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press 1995) 2.

[55] Catherine Barnes, The Functional Utility of Genocide: Towards a Framework for Understanding the Connection between Genocide and Regime Consolidation, Expansion and Maintenance', *Journal of Genocide Research* 7:3 (2005) 309–330, therein: 311.

[56] James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, 'Explaining Interethnic Cooperation', *American Political Science Review* 90:4 (1996) 715–735, therein: 715; Valentino, *Final Solutions*, 153; Benjamin A. Valentino, 'Why We Kill: The Political Science of Political Violence against Civilians', *Annual Review of Political Science* 17 (2014) 89–103.

[57] Jean-Paul Azam and Anke Hoeffler, 'Violence against Civilians in Civil Wars: Looting or Terror?' *Journal of Peace Research* 39:4 (2002) 461–485.

The Holodomor as ethnic mass killing?

Whereas there is consensus that Ukrainian peasants suffered because of the regime's policies in the winter of 1932–1933, the question of intentionality remains debated: was the famine deliberately aggravated? If so, did the regime specifically target the Ukrainian population?

Not everyone is convinced that the Holodomor was genocide, even amongst Ukrainians. For example, Valerii Soldatenko, former director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory, rejects the term genocide because the issue has become too politicised.[58] Though he calls it a tragedy and does not dispute the Soviet leadership's role in aggravating the situation, he concludes that "[t]here is not a single document that supports the concept of the Holodomor as genocide in Ukraine or that even hints at ethnic motives."[59] Echoing an argument commonly made by Russian scholars such as N.A. Ivnitskii and Viktor Kondrashin, Soldatenko also points toward the high death rates in the Northern Caucasus, Kazakhstan, and the Volga region—in relative terms, Kazakhstan even suffered more from the famine, losing approximately a quarter of its population to starvation.[60]

By contrast, other historians emphasise the lethal and punitive character of the measures taken in Ukraine, arguing that the situation there was distinct from the other famine-stricken regions. Andrea Graziosi, for instance, notes that the "scale of both punishment and terror reached extreme dimensions" and that the situation in Ukraine grew "into a qualitatively different phenomenon."[61] Some such scholars see the Holodomor as an episode in a longer and more complex history of violence aimed at countering Ukrainian nationalism, the Soviet peasantry, or both. Graziosi, Orlando Figes, Sergei Maksudov, David Marples and Gerhard Simon each suggest that the Holodomor was the culmination of a "protracted war

[58] V.F. Soldatenko, 'Trahediia trydtsiat' tret'oho: notatky na istoriohrafichnomu zrizi' [The Tragedy of the Thirty-Third: Notes on the Historiography], in: idem ed., *Natsional'na ta istorychna pam"iat': zbirnyk naukovykh prats'* [National and Historical Memory: A Collection of Scientific Works] (Kyiv: Ukrains'kyi instytut natsional'noi pam"iati 2012) 3–92, therein: 4–8. (in Ukrainian.)

[59] Soldatenko, 'Trahediaa trydtsiat' tret'oho', 20

[60] Idem, 22; N. A. Ivnitskii, *Golod 1932–1933 godov v SSSR* [The famine of 1932–1933 in the USSR] (Moscow 2009: Sobranie). (in Russian.); V.V. Kondrashin, *Golod 1932–1933 godov: Tragediya rossiyskoy derevni* [The Famine of 1932–1933: The Tragedy of the Russian Village] (Moscow 2008: ROSSPEN); V. Kondrashin and S. Kul'chitskiy, 'O samom glavnom: Professor Stanislav Kul'chitskiy i yego rossiyskiy kollega Viktor Kondrashin: chem byl Golodomor 1932–1933 godov?' [About the most important thing: Professor Stanislav Kulchitsky and his Russian colleague Viktor Kondrashin: what was the Holodomor of 1932–1933?], InoSMI, 3 June 2008. https://inosmi.ru/world/20080603/241726.html (12 December 2020). (in Russian.); Sarah Cameron, 'The Kazakh Famine of 1930–33: Current Research and New Directions', *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 3:2 (2016) 117–132, therein: 117. Note that whereas Kondrashin is critical of Ukraine's portrayal of the 'Great Famine' as a crime against Ukrainians and the downplaying of Russians' suffering, he refers to the famine as state terror perpetrated by the Stalin regime.

[61] Graziosi, 'The Soviet 1931–1933 Famines and the Ukrainian Holodomor', 108. Other well-known scholars who emphasise this are Kul'chyts'kyi, Shapoval, Vasil'ev, and Werth.

with the peasantry."[62] Lemkin, in an unpublished essay written in 1953, described the Ukrainian famine as a "classic example of Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment in russification—the destruction of the Ukrainian nation"[63]

These different interpretations are not mutually exclusive. In fact, most of these authors point toward both the peasant and the national question and their conclusions differ but in emphasis. Though it seems semantical, the question whether Stalin viewed the Ukrainian peasants primarily as Ukrainians or as peasants is an important one, as only the former would be reason to designate the famine a genocide.

Judging from empirical evidence it seems that both the peasant and the national factor played a part. Stalin himself said that the Ukrainian 'peasant question' was "in essence, a national question, the peasants constituting the principal force of the national movement."[64] Hence Conquest's oft-cited conclusion that "[t]he Ukrainian peasant (…) suffered in double guise – as a peasant and as a Ukrainian."[65] Stalin's correspondence indicates that he was concerned about the re-emergence of a nationalist movement that would unite Ukraine's peasants and political elites. In his letters to Kaganovich, Stalin writes of "Petliurites"—supporters of Ukraine's president during its brief period of independence between 1917 and 1920—and the threat of a "counter-revolution." He calls Ukraine "a distinctive republic" and emphasises that "[t]he most important issue right now is Ukraine."[66]

Yet, whereas it is clearly established that the Stalinist regime took measures that aggravated the situation in Ukraine, nothing suggests that Stalin wanted to eliminate all Ukrainians, nor even all Ukrainian peasants. If it truly was an ethnic question, it would be curious that Stalin's effort to eliminate Ukrainians ended: surely Ukrainians did not stop being Ukrainian, but in 1933 the regime did put a stop to its food confiscations[67] and started offering

[62] Andrea Graziosi, *Stalinism, Collectivization and the Great Famine* (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Studies Fund 2009) 1; Orlando Figes, 'Section 10: Revolution from Above', *Orlandofiges.info* (n.d.). http://www.orlandofiges.info/section10_RevolutionfromAbove/index.php (30 June 2018); Sergei Maksudov, 'Victory over the Peasantry' in: Halyna Hryn ed., *Hunger by Design: The Great Ukrainian Famine and Its Soviet Context* (2009) 53–102; David R. Marples, *Russia in the Twentieth Century* (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd. 2011) 101; Gerhard Simon, 'Die Große Hungersnot in der Ukraine: Holodomor als Völkersmord; Tatsachen und Kontroversen', *Europäische Rundschau* 1 (2008) 83–90, therein: 89. (in German.)
[63] Lemkin, 'Soviet Genocide in the Ukraine', 235.
[64] Nicolas Werth, 'The Great Famine of 1932–33', *SciencesPo*, 18 April 2008. https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/fr/document/great-ukrainian-famine–1932–33 (7 August 2019).
[65] Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 4.
[66] R.W. Davies, Oleg V. Khlevniuk, and E.A. Rees eds., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931–36* (New Haven: Yale University Press 2003) 180–181.
[67] 'Direktiva-instruktsiya TSK VKP(b) i SNK SSSR «O prekrashchenii massovykh vyseleniy krest'yan, uporyadochenii proizvodstva arestov i razgruzke mest zaklyucheniya»' [Directive of the CC AUCP(B) and the CPC USSR «On the cessation of mass evictions of peasants, the streamlining of arrests and the unloading of places of detention»], in: V. Danilov, R. Manning, and L. Viola eds., *Tragediya sovetskoi derevni, kollektivizatsiya i raskulachivanie: dokumenty i materialy v 5 tomakh, 1927-1939. Tom 3: konets 1930-1933* [The tragedy of the Soviet

relief aid, even if it was far too late and far too little (and was, in many cases, the same grain that was requisitioned the months before).[68] But if the total elimination of Ukrainian peasants was not a goal in itself, may the elimination of a large portion of them have been a means to an end?[69]

Counter-guerrilla mass killings

Counter-guerrilla or counterinsurgency (COIN) violence is, as the term implies, employed to suppress insurgents. This violence typically takes on a specific form, as the power relations between both sides are asymmetric: combatant A poses an existential threat to combatant B while the latter cannot do so to the former. This asymmetry forces the insurgent to avoid direct conventional confrontations and resort to the hit-and-run tactics associated with guerrillas (though such tactics are common in virtually all conflicts).[70] Such protracted warfare favours the weak, as it presents two opportunities: a) to achieve relative power parity by slowly picking off enemy troops while building strength,[71] or b) to defeat the enemy by means of political attrition.[72]

Either strategy is highly contingent upon the civilian population. In both cases it is ultimately the local citizenry that provides insurgents with food, shelter, supplies, information, and sometimes recruits, as well as "human camouflage" or even a "human shield."[73] The insurgents' "support and supply system" consists, in large part, of the peasantry, and is usually confined to a small social and geographical space. Hence, the distinction between combatants and non-combatants is blurred, the counterinsurgent faces an 'identification problem', and civilian victimisation is, as Wickham-Crowley suggests, a "far more regular,

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village, collectivisation and dispossession: documents and materials in 5 volumes, 1927-1939. Volume 3: late 1930-1933] (Moscow: ROSSPEN 2001) 746-750. (in Russian.)

[68] In the first half of 1933 at least 35 resolutions were passed on food aid to starving regions. As Werth writes: "Assistance rose to about 320 000 tons, which, applied to the some thirty million people hit by the famine, amounts to only ten kilos of grain per person, or scarcely 3 percent of a peasant's average annual consumption!" Only a fraction of this paltry supply of grain reached the villages of Ukraine, as most of it ended up in the cities. Werth, 'The Great Famine of 1932–33'.

[69] Cf. Barnes, 'The Functional Utility of Genocide'.

[70] Andrew Mack, 'Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict', *World Politics* 27:2 (1975) 175–200.

[71] This approach is epitomised in the writings of Mao Zedong, who suggests a three-stage model of insurgency. First, the insurgent group has to employ insurgency tactics to liberate countryside areas. Second, these 'liberated zones' should be expanded and connected. Finally, once military parity has been achieved, the forces should unite and exterminate any remaining opponents in conventional battle. See: Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, 'The Study of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency', in: idem eds., *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012) 1–20, therein: 5–6.

[72] This has proven especially effective against transnational (democratic) counterinsurgents, with the most notable example being the U.S. in Vietnam, who were defeated in part because domestic support for the war had dwindled. For an account of successful political attrition in the Vietnam war, see: Mack, 'Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars'.

[73] Valentino, Huth and Balch-Lindsay, '"Draining the Sea"', 377. Though the authors do not explicitly mention the possibility of civilians acting as a "human shield," this term is used in various other works.

even 'natural,' concomitant of modern guerrilla warfare than of modern conventional warfare."[74]

Civilian casualties are common in warfare and are usually explained as unintended collateral damage. Yet civilian deaths are not always accidental. Counterinsurgents may deliberately kill or knowingly risk killing civilians if convinced that this contributes toward eliminating the insurgents, simply because selective violence is rendered impossible. Besides, however reprehensible, such types of violence bear clear strategic benefits. Considering that insurgents rely so heavily on support from the local populace, striking at this populace indirectly hurts the insurgents. By "draining the sea", to borrow a phrase from Valentino, Huth and Balch-Lindsay, one can effectively desiccate the fishes in it.[75]

The Holodomor as counter-guerrilla mass killing?

For the Holodomor to be considered a counter-guerrilla mass killing, one would expect a high level of revolt in Ukraine. Indeed, it is suggested that resistance to Stalin's collectivisation was strongest in Ukraine: Chekist reports show that in total around 1.2 million Ukrainians took part in forms of active resistance against collectivisation. 4,098 mass demonstrations occurred in Ukraine in 1930 alone, making up for almost 30% of the total number of peasant actions in the entire USSR in that year. On average these demonstrations saw 298 peasants participating. That same year the Cheka registered 2,779 accounts of 'terrorist attacks' (according to the Cheka's definition) in Ukraine, which equals 20.1% of the total number of such attacks in the USSR.[76]

All this indicates that peasant revolts were indeed common in the Ukrainian SSR. Then again, according to the last complete census before the famine, dated 1927, the UkSSR comprised of around 29.3 million inhabitants—some 19.7% of the total population of the USSR.[77] This percentage is roughly commensurate to the Ukrainian share of terrorist attacks, so the weight of this figure should not be overstated. With regard to the relatively high share of Ukrainian peasant actions—30% of the total actions in the USSR perpetrated in a republic that accounts for 19.7% of the USSR's total population—one can only conclude that

[74] Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, 'Terror and Guerrilla Warfare in Latin America, 1956–1970', *Comparative Studies in Societies and History* 32:2 (1990) 201–237, therein: 225. Also see: Alexander B. Downes, 'Desperate Times, Desperate Measures: The Causes of Civilian Victimization in War', *International Security* 30:4 (2006) 152–195.
[75] Valentino, Huth and Balch-Lindsay, '"Draining the Sea"'. As Mao famously phrased it, the people "may be likened to water and the [insurgents] to the fish who inhabit it". Mao Zedong, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Samuel B. Griffith II transl. (University of Illinois Press 2000 [1937]) 92–93.
[76] V.YU. Vasil'ev, 'Selyans'kyy opir kolektyvizatsiyi v Ukrayini (1930-ti rr.) [Peasant Resistance to the Collectivization in Ukraine (1930s)]', *Istoriya Ukrayiny. Malovidomi imena, podiyi, fakty* [*History of Ukraine. Little-known names, events, facts*] 31 (2005) 140–150, therein: 142. (in Ukrainian.).
[77] Wolowyna, 'Regional Variations of 1932–34 famine losses in Ukraine', 183.

Ukrainian peasants were indeed relatively active, though it remains unclear what constitutes a "peasant action."[78]

Some argue that the Ukrainian peasants were deliberately targeted because of their relatively strong opposition to collectivisation in the preceding period from 1918 to 1930. Findings by Wolowyna et al. suggest no linkage between these historical uprisings and the number of famine deaths in the regions where they took place, but do indicate that the regions where resistance to grain procurements was most prevalent between 1930 and 1933—in Kyiv and Kharkiv—were subject to the highest levels of repression, though not necessarily in proportion.[79]

To be clear, the Cheka figures predate the Holodomor of 1932–1933 and it is established that overt resistance in Ukraine reached its peak in 1930 and declined over the years that followed. This would lead one to conclude that there is no relation between the level of resistance and the level of repression. However, research has pointed out that resistance did not subside altogether. Rather, most previously active peasants seemed to have turned to more covert subversive measures.[80]

This would fit the logic of COIN mass violence: as the peasant-rebels took more subversive approaches, it became increasingly hard to distinguish active opponents from innocent peasants; as this identification problem grew more acute and selective repression became harder, indiscriminate violence ended up the more viable option. Ukraine's higher rate of subversive opposition thus seems a logical explanation for why it was hit by *indiscriminate* repression. However, given the fact that resistance was substantially lower than in, e.g., 1930, it is not clear why such repression was deemed necessary in the first place, and why at that specific time. Besides, the fact that it seems logical is hardly enough to prove that the famine was a punitive measure against the Ukrainian peasantry. Ultimately this is still contingent upon the question of intentionality, which is hard to answer—if only for the simple fact that the famine affected all parts of the USSR, not just the rebellious peasants in rural Ukraine. Finally, this model cannot explain why this mass indiscriminate violence would co-occur with widespread selective purges of the Ukrainian Communist Party. Therefore, closer inspection of the dynamics between the Ukrainian Party and the regime is needed.

[78] Vasil'ev mentions acts as diverse as violence against representatives of the regional and local authorities, arson, and destruction of property, tractors, tools and livestock. Vasil'ev, 'Selyans'kyy opir kolektyvizatsiyi v Ukrayini', 141.
[79] Wolowyna, 'Regional Variations of 1932–34 famine losses in Ukraine', 192–196. The authors indicate that their test should be seen as no more than an approximation, as the data on these historical peasant uprisings is analysed on the *gubernia*-level, whereas their own data on direct losses is based on the *oblast* (province) level. Also see: Anne Applebaum, *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine* (New York: Doubleday 2017) 282-283.
[80] Vasil'ev, 'Selyans'kyy opir kolektyvizatsiyi v Ukrayini', 146–147. In Stalin's words the kulak began to act as a "quiet/sly asshole [tykhoyu sapoyu]," sabotaging the kolkhozes' production. See: idem, 149fn5.

Chapter I

Elite Individuals, Leadership Dynamics, and Elite Rivalry in Ukraine

Nowhere did restrictions, purges, repressions
and in general all forms of bureaucratic hooliganism
assume such murderous sweep as they did in the Ukraine.

Leon Trotsky[81]

Food is a weapon.

Maksim Litvinov[82]

IN ORDER TO establish how Stalin's part in compounding the famine in Ukraine may have been inspired by competition from Ukrainian political elites, one must first identify these elites. The next section discusses four actors in detail: Vlas Chubar, Stanislav Kosior[83], Grigory Petrovsky and Mykola Skrypnyk; Pavel Postyshev and Vsevolod Balytsky are dealt with in the next chapter, as they entered the scene only after the Holodomor had begun. In the second section of this chapter I examine Stalin's dealings with his ruling coalition and reflect on the measure of elite rivalry, this being one of the key parameters for Van der Maat's framework of consolidatory violence. First, however, is a brief discussion of Stalin's ruling coalition in general.

Stalin's ruling coalition consisted of senior party officials, representatives of various institutions including the military and the secret service, and commissars representing important sectors such as heavy industry and railways. While Stalin's primacy remained undisputed, each of these elites retained their own individual responsibilities, so they formed more than just an entourage. Sheila Fitzpatrick points out as much in her study on Stalin's 'team': "Stalin did not need their agreement for his initiatives, but when he sensed it was lacking or lukewarm, he sometimes backed off or simply (for example, in cases of political outcasting) waited for them to come around."[84] Indeed, these individuals held real power, and

[81] Leon Trotsky, 'Problem of the Ukraine', *Leon Trotsky Internet Archive* (2009). https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1939/04/ukraine.html (21 July 2019). Originally written in April 1939.

[82] Litvinov, at the time of this quote, in 1921, was the RSFSR's Deputy Commissar of Foreign Affairs. Cited in: Dana Dalrymple, 'The Soviet Famine of 1932–34', *Soviet Studies* 15:3 (1963) 250–284, therein: 250

[83] Stanislav Kosior was not an ethnic Ukrainian. He was born in Węgrów, Poland, and moved to Ukraine aged 18. Ukraine was the place where he built his formal and informal network (cf. Dittmer, 'Bases of Power in Chinese Politics'). If anything, Kosior's Polish roots may have made Stalin even more suspicious of him considering his fear for a Polish-Ukrainian alliance and the mobilisation of a fifth column in Ukraine. Besides, Kosior's nationality is of no consequence to the main argument of this thesis—his being purged because he was a Ukrainian-based *elite threat* to Stalin.

[84] Sheila Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team: The Years of Living Dangerously in Soviet Politics* (Princeton University Press 2015) 3.

those in the top echelon typically remained there for a longer time. As Oleg Khlevniuk indicates, "[t]hese men had been too close to Stalin for too long for accusations against them not to tarnish the reputation of the leader himself."[85] However, that is not to say that Stalin did not purge them. Stalin was more circumspect when it came to dealing with those closest to him, yet those who were part of what Khlevniuk calls "the second echelon"[86] within his ruling coalition were all but exempt from his repression.

Identifying Ukraine's elite: Chubar, Kosior, Petrovsky and Skrypnyk

The institutional body that most closely resembles Stalin's ruling coalition is the All-Union Politburo. As the highest policy-making institute of the Soviet Union, membership of this group "was very similar [to membership of Stalin's ruling coalition] but, owing to Stalin's preference for informal working groups, never quite the same."[87] Bearing this in mind, the Politburo nevertheless offers a firm starting point for further inquiry into Stalin's ruling coalition and its Ukrainian constituents.

When it comes to Ukrainian elites, three individuals stand out because of their (candidate) membership of the All-Union Politburo. Vlas Chubar, chairman of the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars (CPC/Radnarkom) and thus the head of government, and Grigory Petrovsky, a Bolshevik veteran who was effectively Ukraine's president and the Ukrainian representative to the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, were both candidate members of the Politburo; Stanislav Kosior, First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, was a full member from 1930 onward.

There was also a Ukrainian Politburo. In fact, the Ukrainian Communist Party was the only republican communist party with its own Politburo. Overall, Ukraine was considered the strongest Soviet republic after the Russian one, and its government was accorded a degree of autonomy on issues besides defence and foreign policy.[88] Yet the senior positions in the Ukrainian Politburo were increasingly put in the hands of Stalin's appointees. One notable member of the Ukrainian Politburo who witnessed this was Mykola Skrypnyk. Already having held several commissariats in his earlier career, Skrypnyk became the head of the Ukrainian State Planning Commission (Derzhplan) and a member of the Ukrainian Politburo from early 1933 onward. Skrypnyk expressed himself as a fervent proponent of Ukrainisation,

[85] Oleg V. Khlevniuk, *Master of the House*, Nora Seligman Favorov transl. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press 2009) 216.
[86] Khlevniuk, *Master of the House*, 217.
[87] Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 1.
[88] Valery Vasil'ev, 'The Ukrainian Politburo, 1934–1937', in: E.A. Rees, *The Nature of Stalin's Dictatorship: The Politburo, 1924–1953* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2004) 168–199, therein: 168.

even though he remained politically opposed to Ukrainian nationalism. Skrypnyk saw what was headed toward him: several times his "nefarious" Ukrainisation policies had been called out by Stalin and with the arrival of Stalin's emissaries the Ukrainian leadership was increasingly restrained in its actions. In July that year, right when the famine in Ukraine reached its peak, Skrypnyk chose to shoot himself rather than risk a show trial in which he would have had to recant his policies.[89]

Aside from the three others mentioned, virtually none of the individual Ukrainian political elites were vital for Stalin's continued reign in the Ukrainian republic, let alone the USSR as a whole. Nor were any of them individually powerful enough to present a credible threat to his power. Already at the start of the First Five-Year Plan the power of Ukrainian elites had been greatly reduced by Stalin's centralisation drive. The Supreme Soviet of the National Economy (Vesenkha) assumed control over Ukraine's major industries, while the inception of the All-Union People's Commissariat of Agriculture (NKZem) in 1929 ensured that its Ukrainian counterpart lost autonomy on agricultural policy. Similar transfers of authority from the republican level to the All-Union level occurred in the Council of People's Commissars, the State Planning Commission (Gosplan), and various economic commissariats. By the time of the Second Five-Year Plan, which took effect in 1933, all executive policymaking on Ukrainian matters had effectively been transferred to Moscow. Down to the smallest of initiatives, all policy matters now required telegram approval from Moscow.[90]

Even the importance of these three Ukrainian representatives in the All-Union Politburo should not be overstated. Much rather, they should be considered part of the ruling coalition's second echelon. Chubar and Petrovsky were both candidate members of the Politburo and thus lacked voting rights. Kosior was a full member, holding the prominent position of First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party—previously filled in by Stalin's two closest allies, Vyacheslav Molotov and Lazar Kaganovich, in 1920 and 1925–1928, respectively—, yet he, too, is considered to have been of "marginal"[91] importance. Kosior effectively carried out decisions that were made in Moscow. This became all the more evident once—as will be discussed later—Pavel Postyshev was sent over and appointed Kosior's Second Secretary by Stalin in January 1933; though Kosior remained nominally superior to Postyshev, the latter had more authority because he reported directly to Stalin. In addition, Kaganovich and Molotov were regularly sent to Ukraine as 'plenipotentiaries' from late 1932

[89] Valerii Vasyliev, 'A Crisis in Relations: Leaders of the USSR and Ukrainian SSR during the Holodomor' (n.d.) 20. http://holodomor.ca/research/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/A-Crisis-in-Relations.pdf/ (27 July 2019).
[90] Vasil'ev, 'The Ukrainian Politburo', 170–172.
[91] Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 3.

onward to enforce the grain confiscations, while Vsevolod Balytsky took over control of the Ukrainian secret police (GPU) in January 1933.[92] Together these emissaries would oversee a widespread purge of the Ukrainian Communist Party and new levels of starvation throughout the republic.

Stalin and his rival elites: The Great Purges of 1937–1939

In his seminal *The Political Economy of Dictatorship* Ronald Wintrobe explains that a dictator essentially has a choice between employing repression and investing in loyalty. Of course, relying on repression comes at the risk of inciting more opposition. To put it in Wintrobe's words, "the more the citizens are ruled by repression, the more the dictator has to fear from them."[93] This seems to apply to the leader's ruling coalition as well, perhaps even more so.

Wintrobe positions Stalin's reign at the extreme end of repression; Stalin's way of dealing with this drawback of repression was to increase repression even further, to the extent that organising credible opposition would become virtually impossible.[94] In what remains one of the most infamous displays of dictatorial power, Stalin's Great Purges took an estimated 950,000 to 1,2 million lives.[95] Suspected personal and political opponents from across the Soviet Union were executed or sent to the gulags, in most cases without trial and in many without conclusive evidence.

Stalin clearly had no qualms eliminating many thousands of people to consolidate his position. Yet, as Fitzpatrick, Oleg Khlevniuk, and others aptly point out, he proceeded with the utmost care whenever he considered purging his inner circle. "In virtually each of his purges," Zhaotian Luo and Arturas Rozenas explain, "Stalin worked hard and long to collect evidence in order to make the claim in front of his ruling coalition that the member who must be purged deviated from the 'party line' in pursuit of his own political agenda. In order to make purges effective deterrents of future subversions, Stalin had to make a point that he is purging coalition members because of their subversive behaviour."[96] What is more, Stalin usually ensured that he had support from his closest Politburo associates—particularly

[92] Ibidem; Vasil'ev, 'The Ukrainian Politburo', 170–172. Stalin proposed these measures in a letter to Kaganovich dated August 11, 1932. See: Davies et al., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 179–181.
[93] Wintrobe, *The Political Economy of Dictatorship*, 34.
[94] Ibidem. One is reminded of Yuri Zhukov's conclusion regarding Russia's track record of counterinsurgency: "repression works, but not in moderation." See: Yuri M. Zhukov, 'Counterinsurgency in a Non-Democratic State: The Russian Example', in: Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn, *The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency* (London and New York: Taylor & Francis 2012) 286–300, therein: 293.
[95] Michael Ellman, 'Soviet Repression Statistics: Some Comments', *Europe-Asia Studies* 54:7 (2002) 1151–1172, therein: 1157.
[96] Zhaotian Luo and Arturas Rozenas, 'Ruling the Ruling Coalition: Information Control and Autocratic Governance', unpublished manuscript (2016). https://events.barcelonagse.eu/live/files/2374-arturasrozenas60759pdf (15 July 2019).

Molotov and Kaganovich—throughout these steps, as is indicated clearly by his correspondence with them.

Overall, there was some sense of immunity within the Politburo. As T.H. Rigby argues, Stalin was not an altogether "disloyal patron": of the ten full members of the 1934 Politburo, only Stanislav Kosior was purged; Chubar, Postyshev, Rudzutaks, Eikhe and Yezhov had all been elected as candidates after 1934 and had not been among Stalin's long-time allies.[97] Robert Conquest made a similar distinction between those Politburo members who had been promoted up to 1926 and those promoted between 1926 and 1937, arguing that the latter were expendable because they still lacked a strong foothold and prestige.[98] Kosior was indeed purged as a full member, yet he had become a full member only in 1930 and had never reached the same level of trust as Molotov and Kaganovich, who topped the government chain of command and party chain of command, respectively.

That having said, such temporal distinctions neglect one crucial fact: suspected Politburo members were often removed from their post before being eliminated. Stalin was notorious for purging former allies, and even for completely erasing those he called friends from the history books. He was simply, as already indicated above, extremely careful in doing so: "[i]n dealing with his enemies", Nikolai Bukharin is quoted as saying, "Stalin was a master of 'dosage,' meaning that he undermined them step-by-step rather than cutting them off with one stroke."[99] Himself one of Stalin's closest allies in the mid–1920s, Bukharin would experience this first-hand. Having helped Stalin eliminate Lev Trotsky, Lev Kamenev, and Grigory Zinoviev—the latter his own predecessor as the head of the Communist International—, Bukharin was expelled from the Politburo in 1929 before ultimately getting shot during the Great Purges nine years later. In other words, while he was strictly not executed as an active Politburo member, his case does indicate that membership did not guarantee long-term immunity.

The question of elite rivalry in Ukraine reconsidered

During the Great Purges, the whole of the Ukrainian Politburo, Orgburo, and Secretariat was arrested, all 17 members of the government were arrested, and all provincial secretaries fell. Out of 102 Ukrainian Central Committee members, only three survived, among whom

[97] T.H. Rigby, 'Was Stalin a Disloyal Patron?', *Soviet Studies* 38:3 (July 1986) 311–324, therein: 314fn.
[98] Conquest, *The Great Terror*, 439. Echoing Khlevniuk, Evan Mawdsley positions these victims "on the periphery of the 'inner circle' of full members. Evan Mawdsley, 'An Elite within an Elite: Politburo/Presidium Membership under Stalin, 1927–1953', in: E.A. Rees ed., *The Nature of Stalin's Dictatorship: The Politburo, 1924–1953* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2004) 59–78, therein: 65.
[99] Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 35.

Petrovsky.[100] With the arrests of the first and second party secretaries (Kosior and Postyshev) and the head of the government (Chubar), as well as the president's dismissal (Petrovsky), Stalin completed a thorough purge of the Ukrainian party from the bottom to the top.

That having said, it remains hard to ascertain whether or not this purge was, indeed, Stalin's response to rivalry emanating from the Ukrainian leadership. There is simply no known evidence indicating that any of these individuals posed a strong threat to Stalin. Even those Ukrainian elites who are considered part of Stalin's ruling coalition had, in reality, only marginal influence. Whereas Postyshev *did* acquire real power and likely got purged as a result, he acquired this power *because* of the Holodomor—at Stalin's own instigation. If anything, he was (an expendable) part of Stalin's solution to the Ukrainian threat, not part of the possible threat that may have inspired the Holodomor.

In this light, the framework of elite rivalry as presented by Van der Maat may seem irrelevant at first. However, whereas these elites may not have posed a direct threat to Stalin, they certainly formed a liability. Besides, the individual weakness of these elites does not mean that the Ukrainian leadership as a whole was not seen as a possible threat. This is where the existing explanations come in again: as pointed out earlier, Stalin strongly feared the formation of a nationalist Ukrainian elite. All the more so because the period of Ukrainian autonomy following the October Revolution was still fresh in collective memory and peasant protests were more common in Ukraine than in any other republic. Ukraine was of crucial strategic and economic importance for the USSR: its grain provided a large part of the Soviet food supplies and its border with Poland made it at once an important buffer zone and a likely site of fifth column activities. All in all, the Ukrainian Communist Party leadership was indispensable for Stalin's governance in the Ukrainian republic and the USSR as a whole.

[100] Conquest, *The Great Terror*, 232.

CHAPTER II

A Prelude to the Great Purges in Ukraine?
Retracing Stalin's Consolidatory Violence in Ukraine

In Ukraine 1937 began in 1932.

Lev Kopelev[101]

Ukraine was at the epicenter of Stalinist repressions.

Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi[102]

DID THE GREAT Purges in Ukraine, as Kopelev suggests in this chapter's epigraph, already have their start in 1932? In order to firmly establish that the Holodomor was a preliminary to the Great Purge, and—more generally—that the famine was aggravated to facilitate Stalin's consolidation of power, one has to retrace the chain of events in Ukraine.

This is where Van der Maat's framework comes in. The preceding chapter has examined the elites of Ukraine and the degree to which they posed a threat to Stalin. It has been concluded that, rather than a threat, the Ukrainian leadership formed a liability: too much depended on Ukraine to leave its leaders unchecked. This chapter will discuss the remainder of the sequence of 1) raising a machinery of violence, 2) forcing popular support of the violence, 3) undermining rival coalitions, and 4) purging the rival elites identified earlier.

Raising a machinery of violence

As Van der Maat suggests, the first step for a dictator engaging in consolidatory violence is "raising (i.e., expanding, creating, or capturing) a machinery of violence that is free from control of rival elites in the form of irregular, militia, or paramilitary clients."[103] It is these machineries that later on employ the mass indiscriminate violence. Whereas, strictly speaking, it was the hunger that did most of the killing, Stalin did take measures that added to the lethality of this famine in Ukraine. Furthermore, many did also directly perish as a result of his punitive measures, as he sent out the secret police to execute or imprison anyone suspected of non-cooperation to the grain requisition campaigns.

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[101] Lev Kopelev, *The Education of a True Believer* (New York: HarperCollins 1980) 277.
[102] Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, 'The Holodomor and Its Consequences in the Ukrainian Countryside', in: Andrea Graziosi, Lubomyr A. Hajda and Halyna Hryn eds., *After the Holodomor: The Enduring Impact of the Great Famine on Ukraine* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies 2013) 1-13, therein: 9.
[103] Van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation', 781.

Most of the structures and institutions that Stalin used to execute these policies were already in place. More than before, however, these were placed under central control. By sending his two most trusted emissaries, Molotov and Kaganovich, to Ukraine, and by appointing actors who were strongly dependent upon his approval in secret service and local governance positions, Stalin ensured that the three of them were ultimately in charge of all developments, himself being the final authority.

The most important institution for the employment of violence was the secret police (OGPU), which was parented by the Council of People's Commissars, in turn chaired by Molotov. Throughout the Holodomor, the Ukrainian department of the secret police (GPU) was headed by Stanislav Redens. His predecessor, Vsevolod Balytsky, had headed the Ukrainian GPU from 1923 onward until in July 1931 Stalin had made him deputy head of the OGPU and had him moved to Moscow. Balytsky was to return to Ukraine soon enough, however, as in a letter dated 20 July 1932 Stalin effectively granted the OGPU control over the Ukrainian countryside.[104] On 25 November 1932 the All-Union Politburo appointed Balytsky as the OGPU's special plenipotentiary in Ukraine, effectively granting him control over the entire apparatus of the Ukrainian GPU for half a year, during which he was to report directly to the Politburo every twenty days and during which Stalin likely sent direct instructions in return.[105] As Stalin's dissatisfaction with Redens grew, Balytsky gained in authority (a dynamic that is in many ways similar to the relationship between Postyshev and Kosior within the Ukrainian Party secretariat). Furthermore, a resolution was passed by the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Party a week later calling for Balytsky's admission to the Ukrainian Politburo. In contrast to Redens, who was a candidate member, Balytsky was to immediately become a full member.[106]

Molotov and Kaganovich were dispatched to Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, respectively, with an informally organised 'special commission' consisting of Communist Party leaders.[107] Through these commissions the Kremlin assumed direct control over the grain procurement in Ukraine and oversaw the Ukrainian party and government officials both

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[104] Valerii Vasyliev, 'A Crisis in Relations: Leaders of the USSR and Ukrainian SSR during the Holodomor' (n.d.) 9–10. http://holodomor.ca/research/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/A-Crisis-in-Relations.pdf/ (27 July 2019).

[105] V. IU. Vasyl'iev, *Politychne kerivnytstvo URSR i SRSR: Dynamika vidnosyn tsentr–subtsentr vlady (1917–1938)* [Political Leadership of the UkSSR and USSR: Dynamics of Relations between the Centre and Sub-centre of Power (Kyiv: Instytut istoriï NAN Ukraïny 2014) 251. (in Ukrainian.).

[106] Yuri Shapoval, 'Vsevolod Balytsky and the Holodomor of 1932–33', transl. Marta D. Olynyk (n.d.) 3. http://holodomor.ca/research/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Shapoval-article-translated-BK-ekm-emy-done–1.pdf (17 July 2019).

[107] R.Ya. Pyrih ed., *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraïni: ochyma istorykiv, movoiu dokumentiv* [The famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine: through the eyes of historians, in the language of documents] (Kiev: Politvydav Ukrainy 1990). (in Ukrainian.) 238.

on the local and on the republican level. They worked closely with the OGPU and were supported by thousands of low-level party cadres who were dispatched throughout the Ukrainian countryside in collection brigades to oversee the actual grain procurements. These brigades, in turn, worked together with local collaborators. Finally, upon Balytsky's request, "quartets" were formed in each of the oblasts, consisting of the First Secretary of the oblast party committee, the chair of the executive committee, the head of the GPU, and a prosecutor, many of whom had been newly appointed throughout 1932–1933.[108]

The OGPU's successor, the NKVD, was responsible for the repressions that followed during the Great Terror. After the Holodomor was over, the NKVD maintained its strong grasp of the Ukrainian NKVD and could rely on these newly installed networks to expedite information gathering and arrests.[109]

Signalling popular support

The second step in employing consolidatory violence is to make it costly for anyone to oppose the ongoing violence and to force the population to instead passively acquiesce.[110] Between the spring of 1929, when the first deaths by hunger were reported by the OGPU, and the summer of 1932 around 200,000 people starved to death in Ukraine.[111] Yet, as Molotov spoke to an assembly of party officials on 12 June 1932, "[e]ven if we are confronted today with the spectre of famine, mostly in the grain-producing zones, the collection plans must be fulfilled at all costs."[112] Ukrainian party members regularly and repeatedly called out the unrealistic plans, but at the Third Conference of the Ukrainian Communist Party in Kharkiv between 6 and 10 July, it was stressed by Molotov and Kaganovich on behalf of Stalin, that "any attempt to ease the plan is fundamentally anti-Party and anti-Bolshevik."[113] In other words, anyone opposing the grain requisitions campaign would now be explicitly branded an enemy of communism and the governing party. In a letter addressed to all Ukrainian party leaders at the local, regional and national level, Stalin made it perfectly clear how seriously he took this:

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[108] Shapoval, 'Vsevolod Balytsky and the Holodomor of 1932–33', 9, 18; Mykola Doroshko, 'The Ruling Stratum in the Ukrainian SSR during the Holodomor of 1932–33', Marta D. Olynyk transl. (n.d.) 8. http://holodomor.ca/research/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Doroshko.pdf (5 August 2019).

[109] Valerii Vasiliev, 'The Great Terror in Ukraine, 1936-38', in: M. Ilič ed., *Stalin's Terror Revisited* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2006) 140-162, therein: 141-143.

[110] Van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation', 783.

[111] Nicolas Werth, 'Food Shortages, Hunger, and Famines in the USSR, 1928–33', *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 3:2 (2016) 35–49, therein: 37.

[112] N.A. Ivnitskii, 'Golod 1932–1933-kh godov: Kto vinovat?' [The famine of 1932–1933: Who is to blame?], in: Iu. N. Afanasev and N.A. Ivnitskii eds., *Sud'by rossiiskogo krest'ianstva* [The fates of the Russian peasantry] (Moscow: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi gumanitarnyi universitet 1996) 333–363, therein: 334–340. (in Russian.)

[113] Valerii Vasyl'iev and Iurii Shapoval, *Komandyry velykoho holodu: Poïzdky V. Molotova i L. Kaganovycha v Ukraïnu ta na pivnichnyi Kavkaz, 1932–1933* [Commanders of the Great Famine: V. Molotov's and L. Kaganovich's Trips to Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus, 1932–1933] (Kyiv: Heneza 2001) 152–178. (in Ukrainian.)

"An enemy with a party card in his pocket should be punished more harshly than an enemy without a party card."[114]

The situation would become even worse that autumn, when the Stalin regime took measures that drastically aggravated the famine. The grain requisitions themselves took an immense toll, as peasants who were already malnourished were left with even less food, but disaster really struck Ukraine when a series of measures came into force that were to overcome resistance to those requisitions. Four of them deserve attention: first, on 7 August the All-Union Central Economic Committee and Council of People's Commissars accepted one of the central measures allowing for mass prosecutions. Co-drafted by Stalin himself[115], the 'Law of Spikelets' stipulated that theft of kolkhoz property was punishable by execution. Kulaks were executed; other peasants, under extenuating circumstances, faced up to ten years of imprisonment and confiscation of personal property. This same law was reiterated by the Politburo on 1 January 1933 after Stalin sent a telegram denouncing peasants "who stubbornly insist on misappropriating and concealing grain" and calling for intensified mass searches and confiscations.[116]

Furthermore, two measures prevented peasants from leaving their kolkhozes: a USSR-wide passport system for city residents, which kept starving peasants from entering cities in search of food, and a blockade of the border to Russia to ward off potential migration from Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus. The former measure was drafted by Balytsky and proposed to Stalin in a letter dated 23 November 1932 before being enacted a month later.[117] In the words of Lev Kopelev, "[t]he passport system laid an administrative and judicial cornerstone for the new serfdom [and] tied down the peasantry as it had been before the emancipation of 1861."[118] These conditions were further exacerbated when in January 1933 the borders were closed to prevent a "mass exodus" from UkSSR, the Northern Caucasus, and the Belarusian SSR. So-called "food blockades" were installed at the borders, comprising of internal troops and police. Between 15 December 1932 and 2 February 1933 almost 95,000 peasants were reported to have left their homes. Genrikh Yagoda—at the time OGPU deputy head—noted that, through this new resolution, the OGPU had prevented 24,961 people from

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[114] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, 208.
[115] Vasyliev, 'A Crisis in Relations', 10.
[116] 'Resolution of the CC AUCP(b) Politburo on grain procurement in Ukraine', in: Ruslan Pyrih ed., *Holodomor of 1932–33 in Ukraine: Documents and Materials*, Stephen Bandera transl. (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohyla Academy Publishing House 2008). http://www.faminegenocide.com/resources/hdocuments.htm#44 (5 August 2019).
[117] YU. I. Shapoval and V.A. Zolotarev, *«Gil'otina Ukrainy»: narkom Vsevolod Balitskiy i yego sud'ba* ["The Guillotine of Ukraine": Commissar Vsevolod Balitsky and his fate] (Moscow: Politicheskaya entsiklopediya 2017) 190. (in Russian.) This measure was combined with improved record-keeping by the local authorities and by monitored entry and departure into and from cities.
[118] Kopelev, *The Education of a True Believer*, 258.

crossing the border between 22 and 30 January 1933 alone. According to OGPU data, by 22 April 1933 these blockades had led to the arrest of 258,401 people, most of whom came from Ukraine.[119]

Finally, in November 1932, the Ukrainian Central Committee and the Ukrainian Council of People's Commissars jointly issued a resolution introducing a blacklist with six Ukrainian villages that were deemed problematic; oblast-level executive committees were granted the authority to put more kolkhozes on the list. Whenever one was added "(1) all stores would be closed and supplies removed from the village; (2) all trade was prohibited, including trade in food or grain; (3) all loans and advances were called in, including grain advances; (4) the local Party and collective farm organizations were purged, and usually subject to arrest; (5) food and livestock would be confiscated as a 'penalty'; and (6) the territory would be sealed off by OGPU (…) detachments."[120] After these initial six, as many as four hundred more kolkhozes were blacklisted on the oblast level in the months that followed.[121] Moreover, the list of actions against blacklisted villages was constantly expanded with further (primarily financial) measures.

Undermining rival coalitions

The third aspect of this process consists in preventing elite rivals to form a coalition. Contrary to a direct assault, which may easily cause elites to band together and organise a coup against their leader, consolidatory violence leaves the elites more room to take a neutral or even supportive stance.[122] As discussed in chapter 1, Stalin, in dealing with in-group elite threats, always sought support of fellow elites. These threats, moreover, would not be faced directly. In most cases they were kept on board for as long as possible, so that they would not see their own downfall coming. Tellingly, Chubar, Kosior and Petrovsky are today seen as the architects of the Holodomor who helped seal the fates of millions of their (fellow)

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[119] 'Report from Yagoda to Stalin and Molotov on measures for preventing mass exodus of villagers from the Ukrainian SSR, Northern Caucasus and Belarusian SSR', in: Ruslan Pyrih ed., *Holodomor of 1932–33 in Ukraine: Documents and Materials*, Stephen Bandera transl. (Kyiv: Kyiv Mohyla Academy Publishing House 2008). http://www.faminegenocide.com/resources/hdocuments.htm#54 (10 July 2019); Vasyl'iev, *Politychne kerivnytstvo*, 283; Applebaum, *Red Famine*, 201–202. Aside from demoralising the peasants who were left behind and weakening the undermanned kolkhozes, the ongoing migration of starving peasants had led to practical issues in cities and municipalities: beggars roamed the cities, orphanages were crowded as parents left their children behind on their search for food, and dead bodies of those who failed in their quest filled the streets. However, authorities seem to have been especially concerned about traveling Ukrainians spreading news about the famine across the Soviet Union and its neighbours—Poland in particular.

[120] Olga Andriewsky, 'Towards a Decentred History: The Study of the Holodomor and Ukrainian Historiography', *East/West: Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 2:1 (2015) 18–52, therein: 29.

[121] Pyrih, *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraïni*, 283.

[122] Van der Maat, 'Genocidal Consolidation', 784.

Ukrainians.[123] Indeed, they were complicit in realising the directives of Stalin and his emissaries, even as—as this thesis suggests—these were designed to gradually cut them off from their respective bases of power and would eventually lead to their own downfall.

This is not to say that these elites did not voice their opposition to the tight requisitions regime. On 10 June 1932 both Chubar and Petrovsky sent letters to Stalin expressing their concerns about the famine in Ukraine and requesting food and seed aid from Moscow. Chubar noted that over 100 counties within Ukraine suffered from shortages and that the republic might completely run out of foodstuffs within three weeks.[124] Petrovsky wrote about the growing anti-collectivisation, anti-Soviet, and "Petliurite" sentiments he encountered in the villages he visited. As an indication, he cited a particularly scathing outcry: "Why have you created this artificial famine? We had a harvest, why did you confiscate it all? Even under the old regime no one would have done this!"[125] Petrovsky further reported that villages were running out of resources, and went so far as to blame the Ukrainian Central Committee for carelessly agreeing to an excessive procurement plan of 8,160 million tonnes.[126] Kosior kept silent, but had expressed similar concerns before.

Ukraine was provided with grain support at the All-Union Central Committee's decision on 16 June 1932. However, Stalin, as seen in his letter to Kaganovich dated 15 June, was deeply frustrated with Petrovsky, Chubar and even Kosior. He called Kosior's silence "[t]he worst aspect of this situation"—"Does he know about the letters (…)?"[127] Earlier that year Ukraine had already received food and seed aid at various occasions[128], leaving Stalin with the conviction that the Ukrainian leadership itself was responsible for the growing famine through their incapacity to fulfil the procurement plans and mismanagement of the food provision within the republic. The letters from Chubar and Petrovsky—and the lack thereof from Kosior—added to Stalin's suspicion that the republic was being mismanaged.

It was now up to the All-Union Central Committee to force the Ukrainian Central Committee into compliance with the central directives and to remove any incompetent party members from office. The former was realised on 6 July 1932, at the Third All-Ukrainian Party Conference, where Molotov and Kaganovich achieved a major political victory by

[123] See *supra* footnote 10.
[124] Vasyliev, 'A Crisis in Relations', 5.
[125] Vasyl'iev and Shapoval, *Komandyry velykoho holodu*, 213. Translation mine.
[126] Vasyliev, 'A Crisis in Relations', 5.
[127] Davies et al., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 136. The letters from Chubar and Petrovsky first passed Kaganovich, who then relayed them to Stalin. Stalin, in turn, discussed the matter with Kaganovich and let the latter reply to them on his behalf.
[128] On 23 April 1932 the All-Union Central Committee resolved, "[a]s an extreme measure," to provide Ukraine with 25,000 tonnes of grain; on 5 June it resolved to deliver 26,080 tonnes of grain to Ukraine from Central Asia. Cited in: Vasyliev, 'A Crisis in Relations', 4–5.

securing the Ukrainian Central Committee's support for "unconditional fulfilment (…) [of] the grain procurement plan established by the [Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party] for the agricultural sector in the amount of 356 million *poods* [5,696,000 tonnes]."[129] Kosior personally edited the draft resolution. Despite their concerns, the Ukrainian Bolshevik leadership had now formally expressed its support of Moscow's upcoming new grain procurement campaign, and, more importantly, had thereby made itself responsible in case of non-fulfilment. The second part of Stalin's solution was to purge the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party from the bottom up, a large part of which was carried out by Postyshev and Balytsky in coordination with Kaganovich. These two appointees form without a doubt the clearest examples of actors who were used and then disposed of by Stalin, Balytsky even being of Ukrainian descent himself.

Balytsky and Postyshev oversaw the repression in close contact with Kaganovich and, occasionally, with Stalin himself.[130] As Kosior wrote to Kaganovich after a trip around Dnipropetrovsk province, the direct results of the blacklist measures were limited: "there are hardly any results from them. Where commerce is banned, people are trading actively. Only 25–30 percent of the designated sum of cash fines is collected. To a great extent, the organisers of sabotage have not yet been exposed."[131] This leads to a second, perhaps more important component of these blacklists: they forced local authorities into compliance at the threat of dismissal or arrest. Any opposition to the indiscriminate violence of the grain confiscations and its concomitant repressive measures was considered an anti-Party offence and would nominate one for selective violence. This forced individual Ukrainian authorities to signal support for the regime's violence and to accept the replacements of critical party and local officials with Stalin's clients; those officials who did not enforce sanctions forcefully enough were accused of "criminal inactivity and failure to combat kulak sabotage" and were to be replaced by officials selected by the provincial committee. This also applied to bodies at all levels, including local Komsomol and party centres, from which cadres were frequently purged.[132] As such, these measures, though they did not always reach the desired effects, were of vital importance for Stalin's drive to undermine rival coalitions and capture Ukraine's local institutions.

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[129] Pyrih, *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraïni,* 194. Translation mine.
[130] Shapoval, 'Vsevolod Balytsky and the Holodomor of 1932–33', 3, 14, 16–17.
[131] Vasyl'iev and Shapoval, *Komandyry velykoho holodu*, 315.
[132] Heorhii Papakin, 'Blacklists as an Instrument of the Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933 in Ukraine', transl. Marta D. Olynyk (n.d.). http://holodomor.ca/research/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Papakin.pdf (4 May 2020) 11–12.

Purging rival elites

Despite Stalin's dissatisfaction with Kosior, Chubar and Petrovsky, the top of the Ukrainian government remained largely intact throughout the Holodomor years. Instead of facing them directly, Stalin launched a purge of the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party starting from the lower levels. "Seeing no new political figures capable of implementing his political line," Vasil'ev notes, Stalin "'reinforc[ed]' the functionaries of the lower administrative ranks."[133] Molotov and Kaganovich were sent to Ukraine several times, yet Stalin could not afford to have them there permanently because their support was needed in the Kremlin. Instead, he focused on capturing Ukraine's local institutions by making new appointments to lower administrative positions, thus slowly turning the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party into a tool of Moscow.[134]

This process started in the autumn of 1932. On 16 September 1932, the All-Union Bolshevik Party appointed Ivan Akulov as First Secretary of the Donetsk oblast party and he was admitted to the Ukrainian Politburo and Orgburo within the same month. Furthermore, Sarkis Sarkisov, who had been part of Molotov's commission in Ukraine[135], became the Secretary of the Donetsk oblast party committee responsible for supply. On 1 October Mendel Khataevich was appointed Second Secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee and between 9 and 15 October 1932 new First Secretaries were appointed in three oblasts: Vasilii Stroganov, Vladimir Cherniavsky and Pavel Markitan in Dnipropetrovsk, Vinnytsia, and Chernihiv, respectively.[136] In 1933 Nikolai Popov[137] was appointed Secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee and Yevgeniy Veger[138] became the First Secretary in Odessa oblast. As noted, each of the oblast party secretaries were part of their respective oblast's commission regulating repression. Hence, all these appointees worked closely with Stalin's envoys to enforce the grain procurement plan and replace those who did not follow the directives.

Postyshev was sent to Ukraine on 24 January 1933, along with several thousands of political appointees from Russia. Balytsky had already taken up his duties as the OGPU's special plenipotentiary in Ukraine, but was officially confirmed in his position as head of the GPU by the Politburo of the All-Union Central Committee on 17 February 1933, and by the

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[133] Vasyliev, 'A Crisis in Relations', 12.
[134] Vasyl'ev, *Politychne kerivnytstvo*, 332–333.
[135] Pyrih, *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraïni*, 238.
[136] Bohdan Klid, 'The Origins and Course of the Famine of 1932/1933 in Soviet Ukraine', in: Declan Curran, Lubomyr Luciuk and Andrew G. Newby eds., *Famines in European Economic History: The Last Great European Famines Reconsidered* (London and New York: Routledge 2015) 171–191, therein: 181; Vasyliev, 'Crisis in Relations', 12–13.
[137] '30 April 1938, Kiev. Report from the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, Alexander Uspensky (…)', in: Jerzy Bednarek et al. eds., *Poland anpid Ukraine in the 1930s and 1940s: Unpublished Documents from the Archives of the Secret Services* (Łódź–Warsaw–Kiev 2012) 221–233, therein: 230fn11. http://history.org.ua/LiberUA/UnpDocArch_2012/UnpDocArch_2012.pdf (18 July 2019).
[138] Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 241.

Ukrainian Politburo the day after.[139] At this point there were already 112,000 party members from Russia stationed in Ukraine to expedite the grain requisitions, many of them assigned to collective farms.[140] Nevertheless a new wave of purges and appointments ensued once Balytsky and Postyshev arrived in Ukraine. Identifying and arresting party members suspected of harbouring nationalist sentiments became their core tasks, while the All-Union Politburo reviewed and appointed trustworthy substitutes. In this fashion, under Postyshev's leadership, around 25% of all Ukrainian party members were branded "class enemies," over two-thirds of all *raion* committee secretaries were replaced, and half of the approximately 11,400 collective farms saw their chairman and/or vice-chairman replaced.[141] Party officials accused of protecting fellow party members or peasants were expelled.[142] These purges and the overall repression continued even after the famine ended, and can be said to have culminated in the Great Purges of 1937–1939.

Among the many other casualties of 1937–1939 were Chubar and Kosior, as well as Postyshev and Balytsky.[143] The first to be eliminated was Balytsky, who was shot on his birthday on 27 November 1937. Balytsky's downfall occurred incrementally: in early 1937 Balytsky was assigned to a new position heading the NKVD (formerly OGPU) Directorate for the Far Eastern Territory, but was sequentially removed from this function, the Central Committee and the Communist party even before he could take office. During Bukharin's trial, Balytsky was identified as a member of Panas Lyubchenko's 'Ukrainian National Fascist

[139] Shapoval, 'Vsevolod Balytsky and the Holodomor', 13.
[140] *Harvest of Despair,* Peter Blow dir. (Toronto: Ukrainian Famine Research Committee 1984). 55 min. http://www.ucrdc.org/Film-Harvest_of_Despair_annotated.html (18 June 2019).
[141] Klid, 'The Famine of 1932/1933 in Soviet Ukraine', 181. Many of these lower-level purges were initiated by the (often newly installed) oblast commissions. When it comes to these local trials, the direct role and knowledge of the Stalinist leadership in investigating and sentencing individuals must not be exaggerated, even if the chain of responsibility does run all the way to the summit. See: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivisation* (New York: Oxford University Press 1994) 296–312.
[142] Vasil'ev, 'The Ukrainian Politburo', 180.
[143] For the sake of completeness, it should be mentioned that three other candidate members of the Politburo were arrested. Janis Rudzutaks and Robert Eikhe, both Latvian nationals, were executed in July 1938 and February 1940, respectively. Eikhe had been a member for mere months and had only seldom shown his face in Moscow. Rudzutaks was the very first sitting Politburo member to be arrested. Though also considered of marginal importance by Fitzpatrick (Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 131), his story is a bit more complicated. Rudzutaks had been a full member of the Politburo until 1932, when he gave up his position to become the chairman of the CCC. When he was replaced by the more hard-line Kaganovich in 1934, he was once more admitted to the Politburo, but this time only as a candidate member. It seems he was incrementally curbed by Stalin, in spite of his loyalty, perhaps because of the persistent rumours that Rudzutaks was originally Lenin's favoured option to be the new General Secretary (Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1971) 48. Nikolai Yezhov was admitted to the Politburo as a candidate member in 1937 and quickly made a name for himself as head of the NKVD. His name became synonymous with the Great Purges, which in Russian were referred to as the *Yezhovshchina* (the Yezhov phenomenon). He ostensibly resigned his NKVD position on his own initiative because he was overworked and experienced health issues, in part because of alcoholism. His former deputy, Lavrenty Beria, took over and eventually had Yezhov executed in February 1940, likely because he knew too much.

Organisation' and was subsequently executed for conspiring in a fascist conspiracy.[144] Chubar, Kosior and Postyshev were shot on 26 February 1939, after being arrested on (fabricated) charges of conspiring in a grand anti-Soviet plot. They were branded Trotskyists and accused of being long-time agents for German, Polish or Japanese intelligence services.[145]

The fate of these three individuals is remarkable if one considers that, up until this point, Stalin had not had elites from the Politburo directly executed. In dealing with possible threats from within the Politburo, Stalin usually applied incremental pressure, like with Bukharin and Balytsky, and would first exclude such individuals from important meetings before formally expelling them from the Politburo, the Central Committee, and finally the Party.[146]

It is clear from an oft-quoted letter by Stalin to Kaganovich, dated 11 August 1932, that Kosior and Chubar had not regained Stalin's respect since the previous falling-out over Chubar and Petrovsky's letters in June:

> Instead of leading the districts, Kosior keeps manoeuvring between the directives of the CC of the [All-Union Communist Party] and the demands of the district party committees—and now he has manoeuvred himself into a total mess. Lenin was right in saying that a person who does not have the courage to swim against the current when necessary cannot be a real Bolshevik leader. Things are bad with the soviets. Chubar is no leader. (…) Unless we begin to straighten out the situation in the Ukraine, we may lose the Ukraine.[147]

Stalin, in the same letter, shared with Kaganovich his intent to:

> (a) remove Kosior from the Ukraine and replace him with [Kaganovich] while keeping [Kaganovich] as a secretary of the CC of the [All-Union Bolshevik Party];

[144] Vasil'ev, 'The Ukrainian Politburo', 192; Shapoval, 'Vsevolod Balytsky and the Holodomor of 1932–33', 20.
[145] 'Doklad komissii TSK KPSS prezidiumu TSK KPSS po ustanovleniyu prichin massovykh repressiy protiv chlenov i kandidatov v chleny TSK VKP(b), izbrannykh na KHVII s"yezde partii, 09.02.1956' [Report of the Committee of the CC AUCP(B) to the Presidium of the CC of the AUCP(B) on establishing the causes of mass repressions against members and candidates for membership of the CC of the CPU(B), elected at the XVII Party Congress, 09.02.1956], *Arkhiv Aleksandra N. Yakovleva*. https://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55752 (3 May 2020). (in Russian.); Yuri Shapoval, '«Povelitel'naya neobkhodimost'»: god 1933-y' ["Imperative Necessity": The Year 1933], *Den'*, 1 February 2003. http://day.kyiv.ua/ru/article/panorama-dnya/povelitelnaya-neobkhodimost-god–1933-y (3 May 2020). (in Russian.)
[146] Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 35–36. Bukharin seems to have been an exception to this last rule: he was never formally expelled from the party, likely because Stalin saw merit in retaining the possibility to appeal to Bukharin's position as editor-in-chief for *Izvestia*.
[147] Davies et al., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 180–181 (original emphasis, as written by Stalin). For the earlier letter, see *supra* fn. 126.

(b) right after this, transfer Balitsky to the Ukraine to the post of chairman of the Ukrainian GPU (or plenipotentiary in the Ukraine, since I don't think the position of chairman of the Ukrainian GPU exists) while keeping him as vice-chairman of the OGPU, and make Redens the deputy to Balitsky for the Ukraine;

(c) several months later, replace Chubar with another comrade, say, [Grigori] Grinko or someone else, and make Chubar the deputy to Molotov in Moscow (Kosior can be made a secretary of the CC of the [Ukrainian Bolshevik Party]).[148]

Despite his dissatisfaction with them, Stalin did not outright purge the two—it was simply too risky at this stage.[149] A few days later, he reiterated this wish to do so in another letter to Kaganovich, but he noted that it was inexpedient. Stalin did send Postyshev and Balytsky to Ukraine several months later to take firm control of the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party and GPU, respectively, and Molotov and Kaganovich were sent ahead in advance. Both Kosior and Chubar would continue to hold senior positions until 1937–1938. Kosior, due to a lack of viable alternatives, retained his position at the helm of the Ukrainian Bolshevik, though Postyshev effectively called the shots.[150] Chubar, after the sudden death of Valerian Kuibyshev in January 1935, was replaced by fellow Ukrainian Panas Lyubchenko[151] and sent to Moscow to become Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, serving under Molotov. Chubar ended up spending his final days in the Urals overseeing the construction of a remote cellulose combine.[152]

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[148] Ibidem.

[149] E.A. Rees, 'Stalin as Leader, 1924–1937: From Oligarch to Dictator', in: idem ed., *The Nature of Stalin's Dictatorship: The Politburo, 1924–1953* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan 2004) 19–58, therein: 46. According to Rees this decision illustrates that "Stalin's power, although dictatorial, was not absolute, nor was it exercised without regard to the power of other subordinates." He mentions the retention of Right oppositionist Alexei Rykov as chairman of Sovnarkom until 1930 as a prime example of Stalin's power being limited. Other examples of Soviet officials who have endured for several years despite Stalin's disapproval include Janis Rudzutaks, Genrikh Yagoda, and Mikhail Tukhachevsky.

[150] Stalin, as early as June-July 1932 had written to Kaganovich that he regarded him as the only viable option for replacing Kosior. It would, however, have been unpractical at this point: "We would weaken the Secretariat of the CC. We would have to wait awhile." "As for Chubar," he wrote, "we can leave him be for now and see how he works out." See: Davies et al., *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*, 157–159.

[151] Panas Lyubchenko was later accused of leading the counter-revolutionary nationalist movement in Ukraine. He denied all charges and, foreseeing his impending arrest, shot his wife and committed suicide on 27 August 1937. P.P. Bachinsky and D.V. Tabachnik, 'Rukovoditel' Sovetskoy Ukrainy. Afanasiy Petrovich Lyubchenko' [The Leader of Soviet Ukraine. Afanasy Petrovich Lyubchenko], *Vseukrayins'kyy proekt «Shkola myru» [All-Ukrainian Project "School for Peace"]*. http://peacekeeping-centre.in.ua/Museum/School/Personalii/Lubchenko.htm (14 May 2020). (in Ukrainian.) As for Grigori Grinko, Stalin's first pick to become Chubar's successor, he was arrested 10 days before Lyubchenko's suicide and sentenced and put to death for Trotskyism on 15 March 1938. M. YU. Vyhovsky, 'Hryn'ko H.F.: Dolya Narkoma-Reformatoraa' [Grin'ko, G.F.: The Fate of the People's Commissar-Reformer], *Naukovyy Chasopys Natsional'noho Pedahohichnoho Universytetu Imeni M.P. Drahomanova [Scientific Journal of the National Pedagogical University Named after M.P. Dragomanova]* 6:1 (2004) 241–250, therein: 249. (in Ukrainian.)

[152] Fitzpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 132.

In similar fashion to Balytsky, who was nicknamed "guillotine of Ukraine"[153], Postyshev earned himself the sobriquet "hangman of Ukraine" for his brutal crackdown on so-called "enemies of the people."[154] Tasked with eliminating all opposition to collectivisation within the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party, Postyshev was responsible for the arrest of over 100,000 party members, the majority of whom were exiled or shot.[155] Yet he, too, was ultimately executed in the Great Purges. The main reason for this seems to be that Postyshev, initially an outsider in Ukraine, had become close to local political and cultural elites, who allegedly persuaded him to make concessions to "Ukrainian national sentiments."[156] This went against Stalin's directives, as one of Postyshev's tasks was to oversee the Russification of the Party and Ukraine's cultural and educational institutions. As a result, Postyshev, along with Kosior, was accused of losing his "Bolshevik vigilance" and of surrounding himself with "enemies."[157] In January 1937 he was dismissed from Ukraine by the All-Union Politburo and appointed First Secretary of the Kuibyshev oblast Party Committee. To demonstrate his vigilance, Postyshev relentlessly sanctioned the execution of hosts of alleged "enemies of the people," resulting in the disbandment of dozens of entire district committees. His efforts, however, reached the adverse effect, as they were considered overkill (in the literal sense of the word); he was accused of excessive brutality in the internal reports by Georgi Malenkov.[158] Postyshev was removed from the Central Committee, arrested, accused of Trotskyism, and condemned to the same fate as those he had fought so vehemently for years.

Thus, the process of elimination of the Ukrainian leadership, which Mykola Skrypnyk had started by his own hand in July 1933, had come to an end. Within a short span of time, established Politburo member Kosior and candidates Postyshev and Chubar died alongside rising Ukrainian party officials such as Balytsky (and Grinko and Lyubchenko). The sole surviving Politburo member from Ukraine was Grigory Petrovsky. Allegedly Stalin told him: "We shoot people like you, but I will have mercy on you." Why Petrovsky was spared remains unknown, but he would eventually outlive Stalin, be it after being removed from the Communist Party, losing his dachas, and witnessing the arrest of his two sons.[159] This brings to conclusion the final stage of Van der Maat's process of genocidal consolidation: the purges of the rival elites.

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[153] Shapoval, 'Vsevolod Balytsky and the Holodomor of 1932–33', 2.
[154] 'Harvest of Despair: Pavel Postyshev', *The Ukrainian Canadian Research & Documentation Centre*, n.d. http://www.ucrdc.org/HA-PAVEL_POSTYSHEV.html (18 June 2019).
[155] Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (4th edition; University of Toronto Press 2009) 419.
[156] 'Pavel Postyshev', *The Ukrainian Canadian Research & Documentation Centre*.
[157] Vasil'ev, 'The Ukrainian Politburo', 183.
[158] Fizpatrick, *On Stalin's Team*, 133.
[159] Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 295.

Conclusion

Ще не вмерла Україна, и слава, и воля!	The glory and the freedom of Ukraine has not yet died!

Ukrainian national anthem

IN THE EARLY 1930s a series of famines struck the Soviet Union that were a consequence of the forced collectivisation and strict grain confiscation regime during Stalin's First Five-Year Plan. Many millions of peasants died of starvation. The Ukrainian famine of 1932–1933, or 'Holodomor', with its death toll of 4 to 4.5 million people and its infamous extent of peasant repression, is considered to have been aggravated by the Stalin regime for political purposes.

I posit that the chief purpose of aggravating this famine was to facilitate Stalin's consolidation of power in Ukraine, namely by enabling him to purge the Ukrainian political leadership. In keeping with Van der Maat's framework of genocidal consolidation, or 'consolidatory mass indiscriminate violence', I have taken Stalin's purges of the Ukrainian elite in 1937–1939 as the point of departure and traced the steps he took in preparation back to the famine years of 1931–1933.

First, Stalin regime organised a machinery of irregular forces that were to initiate the mass indiscriminate violence—that is, to regulate the famine in the Ukrainian countryside. Stalin called upon the existing structures of the OGPU and its Ukrainian subsidiary, the GPU. To increase control over the GPU and increase oversight over the grain procurements, Stalin appointed Vsevolod Balytsky as the OGPU's special plenipotentiary in Ukraine. Balytsky took control over the GPU and reported to Stalin directly on his monitoring of Ukrainian party and government officials at all levels. After the Holodomor was over, the NKVD kept these same mandates, which allowed the Great Terror in Ukraine to reach the scale it did.

Second, the regime introduced a series of measures that not only aggravated the famine in Ukraine, but also served to draw out any opposition to this collectivisation campaign. Opposition was punished by selective violence, forcing both the local populace and the Ukrainian elite into passive acceptance of these measures. Among these are: a) the Law of Spikelets, which made theft of kolkhoz property (e.g. withholding grain from the grain requisitions) punishable by execution; b) the USSR-wide passport system for city residents that prohibited starving peasants to move to cities; c) a blockade of the Ukrainian borders; and

d) a blacklist of kolkhozes that were penalised for disregarding the stipulations on grain requisition. These measures were designed to punish ‘rebel’ peasants—or, rather, whole peasant communities—and deter others from rising up.

Third, Stalin undermined the formation of rival coalitions. The measures mentioned above helped identify possible sympathisers within the Ukrainian Soviet and Party system, and anyone opposed to the mass violence was made a target of a selective purge of the lower administrative levels. Those who opposed or disregarded the procedures was replaced, so that, step by step, the autonomy of the Ukrainian Communist Party was circumscribed until it was a mere instrument of Moscow and the Ukrainian political elites were gradually cut off from their clients. Meanwhile, the very individuals he sought to purge were made complicit in the scheme that undermined their own positions: throughout the famine, Petrovsky, Chubar and Kosior were held responsible for the grain requisitions, while Balytsky and Postyshev were dispatched to Ukraine to oversee the enforcement of the repressive measures outlined above, only to be purged themselves once they served their purpose.

Finally, all these steps allowed Stalin to purge his Ukrainian political rivals. Stalin acted cautiously in confronting these elites in the “second echelon” of his ruling coalition, gathering (forced) confessions to justify their execution and, throughout this process, ensuring himself of the explicit support of his confidants in the “first echelon”. In large part, Chubar and Kosior shared the same trajectory: they had a career in Ukraine that they managed to retain until their bases of power were so eroded that Stalin could eliminate them without problems. Postyshev and Balytsky, too, shared similar fates. Both having been sent to Ukraine to identify and eliminate opponents to Stalin’s grain requisition campaigns, they themselves were sentenced to death for complicity in the very anti-Soviet conspiracies they were tasked to uncover. Skrypnyk’s suicide, in hindsight, was but a portent of many deaths to follow. Of this group, Petrovsky was the sole survivor, but he, too, was stripped of his power.

Altogether, this episode can be seen as an example of what has been termed ‘consolidatory genocide’. Some clarifications, however, are in place. First, the term ‘genocide’ should in this case strictly be replaced by ‘mass indiscriminate violence’, as the definition of genocide does not include the elimination of a particular social group—in this case (Ukrainian) peasants. ‘Violence’ is used merely for lack of a better term, but it should be clear that most of the casualties of the Holodomor were attributed to starvation rather than physical harm.

Second, although the causal links described above correspond to what Van der Maat’s conceptualisation of genocidal consolidation prescribes, the chronology of this case needs

some additional attention. When connecting two ostensibly disparate periods such as the Holodomor and the Great Purge, one should always be wary of teleological fallacies: the fact that these elites were eventually purged in 1937–1939 does not *ipso facto* mean that their execution was planned ahead to the extent that Stalin's actions during the Ukrainian famine were all geared toward their isolation and ultimate elimination. However, anecdotal evidence, found for instance in Stalin's letters to Kaganovich, suggests that he did consciously plan the demise of these individuals. He planned it carefully, with clear increments and timelines in mind, even if he did deviate from these as the political conjunctures required. Besides, even if Stalin did not foresee the final step of this process, process-tracing clearly shows how each of the preceding steps served to strengthen his grasp over Ukraine—and his correspondence makes it perfectly clear how important Stalin deemed the Ukrainian republic, both because of its grain and because of its strategic location at the border with Poland. This is enough to say that the causal mechanisms underpinning the consolidatory genocide framework are accurate.

Finally, the three common explanations for mass indiscriminate violence—communism, ethnicity or counterinsurgency—each point toward different incentives that may have informed Stalin's policies. While none of them fully account for what happened during the Holodomor, they do complement the consolidatory mass indiscriminate violence. It was communist ideology that instructed Stalin's drive for collectivisation and consequently led to famines throughout the USSR, just as it was the confluence of communist, ethnic and counterinsurgency incentives that partly impelled Stalin to instrumentalise this particular famine to consolidate his grip over the Ukrainian party.

The counterinsurgency explanation remains of value not so much because peasant revolts had been so common in Ukraine in the years prior to and during the Ukrainian famine, but rather because of the logic underlying this model: repressing whole groups indiscriminately to punish any (possible) rebels amongst them, dissuade the population from abetting anyone opposing the regime, and to expose any opposition from authorities unwilling to enforce repressive measures. From the communist perspective, agricultural reforms were needed in order to further the socialist development of the USSR. As many peasants were unforthcoming, Stalin had a "peasant issue" to solve. As for ethnicity, Ukrainians as a people were seen as problematic because of their history of autonomy and their relatively strong nationalist sentiments. This posed Stalin with a "national issue". These two issues were connected particularly closely in Ukraine, where peasant opposition was strongest and where the people had an active claim to a culture and history distinct from the prevailing Russian narrative that was advocated by the regime. The Ukrainian peasant, as a consequence,

suffered under a "double guise". For whereas Stalin did not seek the complete eradication of the Ukrainian people—which is one of the reasons why the Holodomor cannot strictly be called genocide—he did want to thwart the nationalist movement and the opposition to agricultural collectivisation.

On the issue of terming this a genocide, I concur with Robert Conquest in saying that, "whether these events are to be formally defined as genocide is scarcely the point. It would hardly be denied that a crime has been committed against the Ukrainian nation; and, whether in the execution cellars, the forced labour camps, or the starving villages, crime after crime against the millions of individuals forming that nation."[160]

For future research, it is worth emphasising the need for more information on the individuals that carried out and/or were victimised by Stalin's repressions of the 1930s. Scholarship on the purges co-occurring with the Holodomor pales in comparison to the work done on the Great Purges in 1937–1939 and whereas such prominent figures as Molotov and Kaganovich—let alone Stalin himself—have been the subject of countless monographs, research on the life and work of an influential executive like Vsevolod Balytsky has only been done quite recently. This has proven invaluable to the writing of this thesis; the potential of this human approach for the further clarification of the chain of events and responsibility is endless.

[160] Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow*, 272–273.

APPENDIX 1

Glossary of terms and abbreviations

AUCP(B)	All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)[161]
CC[162]	Central Committee, executive leadership directing all party and governmental activities
CCC	Central Control Commission, supreme disciplinary body within the Central Committee overseeing implementation
CEC	Central Executive Committee, main authoritative government body during interims of Congress sessions
Cheka	Vserossiyskaya Chrezvychaynaya Komissiya (All-Russia Extraordinary Commission, secret police)
Comintern	Communist International (Third International, 1919–1943)
CP(B)U	Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine
CPC/Radnarkom	Rada narodnikh komisariv UkSSR (Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, Ukrainian republican equivalent of Sovnarkom)
CPC/Sovnarkom	Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov (the government of the Soviet Union, also SNK)[163]
Derzhplan	Derzhavnyi Planovyi Komitet URSR (State Planning Committee of the UkSSR, Ukrainian equivalent for Gosplan)
Gosplan	Gosudarstvennaya Planovaya Komissiya (State Planning Commission)
gulag	Glavnoe Upravlenie Lagerei (Main Administration of Labour Camps), also used to denote the labour camps themselves
kolkhoz	kollektivnoe khozyaistvo (collective farm)
Komsomol	Kommunisticheskiy Soyuz Molodyozhi (Communist youth party)
kulak	wealthy peasant; *kurkul* is the Ukrainian equivalent

[161] This name was in use from 1925–1952; from 1952–1991 it was simply called the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).
[162] These abbreviations are generally used in combination with an abbreviation denoting the specific communist party. For example, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine would be abbreviated as follows: CC CP(B)U. The same principle applies to the CCC, CEC, and CPC. I have refrained from using these terms in the main body of the thesis, but will use them in the chronology in Appendix 2.
[163] This name was in use from 1923–1946; from 1946–1991 it was called the Council of Ministers (Sovmin).

NKVD	Narodnyy Komissarit Vnutrennikh Del (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, successor of the OGPU)
oblast	province
OGPU	Ob'edinennoe Gosudarstvennoe Politicheskoe Upravlenie (Unified State Political Administration, intelligence service and secret police)[164]
Orgburo	Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee, decides on personnel-related issues, particularly on the local party cadre level
Politburo	Political Bureau of the Central Committee, highest policy-making authority
raion	Administrative district, one level below the oblast-level
RSFSR	Rossiyskaya Sovetskaya Federativnaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic)
sovkhoz	sovetskoe khozyaistvo (state farm)
UkSSR	Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

[164] The OGPU existed from 1923 to 1934 until its functions were transferred to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD).

APPENDIX 2

Chronology of key events

March 2, 1930	Stalin's 'Dizzy with Success' article appears in *Pravda*.
August 7, 1932	The CEC and CPC AUCP(B) pass a law on theft of state property ('Law of Spikelets'/'Five Stalks Law'/'Seven Eigths Law') stipulating that theft of kolkhoz property was punishable by execution. Kulaks were executed; other peasants, under extenuating circumstances, faced up to ten years of imprisonment and confiscation of personal property.
October 22, 1932	The All-Union Politburo agrees to send two 'plenipotentiary commissions' to Ukraine and the North Caucasus, headed by Vyacheslav Molotov and Lazar Kaganovich.
November 18, 1932	The Ukrainian Politburo adopts a resolution 'On measures to strengthen grain procurements': communist functionaries are dispatched to villages where "kulak sabotage and lack of party activity had become particularly acute."[165]
November 20, 1932	The Radnarkom introduces 'blacklists' on the All-Ukrainian level ('On the struggle against kulak influence on collective farms'). Oblast executive committees are granted the right to blacklist villages.[166]
December 14, 1932	The All-Union Politburo adopts a resolution 'On grain procurements in Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and the Western province'. It particularly denounces "saboteurs of grain procurements with party memberships in their pockets" and sentences them to 5 to 10 years in concentration camps or execution upon arrest. Secret decree calling for "serious attention to the proper implementation of Ukrainisation" policies and a more "careful choice and education of Bolshevik Ukrainian cadres."[167]
December 27, 1932	The CEC USSR and Sovnarkom adopt a joint resolution introducing a universal passport system in union cities throughout the USSR, on local

[165] Pyrih, *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraïni*, 250–261.
[166] Papakin, 'Blacklists as an Instrument of the Famine-Genocide'.
[167] Pyrih, *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraïni*, 293; Lozyts'kyi, *Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv*, 475–477.

	record-keeping and registration of the population, and on "regulation of departure from and entry into the cities of Moscow, Leningrad, and Kharkiv."[168]
January 1, 1933	Stalin sends a telegram to the Ukrainian leadership in which he calls for intensified mass searches and confiscations, threatening peasants "who stubbornly insist on misappropriating and concealing grain." The All-Union Politburo introduces a resolution calling for peasants caught with hidden stocks to be punished according to the law of August 7, 1932.[169]
January 11, 1933	Launch of a purge of the leadership of the CP(B)U at the combined plenum of the CC and CEC of the AUCP(B).
January 22, 1933	Stalin's secret directive to halt the movement of Ukrainian peasants.
January 24, 1933	CC AUCP(B) resolution blaming the CP(B)U for the grain procurement failures of 1932 and appointing Pavel Postyshev as Second Secretary of the CP(B)U and First Secretary of the Kharkiv *oblast* committee.
April 28, 1933	The Sovnarkom issues a resolution on the issuance of 'passports' to citizens across the USSR.
May 8, 1933	Joint directive of the CC AUCP(B) and the Council of People's Commissars calling upon all Party and OGPU officials, courts, and prosecutors' offices to "stop, as a rule, the use of mass exile and sharp forms of repression in the countryside." This introduced a less harsh treatment of peasants and put an end to food confiscations.[170]
October 18, 1933	The All-Union Politburo approves Stanislav Kosior's request for a reduction in the grain procurement plan in Ukraine and lowers the requirement for 1934 by 415,000 tonnes. A further reduction by 500,000 tonnes is confirmed by Stalin several weeks later.[171]
November 22, 1933	Resolution declaring Ukrainian nationalism to be a main threat to the Ukrainian Communist Party passed at the combined plenum of the CC and CCC CP(B)U.
January 26, 1934 –	Seventeenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (also known

[168] Shapoval and Zolotarev, *«Gil'otina Ukrainy»*, 190.
[169] 'Resolution of the CC AUCP(b) Politburo on grain procurement in Ukraine'.
[170] 'Direktiva-instruktsiya TSK VKP(b) i SNK SSSR «O prekrashchenii massovykh vyseleniy krest'yan, uporyadochenii proizvodstva arestov i razgruzke mest zaklyucheniya»'.
[171] Applebaum, *Red Famine*, 284.

February 10, 1934	as the Congress of Victors). Joseph Stalin describes nationalism as an attempt by "'national' bourgeoisie to undermine the Soviet system and to restore capitalism. Pavel Postyshev takes responsibility for "gross errors and blunders" in Ukraine on behalf of the Ukrainian Communist Party.[172]

[172] Ibidem.

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