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The Holodomor in Ukraine (1932–1933) in the Accounts and Assessments of the Ukrainian-language Hetmanite Press in the United States*

STRESZCZENIE

Hołodomor na Ukrainie w latach 1932–1933 w relacjach i ocenach ukraińskojęzycznej prasy hetmańskiej w Stanach Zjednoczonych

Artykuł przedstawia nowe ustalenia na temat Wielkiego głodu (Hołodomoru) na Ukrainie w latach 1932–1933, postrzeganego jako element zaplanowanego przez władze sowieckie ludobójstwa. Podstawę rozważań stanowią publikacje zamieszczane na łamach gazet hetmańskich „Sicz” i „Nasz stąg”, ukazujących się w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Czasopisma te były najdłużej działającymi mediami

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ukraińskiej diaspory w tym kraju, a drukowane na ich łamach treści były zgodne ze stanem faktycznym. Wszystko to pozwoliło sformułować tezę, że przedstawiciele ruchu hetmańskiego postrzegali Wielki głód na Ukrainie jako ludobójstwo realizowane przez sowieckie władze, zmierzające do „zniszczenia tożsamości Ukrainy”. Czasopisma hetmańskie stanowią cenne źródło do badań zarówno nad dziejami ruchu hetmańskiego, jak i Wielkiego głodu. Artykuły publikowane na łamach czasopism „Sicz” i „Nasz Styag” odzwierciedlają aktywną postawę hetmanistów w Stanach Zjednoczonych, świadomie zmierzających do kształtowania obiektywnego obrazu i wykazania ludobójczego charakteru Wielkiego głodu na Ukrainie.

Słowa kluczowe: czasopisma hetmańskie, „Sicz”, „Nasz stąg”, Wielki głód 1932–1933, koncepcja ludobójstwa

ABSTRACT

The article presents new findings on the Holodomor in Ukraine of 1932–1933, perceived as part of a planned genocide by the Soviet authorities. The paper is based on publications printed in the Hetman's newspapers 'Sich' and 'Nash stiah', both published in the United States. These periodicals were the longest-running media outlets for the Ukrainian diaspora in the country, and their content was factually accurate. This led to the thesis that representatives of the Hetman's movement perceived the Holodomor in Ukraine as a genocide carried out by the Soviet authorities, aiming to "destroy Ukraine's identity". The Hetman's periodicals constitute a valuable source for research on both the history of the Hetman's movement and the Holodomor. Articles published in the magazines 'Sich' and 'Nash stiah' reflect the active attitude of the Hetmanists in the USA, consciously aiming to shape an objective image and demonstrate the genocidal nature of the Holodomor in Ukraine.

Keywords: Hetmanite newspapers, 'Sitch', 'Nash stiah', Holodomor of 1932–1933, concept of genocide

The early 1930s were a particularly devastating period in the agrarian history of Ukraine. During this time, in rural Ukraine, market relations were dismantled, and a system of centralized administrative control was imposed on the peasantry of collective and state farms. Measures such as the establishment of the system of collective and state farms, the introduction of collective and state ownership of land, and the grain procurement and fiscal policies brought about the man-made Holodomor in 1932–1933 and the destruction of the peasant proprietors not embraced by the doctrine of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine exterminated Ukrainian peasants and destroyed traditional Ukrainian peasant culture, causing severe damage to Ukrainian identity.

In the 1930s, the USSR did not officially acknowledge the vast scale of ‘starvation deaths’, nor the occurrence of deviant behaviors, including cannibalism, precipitated by food shortages as J. Stalin dismissed the Holodomor as a non-event. In the public discourse of the time, the Soviet state leadership and its intelligence apparatus orchestrated a coordinated campaign of disinformation aimed at concealing, discrediting, disguising, and distorting the ‘famine’ through the official terminology, both in the USSR in general and in Soviet Ukraine in particular.

The Soviet authorities suppressed and withheld information about the famine until the late 1980s and early 1990s. The aggressor country still fails to honor the memory of its victims even today¹. In Ukraine, the ‘Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Famines and Political Repressions’ was established by Presidential Decree No. 1310/98 of October 28, 1998, and is commemorated every year on the fourth Saturday of November².

In view of the above, it is therefore important to examine contemporary accounts from the 1930s about the horrors of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine. The Ukrainian diaspora press, in particular the Ukrainian-language Hetmanite press in the United States, provides one such historical source.

Specific issues relevant to this study have been addressed in modern Ukrainian historiography, including in the works of T. Vronska and T. Ostashko³, V. Huberets⁴, O. Kovalchuk⁵, D. Kolisnyk⁶,

¹ S. Dmitriev, *Viktor Kondrashin: stydno, chto v Rosii net politiki po uvoke-vechivaniyu pamyati bezvinno pogibshykh*, “RFI”, 29 XI 2013, <https://www.rfi.fr/ru/ukraina/20131129-viktor-kondrashkin-stydno-chto-v-rossii-net-politiki-po-uvekovecheniyu-pamyati-bezv> (accessed 7 May 2025).

² *Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 1310/98 ‘On the Establishment of the Day of Remembrance of Victims of Famines and Political Repressions’*, “President of Ukraine: Official website”, <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/131098-5115> (accessed 21 April 2025).

³ T. Vronska, T. Ostashko, *Uchast ukrainskykh zarubizhnykh politychnykh ta hromadskykh orhanizatsiy v aktsiyakh protestu 30-kh rr. XX st. proty holodomoru v USRR*, “Ukrainskyi istorychnyi zhurnal” 2003, no. 5, pp. 65–81.

⁴ V. Gubarets, *Ukrainska etnichna presa u Pivnichnyi Amerytsi: istoriya I suchasnist*, “Instytut zhurnalistyky” 2006, <http://journlib.univ.kiev.ua/index.php?act=article&article=1451> (accessed 10 April 2025).

⁵ O. Kovalchuk, *Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. v USRR I ukrainska diaspora Pivnichnoyi Ameryky: informatyvni aspekty*, “Ukrayina XX st.: kultura, ideolohiya, polityka” 2008, no. 14, pp. 377–400.

⁶ D. Kolisnyk, *Hetmanska periodyka v Evropi na pochatku Druhoyi Svitovoyi viyny*, “Humanitarnyi zhurnal” 2011, no. 3–4, pp. 155–166.

A. Kozytskyi⁷, P. Hai-Nyzhnyk⁸, and others. However, the materials published in the US Hetmanite newspapers ‘Sitch’ and ‘Nash stiah’ (Our Banner) merit closer examination.

This study seeks to shed new light on the formation of the concept of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as genocide, as reflected in the pages of the two aforementioned newspapers.

‘Sitch’, the official newspaper of the Ukrainian ‘Sitch’ society, Hetmanite in orientation, was published in Chicago every two weeks from July 1924 to May 1934, continuing the earlier ‘Sitchovi Visti’ (Sitch News). It was edited by O. Nazaruk and, from 1928, by M. Bodruk. In 1934, ‘Sitch’ was succeeded by ‘Nash stiah’⁹.

‘Nash stiah’, published in Chicago, was the newspaper of the ‘Sitch’ athletic society from 1920 to 1925, with S.-K. Hrynevetskyi as its editor-in-chief, and followed an openly pro-Hetmanite editorial line. In 1934–1942, it was issued weekly as the official publication of the Ukrainian Hetman Organization of America, with O. Shapoval heading the editorial board. It continued the earlier ‘Sitchovi Visti’ (Sitch News) and ‘Sitch’. The newspaper carried ideological and political commentary, analysis of international events, personal reminiscences, and reports on the activities of the ‘Sitch’ Society and the Ukrainian Hetman Organization of America¹⁰.

During the interwar period, these Ukrainian émigré newspapers served an important social function and kept the American community informed about the Holodomor of 1932–1933. First, in the context of the information war of that time, they sought to challenge the narratives of progressivists and other pro-Soviet forces, who denied, distorted, or manipulated information about the Holodomor in their newspapers, such as ‘Ukrainski Robitnychi Visti’ (Ukrainian Workers’ News), and ‘Narodna Hazeta’ (People’s Newspaper).

Second, the Hetmanite periodicals informed Ukrainians and other communities in the USA about the Holodomor from 1932 to 1935, that is, for four years. They consistently highlighted that

⁷ A. Kozytskyi, *Velyka brekhnya. Metody, naratyvy ta dynamika zaperechennya Holodomoru*, Kharkiv 2023.

⁸ P.P. Hai-Nyzhnyk, *Ukrainskyi natsional-konservatyzm: hetmanskyi rukh. Book 1: 1900–1936 rr.*, Kyiv 2023.

⁹ ‘Sitch’, [in:] *Entsyklopediya ukrainoznavstva: slovnykova chastyna*, ed. V. Kubyovutch, vol. VIII, Paryzh–New-York 1976, p. 2847.

¹⁰ P.P. Hai-Nyzhnyk, *Nash stiah*, [in:] *Entsyklopediya suchasnoyi Ukrainy*, Kyiv 2020, <https://esu.com.ua/article-70996> (accessed 7 May 2025).

humanitarian catastrophe, both during the period in which it occurred and in the ensuing years. The chronology of the publication and dissemination of these materials, when considered together with their subject matter, offers substantial evidence to support the assertion that the Hetmanite coverage of the Holodomor was unmatched in duration among Ukrainian diaspora media in the 1930s. Thus, these findings challenge A. Kappeler's view, particularly his claim that, starting from the autumn of 1933, "the foreign press witnessed an abrupt decline in reports concerning the Ukrainian famine, and in 1934 they almost disappeared from the columns of the press in Central and Western Europe – consequently, the famine was largely forgotten abroad"¹¹.

In 31 issues of 'Sitch' published between 1932 and 1934, 50 items addressed the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine. Of these, 16 were featured in 12 issues dated February 15 – December 17, 1932, 22 in 12 issues dated February 18 – December 23, 1933, and 12 in 7 issues dated January 13 – May 26, 1934.

In 'Nash stiah', the authors published 44 pieces in 30 issues in 1934–1935: 32 in 19 issues dated June 16 – December 22, 1934, and 12 in 11 issues dated January 12 – June 22, 1935.

Thus, 94 items of various kinds were published in 61 issues of 'Sitch' and 'Nash stiah' in 1932–1935, spanning the period from February 15, 1932, to June 22, 1935. These materials related to almost all aspects of the 'tragedy in Great Ukraine'.

In 1932, in 'Sitch', the Holodomor of 1932–1933 was discussed in the interviews, dialogues, analytical publications, correspondence, reports, stories, and series of articles (for example, 'From the Bolshevik Paradise', 'New Act of the Terrible Tragedy on the Dniester'), news items, commentary, press reviews, descriptions, eyewitness accounts, and letters.

In terms of their subject matter, they addressed the following issues:

- Bolshevik measures to conceal information about the famine;
- the formation of the 'Soviet person';
- the religiosity of the peasantry and the anti-religious policy of the Bolsheviks in rural areas;

¹¹ V. Korotkyi, *Shcho pysala tohochasna presa v Evropi pro Holodomor*, "Ukrinform", 25 XI 2023, <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-world/3791036-so-pisala-togocasa-presa-u-evropi-pro-golodomor.html> (accessed 11 May 2025).

- the life of ordinary people;
- the nature of the Soviet political system, in particular, the mechanism of non-competitive elections;
- the reasons for the introduction of the five-year plans and the effectiveness of their implementation;
- the structure of the USSR budget, its distribution, revenues, and Ukraine's share;
- executions and repression of peasants;
- criticism of collectivization;
- food prices;
- excessive grain procurements;
- the causes and course of the famine and the number of starving peasants;
- rations of starving peasants.

For example, an interview with J.G. Watt, an American engineer working in the USSR, published in 'Sitch' on February 15, 1932¹², described how the Soviet authorities cultivated the illusion of the success of the 'first socialist state in the world', concealing information about the Holodomor. The engineer spoke of his experiences as follows: "for the first four months, it was paradise. They gave us everything. They organized banquets for us. They took us to various eating establishments (as I later found out, these establishments had been set up purely for show). In short, they fed us and spoiled us like children. [...] At meetings and rallies, as I later learned, the communists presented us as Americans who had come to help advance a world revolution. [...] After four months [...] they left us alone and took up the next groups of newly arrived foreigners. And only then did I begin to look around me and see that things were not as they had seemed. For the first time, I saw terrible poverty and persecution all around me. [...] The scales fell from my eyes, and I saw what a terrible monster this communism and the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat were [...]"

The information blockade introduced by the Soviet authorities on the coverage of the Holodomor was mentioned in a piece published on July 15, 1932. The editorial board of 'Sitch' drew readers' attention to the fact that "Bolshevik periodicals are forbidden

¹² "Sitch", 15 II 1932, no. 4, pp. 3–4.

to write about the famine". It also offered an objective representation of the tragedy, comparing it to the famine of 1921–1923 and describing the conditions faced by the starving peasants: "The famine in Ukraine is the same as the one that struck the Russian provinces on the Volga in 1921. Last year's grain in Ukraine was exhausted by February, and since then, both villages and cities have been living on 'whatever God may provide'. [...] After consuming the remaining grain not yet seized by the Bolsheviks, the population began to 'finish off' the cattle. The cattle die, mostly from various diseases. The Bolshevik authorities order such animals to be buried, but people dig them out of the ground and eat the meat of the carcasses [...].

The legal markets do not improve the situation because nothing is brought in to be sold, and everything is kept for harder times.

Nothing can be transported by rail because almost every day, railway cars are robbed by crowds of starving people, who even take what the passengers are carrying. The spring sowing has gone very badly. No more than 30 percent of the fields have been sown with spring crops.

The authorities have lost their heads and do not know what to do. The prospect of an even more terrible famine next year looms over the people, and it is difficult to say how it will all end"¹³.

Jan Slavik, a well-known Czech historian and Sovietologist, shared his views on the impact of the Soviet policy of disinformation about the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine on Europeans in an article published in 'Sitch' on September 15, 1932. He criticized those "who believe in the communists as saviors, who believe despite the facts, who believe because [...] you have to believe in something; otherwise, life would be unbearable. But fortunately, not all the supporters of the 'new Russia' take their word for it; there are those among them who, like the biblical Doubting Thomas, want to see it with their own eyes (mostly those who came from peasant stock), want to touch with their own hands that new order that the communists are building with such fanfare in all of Russia and Ukraine. And among the latter are those who are not afraid to shatter their illusions, look the truth in the face, and even tell people about that 'glorious' USSR"¹⁴.

¹³ "Sitch", 15 VII 1932, no. 14, p. 6.

¹⁴ "Sitch", 15 IX 1932, no. 18, pp. 2–3.

In a series of publications in June–July, November, and December 1932, the causes of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 were identified: excessive grain procurements – in essence, the plunder of the peasantry, the introduction of the five-year plans, and collectivization. For example, the issue of ‘Sitch’ of December 17, 1932 carried a statement by ‘Dr. Totton’, who had returned from the USSR. In it, he shared his view on the situation that had developed in Ukraine, which the Kremlin had done its utmost to conceal. In the interview, ‘Dr. Totton’ called the five-year plan “the most terrible exploitation of the poor in the world”. He noted that industrialization is accompanied by “terrible famine” and that “the people are perishing”¹⁵.

‘Sitch’ informed its readers in plain terms that collectivization was “the destruction of private property and the landowning grain growers, who are pooled together”, as part of “the so-called collectivization”. The article dated June 1, 1932, identified the latter as a “socialist toxin”. It also described the social and economic standing of collective farms: “It turned out that all those peasant holdings are so terribly neglected and ruined that livestock (horses, cows, etc.) begin to starve”¹⁶.

The consequences of collectivization for Ukrainian agriculture were reported by K. Foss, a journalist whose article in ‘Sitch’ published on July 1, 1932 was reprinted from the ‘International News Service’. Based on his personal observations, the author stated: “Famine and the plunder of peasant property by the Bolsheviks have reached their peak in Ukraine. [...] Many villages have turned into wastelands. The Bolshevik government is unable to cope”. His conclusion was stark: “Collectivization has completely ruined the peasantry”¹⁷.

A comparative analysis of the materials on the Holodomor of 1932–1933 published in ‘Sitch’ in 1932 and in 1933 shows that they are of a similar form. However, certain differences are also apparent. First, the newspaper began to carry appeals and open letters. This was prompted by: a) the intensification and spread of the famine, the rising death toll, the increase in the number of forced migrants; b) the active role of members of the Hetmanite movement in organizing campaigns intended to condemn the

¹⁵ “Sitch”, 17 XII 1932, no. 29, p. 1.

¹⁶ “Sitch”, 1 VI 1932, no. 11, p. 3.

¹⁷ “Sitch”, 1 VII 1932, no. 13, p. 7.

Bolsheviks, drawing the attention of the international community to the ‘tragedy in Greater Ukraine’, and providing assistance to the starving in Ukraine. Second, O. Shapoval, Chief Otaman of Sich Organizations of America and Canada, published a larger number of analytical pieces.

Thematically, the materials in ‘Sich’ in 1933 addressed the following issues:

- those who bore the main burden of socialist policies;
- the imposition of Soviet serfdom on the peasantry;
- the quality of grain;
- the activities of the Committee for Assistance to the Starving in Ukraine;
- the information blockade and the methods used by the Bolsheviks to conceal the tragedy and its consequences;
- repression in the country and punishment of peasants;
- the nature of the Bolshevik policy that caused the famine;
- the extent of famine-related deaths and cannibalism;
- psychological effects of the famine;
- efforts by the Ukrainian emigration to inform the political circles of other countries about the ‘tragedy in Greater Ukraine’;
- Pius XI’s attitude to the famine;
- the reaction of the international community to the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine.

This is best illustrated by several examples. In an article of February 18, 1933, O. Shapoval argued that excessive grain procurements was one of the causes of the Holodomor. He reported that during 1930–1931 alone, 46 million tons of grain had been “looted” from Ukraine. This led to severe hardship of the peasantry and to starvation. He described Soviet policy in rural Ukraine in the late 1920s and early 1930s not as “the growth of well-being in the Soviet socialist republic of workers and peasants” but as “the development of serfdom”¹⁸.

The situation ‘in Greater Ukraine’ was analyzed in another article by the same author, published in ‘Sich’ on September 2, 1933.

¹⁸ O. Shapoval, *Rozbudova rabstva v Sovdeprii*, “Sich”, 18 II 1933, no. 7, p. 2.

Shapoval also noted the efforts to bring the tragedy to the attention of the outside world; “the entire Ukrainian (except the Bolshevik) press and almost all American periodicals...” reported on it. He added that these reports mentioned “numerous cases of cannibalism in that plundered land”¹⁹.

O. Shapoval also emphasized both the scale of deaths from starvation and the repression of the peasantry, and attempted to estimate the number of victims of the Holodomor of 1932–1933. As the chief otaman of Sich Organizations of America and Canada, he observed: “Every day, every hour, death claims thousands of Ukrainians exhausted by famine, and the Bolshevik executioners finish off those who can still move and have enough strength to even groan in protest”. By his estimate, “out of last year’s 30 million population, at least five million now either lie in their graves or are in their death throes. [...] In some villages, 80% of the inhabitants have already died of starvation, and there is no one to even bury them [...]”²⁰.

In its issue of September 16, 1933, ‘Sitch’ carried a reprint of a report from ‘Meta’ stating that “only the Ukrainian peasantry is dying of hunger. The Jews and Czech colonists are not, having somehow secured provisions before the famine. Interestingly, the Bolshevik administration in the towns and Soviet collective farms is rather well-supplied with food. All these government officials, among whom there are almost no Ukrainians, but half of whom are Jews, buy food at their special stores and pay ridiculously low prices for it – compared to those at regular markets”²¹.

An article published in ‘Sitch’ on December 23, 1933 criticized Bolshevik attempts to misrepresent the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine. The editors described them as a ‘Bolshevik comedy’. The piece sought to dismantle the myth promoted by the Bolsheviks following the visit of the French politician E. Herriot to the USSR²². Another piece, entitled ‘HUNGER’, in the same issue of ‘Sitch’, described the destructive effect of starvation on the mental and emotional state of starving peasants and their abnormal behavior caused by ‘pangs of hunger’²³.

¹⁹ *Idem*, *Ukraina hynē! Shcho zh my maemo robyty?*, “Sitch”, 2 IX 1933, no. 31, p. 4.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ “Sitch”, 16 IX 1933, no. 33, p. 1.

²² “Sitch”, 23 XII 1933, no. 45, p. 2.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

Thus, coverage in 'Sitch' in 1933 focused on the actual causes and horrors of the 'tragedy in Greater Ukraine'. While in 1932 the newspaper informed the public about the famine and the reasons why it arose, in 1933, it reported on its intensification, spread, and its terrible manifestations: mass mortality, cannibalism, and human degradation. The Bolshevik and pro-Bolshevik press abroad either remained silent or distorted the accurate and fair view of the situation in the Ukrainian SSR.

'Sitch' continued to inform the Ukrainian diaspora and the international community about the Holodomor in Ukraine in 1934. The materials published in the newspaper that year included a series on aid for the starving and on protests of the Ukrainian public abroad against the recognition of the USSR and its admission to the League of Nations, 'predictions', discussions, dialogues, interviews, memoirs, signed and editorial analytical articles, and reprints.

Compared to 1932–1933, 'Sitch' in 1934 featured a greater proportion of original contributions and offered more extensive and detailed analysis.

The issues addressed in the newspaper that year included the following:

- protest campaigns of the Ukrainian community abroad against the recognition of the USSR and its admission to the League of Nations;
- fundraising for aid and financial assistance to the starving;
- the policy of the Soviet authorities towards rural Ukraine and the failures of the collective and state farm system;
- the emergence of the 'new' state and collective farm peasant;
- the curtailment of Ukrainization;
- the formation of the 'Soviet man' and of Soviet commemorative space;
- the forced migration of peasants and other consequences of the famine;
- the social and economic situation of the Soviet elite and of the population of Soviet Ukraine;
- foreign loans financing the Soviet economy.

This may be illustrated by specific examples. An interview with an Austrian emigrant reprinted from the Lviv newspaper 'Dilo', informed the readers of 'Sitch' on February 3, 1934 about

demographic losses caused by starvation and reported that the famine in Ukraine brought about by collectivization, heavy taxation, and low procurement prices for agricultural produce continued in 1934. The respondent stated that “collectivized peasants are driven to work day and night, and there is nothing to eat. [...] There is rampant theft, banditry and general ruin everywhere [...]”²⁴.

An interview with an émigré engineer who had worked in the USSR for a long time, contributed by Stepan F. (Praha) and published in the issue of ‘Sitch’ of February 17, 1934, recounted the scale of the Holodomor and its moral and psychological impact on the peasantry. The engineer said he had been “told in confidence... that entire villages had died out”. He spoke of the consequences of the Holodomor of 1932–1933, above all its destructive impact on the individual. According to the respondent, “this poor Soviet citizen! [...] is no longer a person with a natural smile, with a natural desire for something (save for the urge to eat) or with any interest in human achievements, progress, and culture. He is a walking embodiment of despondency, indifferent to everything, even to the corpses of those unfortunate people who died in the streets [...] He is no longer afraid of anything; nothing can scare him anymore. He craves bread alone!”²⁵.

Other materials in ‘Sitch’ in 1934 offered a broad and varied representation of life in Ukraine affected by the tragedy. In particular, V. Franko’s account entitled ‘What I Saw and Experienced in Soviet Ukraine’ was especially notable for its breadth and detail. It was published in issues 19–21 of May 12, 19, and 26²⁶.

Accordingly, in 1934 ‘Sitch’ published articles on the social and economic situation of the Ukrainian peasantry and on various consequences of the Holodomor it experienced in 1932–1933, and continued to endure in 1934.

The Hetmanite ‘Nash stiah’, the successor to ‘Sitch’, also served as an important platform for Ukrainian political émigrés in the USA. In 1934–1935 it carried numerous pieces about the Holodomor. The contributions published in the newspaper in 1934 included original articles (primarily reprints), reports, critical com-

²⁴ “Sitch”, 3 II 1934, no. 5, p. 1.

²⁵ S.F. (Praha), *Po toi bik chervonoyi hrebli. Yak zhyvut nashi braty za kytaiskym murom*, “Sitch”, 17 II 1934, no. 7, pp. 3–4.

²⁶ V. Franko, *Sho ya bachyv i perezhyv na radyanskiy Ukraini*, “Sitch”, 12 V 1934, no. 19, pp. 1–2, 4; 19 V 1934, no. 20, pp. 1–3; 26 V 1934, no. 21, pp. 1–2.

mentary, analytical pieces, stories, vignettes, letters of gratitude, reviews, series of articles (for example on aid for the starving and on appeals and protests concerning the admission of the USSR to the League of Nations), interviews, press reviews, and poems.

They addressed the following issues:

- the methods used by the Bolsheviks to suppress information about the Holodomor;
- the number of victims of the humanitarian catastrophe;
- peasant resistance;
- forced evictions, resettlement of peasants from Ukraine, and the lives of those deported to concentration camps;
- class discrimination in the USSR;
- the threat of a new famine;
- everyday life on collective farms;
- the causes of famine in Ukraine and in Western Belarus;
- repression of peasants;
- peasant rations and food prices;
- informing the governments of European countries about the Holodomor and their reactions;
- the condition of Ukrainian agriculture;
- the objectives of Soviet agrarian policy in Ukraine;
- the specifics of the Soviet model of statehood;
- the causes of the Holodomor;
- assistance to the starving.

For examples, the scale of the catastrophe and the following demographic losses were discussed in an article published in 'Nash stiah' on June 16, 1934. It cited accounts by foreign press correspondents, based on eyewitness testimony, describing mortality in particular localities. According to those reports, in Poltava, Bila Tserkva, and Kropotkin (Northern Caucasus), "the mortality rate was approximately 10 percent"²⁷.

An article by F. Sturm, reprinted from the periodical 'Schönere Zukunft' and published in the issue of 'Nash stiah' of September 1, 1934, clearly set out the objective of Moscow's policy

²⁷ "Nash stiah", 16 VI 1934, no. 23, p. 1.

towards Ukraine. The Viennese scholar described it as follows: “the destruction of Ukraine’s individuality and the struggle to absorb it into the vast expanses of the Russian state – these are the main tenets of the domestic policy program of the Moscow rulers”²⁸.

The editorial board elaborated on the author’s argument, developing it further. It emphasized that “the campaign against Ukraine was carried out with double the force in the areas of economy, politics, and culture”. In particular, “under the guise of economy, Moscow acted with great determination against the peasantry, which made up 85% of the population of Ukraine”. The victims of this Bolshevik policy, primarily of dekulakization, included “200,000 of the best landowners”, who were “exiled to the Siberian steppes [...]”²⁹.

‘Nash stiah’ reported on the forced deportation of the Ukrainian peasantry in its issue of 23 June 1934 by reprinting from ‘*Courrier de Genève*’ an eyewitness account by Pastor Chalabert that described the harsh conditions in which deportees lived in concentration camps in the USSR. The account stated that “Life in concentration camps is absolute hell. It is hardly surprising that in the concentration camp where I was, the deportees died by the thousands”³⁰.

The collective farms failed to achieve their intended results, as was the case with collectivization as such. This is evident from the following statement: “a significant number of the peasants are starving. The legal status of collective farms is equivalent to serfdom; the USSR government is unable to export grain. When it does, it does so only at the expense of the starving population”. Such explanations of the causes of the Holodomor and the means of mass extermination of the peasantry were provided by ‘Nash stiah’ on September 29, 1934³¹.

In its issue of October 6, 1934, ‘Nash stiah’ reported on Soviet tax policy in rural Ukraine, presenting it as a means of destroying individual peasant holdings. The article stated that “the Moscow Red Commissars have issued a decree according to which each individual landowner must pay a tax 200 percent higher than that imposed on collective farms. In this way, the Bolshevik government

²⁸ “Nash stiah”, 1 IX 1934, no. 34, p. 2.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

³⁰ “Nash stiah”, 23 VI 1934, no. 24, p. 1.

³¹ “Nash stiah”, 29 IX 1934, no. 38, p. 1.

seeks to put individual landowners in such a position that they can no longer run their holdings”³².

The issue of ‘Nash stiah’ of August 18, 1934 included a review of O. Schiller’s monograph *Die Krise der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft in der Sowjetunion* (The crisis of socialist agriculture in the Soviet Union). He attributed the famine in Ukraine to collectivization and collective farms: “the collectivization of the economy carried out in the Bolshevik state destroyed individual peasant holdings, decimated livestock, burdened organizationally immature collectives with a vast bureaucratic apparatus, undertook unnecessary construction and investment projects, pursued a policy of creating large-scale grain farms and expanding the acreage under cultivation as far as possible, deprived the peasants of the desire to work and of any interest in the results of their efforts, and finally (in 1933) provoked a new type of class struggle by introducing compulsory labor in agriculture and bringing people together in collectives where they are heavily exploited. The consequences of this economy are such that the grain procurements and exports to foreign countries are far lower than before the World War. Hunger in the country is much greater than it was then”³³.

In this respect, ‘Nash stiah’ continued the mission initiated by ‘Sitch’: to convey objective information about the ‘horror of famine in Ukraine’ to the outside world. As was the case with ‘Sitch’, many of the items published in the newspaper carried no author’s name, being either editorials or reprints from other publications, with the source or author indicated where available.

In 1935, ‘Nash stiah’ featured several types of pieces on the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine, including speeches, descriptive items, stories, eyewitness accounts, series of articles (for example, ‘Pravda pro Rosiiu’ [The truth about Russia]), articles and ‘announcements’ of lectures.

As for their subject matter, they addressed the following issues:

- Soviet reality;
- food prices;
- strategies to survive during the famine;
- rations of starving peasants;
- the number of victims;

³² “Nash stiah”, 6 X 1934, no. 39, p. 4.

³³ “Nash stiah”, 18 VIII 1934, no. 32, p. 4.

- famine-induced deformities in children;
- looting;
- the causes and nature of the famine;
- the moral qualities of peasants;
- methods of enforcing peasant obedience to the authorities.

The moral and psychological changes among the starving peasants in Ukraine were described in letters published in issues 2 and 6 of 'Nash stiah' in 1935. Sent from the 'Bolshevik paradise', i.e., famine-stricken Ukraine, they recounted the effects of the Holodomor, the central assertion of which was that "people have become beasts"³⁴. Driven to the brink by poverty and hunger, they lost their humanity and became biological beings, whose behavior was distorted. One of the letters stated: "They have no compassion, neither for their parents, nor for their brothers and sisters. And all because they have no fear of GOD. They have no conscience; there is nothing human left in them"³⁵.

In an account published in 'Nash stiah' of March 9, 1935, T. Volker described the physical degradation of a child weakened by starvation. In one of the villages of the Kharkiv region, he "found an emaciated girl of fourteen and her brother, a boy of two and a half. This child crawled on the floor like a frog; for want of food, he no longer looked human".

According to the figures provided by T. Volker, in Ukraine and "part of Soviet Russia [...] 6,000,000 inhabitants died of starvation in 18 months [...]". As he explained, the famine arose "due to the administration of the Bolshevik government, which requisitioned almost the entire harvest. Last winter, the soldiers of the Red Army, by order from Moscow, took so much grain from the population of Ukraine that there was nothing left to feed people and livestock"³⁶.

In general, the items published in 'Sitch' and 'Nash stiah' addressed a range of issues related to the humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in Ukraine at that time. A reading of these materials warrants the conclusion that the Hetmanites regarded the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine as a genocide of Ukrainians engineered by the Soviet leadership, resulting in "the destruction of the individuality of Ukraine". They identified its principal mechanisms

³⁴ "Nash stiah", 12 I 1935, no. 2, p. 2; 9 II 1935, no. 6, p. 4.

³⁵ "Nash stiah", 12 I 1935, no. 2, p. 2.

³⁶ "Nash stiah", 9 III 1935, no. 10, pp. 1–2.

as: 1) collectivization and dekulakization; 2) excessive grain procurements; 3) fiscal tax policy; 4) forced resettlement of peasants; 5) executions and repression of peasants; 6) liquidation of individual peasant holdings. Its consequences included: 1) heavy demographic losses; 2) moral and psychological disintegration of peasantry; 3) physical degradation of those affected by the famine; 4) the emergence of the new 'state and collective farm' peasant.

Such a position of the Hetmanite movement in the USA concerning the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine, as reflected in the materials published in 'Sitch' and 'Nash stiah', corresponds to the modern understanding of the tragedy in Ukrainian historiography, where it is widely regarded as genocide. This line of interpretation was first advanced in the works of S. Kulchytskyi³⁷, V. Marochko³⁸, Yu. Shapoval³⁹. Today, it is also represented by the works of numerous Ukrainian scholars, including L. Hrynevych⁴⁰, V. Borysenko⁴¹, L. Slobodian⁴², O. Veselova⁴³, M. Antonovych⁴⁴, V. Vasylenko⁴⁵, A. Kozytskyi⁴⁶, S. Kornovenko and L. Vovchuk⁴⁷, V. Hudz and N. Krasko⁴⁸ and others.

³⁷ S. Kulchytskyi, *Holodomor 1932–1933 rr. v Ukrayini yak henotsyd*, "Problemy istoriyi Ukrayiny: fakty, sudzhennya, poshuky" 2005, no. 14, pp. 225–300.

³⁸ V. Marochko, *Henotsyd ukrayinskoho narodu (1932–1933 rr.)*, [in:] O. Veselova, V. Marochko, O. Movchan, *Holodomory v Ukrayini 1921–1923, 1932–1933, 1946–1947: Zlochyny proty narodu*, Kyiv–Nyu-York 2000, pp. 83–151.

³⁹ *The Famine-Genocide of 1932–1933 in Ukraine*, ed. Yu. Shapoval, foreword L. Luciuk, Kingston 2005.

⁴⁰ L. Hrynevych, *Holodomor kriz pryzmu imperializmu*, "Lokalna istoriya", 7 XI 2024, <https://lokalhistory.org.ua/videos/bez-bromu/golodomor-kriz-prizmu-imperializmu-liudmila-grinevich/> (accessed 11 May 2025).

⁴¹ V. Borysenko, *Svicha pamyati. Usna istoriya pro henotsyd ukrayintsiv u 1932–1933 rokakh*, Kyiv 2007.

⁴² L. Slobodyan, *Holodomor 1932–33 rr. yak etnichnyy ta kulturno-dukhovnyi henotsyd ukrayinskoho narodu: istoriohrafiya pytannya*, "Visnyk Akademiyi pratsi i sotsialnykh vidnosyn Federatsiyi profspilok Ukrayiny" 2013, no. 3, pp. 100–109.

⁴³ O. Veselova, *Uvichnennya pamyati zhertv holodu-henotsydu 1932–1933 rr. v Ukrayini*, "Ukrayinskyi istorychnyi zhurnal" 2004, no. 2, pp. 50–67.

⁴⁴ M. Antonovych, *Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv v Ukrayini yak henotsyd ukrayinskoji natsiyi: subyektyna storona zlochynu*, "Mandrivets" 2013, no. 6, pp. 4–9.

⁴⁵ V. Vasylenko, *Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv yak zlochyn henotsydu: pravova otsinka*, Kyiv 2009.

⁴⁶ *Holodomor 1932–1933 rokiv – henotsyd ukrayinskoho narodu. Masshtaby ta naslidky Holodomoru*, [in:] *Istoriya Ukrayiny. 1914–2014. Materialy do pidruchnyka dlya uchniv zahalnoosvitnikh shkil*, ed. A. Kozytskyi, Lviv 2014, pp. 82–108.

⁴⁷ L. Vovchuk, S. Kornovenko, *The Holodomor of 1932–1933 through the Eyes of Foreign Diplomats*, "Eminak" 2019, no. 4(28), pp. 71–82.

⁴⁸ V. Hudz, N. Krasko, *The Communist Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Bulgarian Settlements of the Northern Azov Region*, "Eminak" 2024, no. 3(47), pp. 313–328.

Despite differences between individual authors in their treatment of particular aspects, the body of scholarship that interprets the Holodomor of 1932–1933 as genocide is both coherent and well supported. A review of the works of scholars who have advanced this view and those who have developed it further suggests that its main claims may be summarised as follows (the list is not exhaustive).

First, the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine was an act of genocide, the clearest manifestation of which was the deliberate creation of living conditions intended to exterminate the peasantry and to turn the Ukrainian SSR into a territory where starving peasants were effectively confined, being denied the possibility of resettlement and deprived of passports.

Second, the genocide involved the planned destruction of the rural population of the Ukrainian SSR, the Kuban, the Don, the Armavir region, and other parts of the USSR where Ukrainians lived in compact settlements and formed the majority.

Third, the events of 1932–1933 in Ukraine meet the definition of genocide set out in the ‘Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide’ of December 9, 1948⁴⁹.

Fourth, the genocide resulted from the Soviet leadership’s pursuit of the strategic objective articulated by V. Lenin and J. Stalin: the creation of a state based on the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ and the construction, by totalitarian means, of a homogeneous society of ‘new Soviet people’ without private property, monetary circulation, market relations, and pre-revolutionary social strata.

Fifth, the principal instruments of the genocidal campaign included 1) extrajudicial killings and repression of the peasantry and other groups, carried out without proof of guilt and based solely on social origin or even former political affiliation; 2) the use of famine as an instrument of terror, through deliberately depriving peasants of the means of subsistence, in order to bring about partial extermination and intimidate the rest of the population; 3) deportations based on class and national origin, and 4) the concealment and denial of the famine itself.

⁴⁹ *Konventsiya pro zapobihannya zlochynu henotsydu ta pokarannya za nioho*, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Legislation of Ukraine, https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_155#Text (accessed 1 May 2025).

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The Hetmanite newspapers ‘Sitch’ and ‘Nash stiah’ are valuable primary sources both for the study of the history of the Hetmanite movement and of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine, as well as the formation of the concept of that tragedy as genocide. They reflect the active role played by the Hetmanites in the USA in countering the Bolshevik policy of disinformation about the famine and fostering an objective understanding of its man-made and genocidal nature. The Hetmanites informed Ukrainians in the USA and other communities about the Holodomor for four years, from 1932 to 1935, and thus for a period longer than any other Ukrainian-language publications in the United States.

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