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Toward the transnational memory of Holodomor: The famine commemorative genre and the Ukrainian diaspora

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Karolina Koziura
The New School, USA

Abstract

This article traces the emergence of the public memory of Holodomor by focusing on the history of Famine commemorations outside of the Soviet Union from 1933 till 1983. By following Jeffrey K. Olick's call for a dialogical analysis of memory genres, it attempts to unravel the complex cultural mechanism through which commemorations of the Famine evolved not only through their interactions with immediate political context but also in response to earlier commemorations. Two Famine commemorative genres informed this process: that of national mourning and that of anti-Soviet protest. Drawing on my multi-sited and multilingual research, this article argues that the process of creating the public memory of the Holodomor has been transnational, multidirectional, and path-dependent. The framing of the Famine as the Holodomor, a genocide against Ukrainians, was an outcome of negotiations that occurred across time and space. Ukrainian diaspora members, it is further argued, played a prominent role in this process.

Keywords

Cold War, commemoration, Holodomor, transnational memory, Ukrainian diaspora

On Sunday morning, October 2, 1983, thousands of Ukrainian Americans gathered in Washington, D.C., to raise awareness of "The Forgotten Holocaust Ignored by the West." With banners exclaiming "Mass Murder by Moscow 7,000,000 Ukrainians," "Ukrainians Against Soviet Genocide," and "Forced Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933 The West Must Not Forget," the crowd rallied at the Washington Monument to "mourn those of their kinsmen who perished in the Great Famine of 1932–1933."[1] During the 2.5-hour rally, the participants, dressed in traditional Ukrainian embroidered costumes, shouted for recognition of the Famine,[2] protested against the West's obliviousness, and called for holding the Soviet regime accountable for murdering millions of innocent Ukrainian peasants. Black and red posters with images of skulls and skeletons covered in blood dominated the mnemonic landscape of the National Mall.

Corresponding author:
Karolina Koziura, The New School 6 East 16th Street New York, NY 10003, USA.
Email: kozik889@newschool.edu

For many contemporaneous American observers, the multiple references to the Holocaust that the participants of the Ukrainian rally made were a direct response to the changing politics of memory in the early 1980s. Only a couple of months earlier, in April 1983, one of the biggest meetings of Jewish survivors was also held in Washington. Organized by the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Descendants, the largest umbrella organization of Holocaust survivors in North America, the event brought together more than 15,000 Holocaust survivors and their children. Led by Elise Wiesel, a prominent Jewish activist, the meeting brought nationwide recognition of the suffering of European Jews during the Second World War. The event, in other words, confirmed the decades-long transformation of the Holocaust into a universal symbol of human suffering (Alexander, 2002).

The temporal and spatial proximity of both commemorative events immediately brought into question the relation between the emerging public memories of the Holocaust and the Holodomor in the American context. The Great Ukrainian Famine of 1932–1933, known as the Holodomor, belongs to one of the most contested topics in East European scholarship that have traveled outside the academic context.[3] Some parts of the public, in a similar way to the participants of the 1983 rally, embraced the idea of the Famine as a "forgotten genocide." Others saw the emergence of the Holodomor as a mere response to the Holocaust advocated by the most radical and nationalist members of the Ukrainian diaspora (Dietsch, 2006; Himka, 2006; Rudling, 2011). Also the academic community in Ukraine has been divided over the issue of the instrumentalization of the memory and trauma of the Famine in political debates.[4] However, by stressing the relevance of the immediate political context of the 1980s, these interpretations pose a danger of fixing both public memories in a static polemic opposition (Assmann, 2014).

The approach in this article is different. First of all, it does not engage in the questions on whether the Famine of 1932–1933 constituted a genocide.[5] Second, it shifts the focus from a mostly historical debate surrounding the Famine to the understudied questions of the dynamics of public memory outside the Soviet Union. Therefore, it looks at this mnemonic relationship between the Holodomor and the Holocaust as a temporal and spatial conjuncture that culminated a decades-long "management of the unspeakable" (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009), the process of shaping the public memory of the Famine outside of the Soviet Union since the 1930s. By bringing the notion of transnational memory (Assmann, 2014; Erll, 2011; Radstone, 2011; Rothberg, 2014) into the study of the emerging memory of the Famine, this analysis stresses how the movement of concepts, forms, and mnemonic practices shaped the meaning of the Holodomor outside of the Soviet Union. It further proposes to look at the evolving memory genre (Olick, 1999) of the Famine as a particularly fruitful empirical window through which this complex transcultural mechanism of the making of the memory of the Holodomor can be traced. As this article demonstrates, the 1983 commemoration was not only shaped by its immediate political context but was also built up in response to earlier commemorations, and among them, those of 1933, 1953, and 1973 being the most important. Although expressing simultaneous continuities and departures in the rhetoric, two Famine memory genres have been a persistent feature in this process, namely the Famine as a national mourning and as an anti-Soviet protest. It was then in response to the Soviet denial and through the process of the transnational circulation of these memory genres that Famine's knowledge became vulnerable to contradictory ideologies and, therefore, utilized in service of radical national(ist) politics.

Understanding the complexity of evolving memory of the Famine requires studying the interaction between the event, its commemorative forms, and mnemonic context (Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991). This article first raises the problem of the Famine of 1932–1933 as a silenced event (Göçek, 2016 [2014]; Savelsberg, 2021; Trouillot, 1995), cultural trauma (Alexander et al., 2004), and "contested memory" (Schudson, 1993; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991). By

discussing the process of the formation of the public memory of the Famine, it further shifts the conceptual focus from the dominant essentialist views on the role of the Ukrainian diaspora in this process to a more dynamic approach of transnational "memory activists" (Gutman, 2017). As this article points out, the memory of the Famine was not carried out by a particular group but rather resurfaced in multiple settings through various diasporic stances, projects, claims, and practices (Brubaker, 2005). This section is followed by a detailed description of the data and methods of my analysis that streams from multi-sited and multi-method fieldwork conducted in Ukraine, United States, Germany, and Poland. As I demonstrate, the formation of the public memory about the Holodomor was deeply embedded in fragmented historical narratives sustained predominantly through displaced community archives (Caswell, 2010; Lowry, 2017). The paper proceeds to offer a historical-sociological analysis of the evolving Famine memory genre by stressing in particular the three commemorations, namely those of 1933, 1953, and 1973 that shaped the mode of the 1983 anniversary.

Famine as a silenced event, cultural trauma, and contested memory

From the perspective of the Soviet archives, the collectivization famines, including the one in Ukraine, did not happen. In the massive flow of bureaucratic papers through which Soviet officials discussed the situation in the Ukrainian countryside in the early 1930s, the word *holod* (ukr. starvation) is barely mentioned. Documents from 1932 to 1933 are marked by severe discursive cleansing in which such euphemisms as "food difficulties," "mismanagement," "temporary problems," or "counterrevolution" were used to downplay the evolving catastrophe. At the peak of the ongoing starvation, nobody counted the deaths, and people were buried in collective and unmarked graves scattered across Central and Eastern Ukraine. In the post-Famine years, many files pertaining to 1932–1933 were further falsified or destroyed—leaving few, if any, traces (Boriak, 2013). When it comes to the numerous cases of state-orchestrated violence, the Soviet archives were repositories not only of power and knowledge but also of uncertainty and secrecy (Etkind et al., 2013 [2012]; Kirschenbaum, 2006).

Many past famines illustrate a tension between denial and recognition, memory, and oblivion similar to that of the Famine (Corporaal and de Zwarte, 2021). The interconnectedness of past famines and their enduring political presence produced through the vast cultural trauma is evident especially in the Irish (Mark-FitzGerald, 2015), Scottish (Gouriévidis, 2010), Finish (Newby, 2016), and Soviet (Kirschenbaum, 2006) cases. Still, famines are rarely memorialized, and famine victims considered martyrs (Orjuela, 2024). The starving people experience their hunger in an isolated way and frequently feel shameful about their misfortune. Famines are suppressed by those in power yet live on in memories of those who survived (de Waal, 2017; Edkins, 2000).

The complexity of coming to terms with famines is further related to their historical misconception as forms of political violence. The eighteenth century paradigm set by Thomas Robert Malthus saw famines as impersonal phenomenon driven by laws of nature, population, and economics (de Waal, 2017: 18). The starving have been those who could not keep up with economic changes, the lazy ones who refused to work harder, or the passive victims of natural calamities. They have evoked little sympathy (Edkins, 2000; Vernon, 2009). Starvation, however, can be used as an (in) direct form of killing (Snyder, 2012), a form of exploitation (Dikotter, 2010), and way of subjugating population to imperial powers (Cameron 2018a; Graziosi and Sysyn 2016; Sen, 1981). Still, as a form of "slow violence" (Nixon, 2013) that unravels through delayed destruction dispersed across time and space, famine have escaped the recognition as a form of political violence.

Throughout the twentieth century, the painful memories of the Holocaust came to inform the tone for thinking about trauma (Huyssen, 2003). Yet many forms of structural violence

characterized by a different logic of slow and delayed death escaped the recognition as traumatic events. The Famine in Ukraine is a unique case among other famines that, while being contested, in fact got an international recognition as either a crime against humanity or genocide. Especially in the light of the recent full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the majority of Western states and international legal bodies shifted their perception and officially recognized the Holodomor as genocide against Ukrainians. Most of the other famines still occupy a blurred space of a mere humanitarian crisis.[6] Also, the concept of genocide, including its instrumentalization in international politics, has been widely criticized across academia (Moses, 2021).

Perhaps not surprisingly these dynamics of silencing structural violence as forms of political violence resemble the features of more conventional forms of political violence, such as mass atrocities.[7] In particular, memory scholars have pointed out the importance of understanding silencing as a powerful mechanism through which societies come to terms with the repressive past (Cohen, 2013; Laub, 1991; Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger, 2010; Wajnryb, 2001). Also, in the case of the Famine, the construction of denial as a foundational knowledge contributed to the repression of its memory and further enforced the forgetting.[8] The severe discursive cleansing surrounding the Famine stripped people of the vocabulary and conceptual framework through which they could make sense of their suffering. The repressive erasure that characterized the Famine years turned into what Paul Connerton (2008) defined as *prescriptive forgetting*, a denial imposed from above in the aftermath of a traumatic event. In many cases, former perpetrators who forcefully extrapolated food from the peasants were those in charge of collective farms and village councils in the post-Famine years (Mattingly, 2020). Many survivors recall that, during the Famine, a "conspiracy of silence" covered their lives. As can be learnt from hundreds of testimonies from Famine survivors, people often could not bury their deceased relatives or even mourn them in public.[9] Many of the dead were anonymously buried in unmarked mass graves which were soon overgrown with bushes and forests. Nameless victims in unmarked graves, Martin Pollack (2014) pointed out, foster forgetting.

However, already in 1930s, Ukrainian activists from Galicia and other parts of Europe formed local committees for helping the starving by distributing humanitarian narrative that recognized the political nature of the Famine. They were also the first to separate the Famine in Ukraine from other Soviet collectivization famines and gave it a particularly national(ist) framing. Ukrainian aid committees further framed the misery of the starving as a national tragedy for all Ukrainians living across borders. Already in the fall of 1933, in every town of Galicia and many West European and North American cities, the starving in Soviet Ukraine were commemorated and mourned as distinct and unique victims of Stalinist repressions.

Those who managed to survive the Famine faced further repressions and deportations, which worsened during the Second World War. A parallel part of the Nazis' extermination plan was the exploitation of foreign workers, known as *Ostarbeiters*, to build Germany's agricultural and industrial power during the war. Captured by the Germans during its push into the eastern front, they were transferred to Germany, where they were forced to work in slave-like conditions.[10] In the wake of the Second World War, many of them were transferred to the displaced persons (DPs) camps. The camp communities became sites of ideological struggles between socialists and nationalists, those who viewed the Soviet Union as an idealized homeland and those for whom Soviet Ukraine was a place of national oppression. Some, under the 1945 Yalta agreement, decided to return to the motherland, while others resisted repatriation to the Soviet Union for years (Bernstein, 2023). Some 250,000 refugees from Ukraine refused to return and waited to be resettled to Australia, South America, and North America.[11] This included also the most nationalistic fractions of Ukrainians, including the members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and, after additional screening, the members of the controversial Galicia Division with directed war-time ties to the Nazi.[12] In

the context of displacement and post-war uncertainty, it was not obvious that collective memory of the Famine would develop at all.[13]

Thus, in the post-war context, diverse groups carried the memory of the Famine. First of all, there were Famine survivors who frequently mourned their losses within intimate spaces of their homes and through church services. Second, there were a more nationally oriented Western Ukrainians who perceived themselves as heirs to the national-democratic activism of inter-war Galician leaders and emigre communities, and finally there were the most radical nationalistic fractions who perceived in the Famine a powerful ideological resource for the consolidation of their power.[14] Thus, the memory of the Famine was not a property carried by one group but rather resurfaced through various tensions, claims, and political stances (Satzewich, 2002; Sysyn, 1999). In fact, as Pawliczko (1994) argued, historically Ukrainians living in the diaspora have emphasized their within-group differences through numerous conflict and struggles over political convictions, religious affiliations, classes, and waves of immigration. Especially the divide between socialists and nationalists, eastern and western Ukrainians, left an imprint on the ways in which the knowledge about the Famine was produced and contested abroad.

If silencing was the logic that informed the production of knowledge about the Famine by the Soviet state, "unsilencing" (Tali and Astahovska, 2022) became the mechanism of processing difficult memories in post-1991 Ukraine. The Holodomor entered the public memory in Ukraine through numerous mutually informed platforms (Andriewsky 2015; Grynevych 2008). Across central and eastern Ukraine, villagers and mnemonic activists commemorated the starving through processions, raising crosses, cleaning mass graves, raising memorials, and creating burial mounds. Historians, often informed by the so-called "file fever," (Verdery, 2013) rushed to the archives to document the "unknown" past. Finally, the (post)Soviet elites were quick to utilize trauma for their consolidation of power (Riabchuk, 2008).

Similarly to the North American context, in Ukraine, the Holodomor narrative turned into "contested memory" (Schudson, 1993; Wagner-Pacifici and Schwartz, 1991) that developed in the shadow of the coming to terms with the Nazi as well as Soviet atrocities. As many scholars (Dietsch, 2006; Kasianov, 2022b; Klymenko, 2006) have pointed out, while the state invested significant energy in promoting the Holodomor, the research on the Holocaust remained neglected. As many critics have noted, the vision of the Holodomor as the major atrocity of the twentieth century aimed to stress the status of Ukrainians as ultimate victims of Soviet totalitarianism, silencing at the same time their collaboration in atrocities against Jews and Poles during the Second World War. Moreover, the genocidal intent and the exclusive character of the Famine in Ukraine became a crucial point in the Ukraine-Russia "history wars" (Kappeler, 2014; Kasianov, 2022a). Depending on the political climate, Ukrainian political elites promoted scholars championing a particular narrative and the state-legislated memory laws that fitted their ideological orientations leading to the ambivalent responses on the regional level.[15]

As the next section will demonstrate, the dynamics of the coming to terms with the history and memory of the Famine cannot be reduced to these most recent debates. The focus on the work of diverse transnational "memory activists" (Gutman, 2017) helps then to overcome the predominantly static and essentialist views on the Holodomor that preoccupied scholars on both ends of the political spectrum. It further demonstrates a more dynamic and relational perspective on the ways in which the Famine was incorporated as common diasporic stances, projects, claims, and practices (Brubaker, 2005). The formation of the public memory of the Holodomor has been, then, a transnational and multidirectional process (Assmann, 2014; Erll, 2011; Radstone, 2011; Rothberg, 2014) in which the annual commemorations of the Famine have played a crucial role.

Tracing Famine commemorative genres

In analyzing the anniversaries of the 8 May 1945 commemorations in the Federal Republic of Germany, Jeffrey K. Olick (1999) relied heavily on Bakhtin's (1986) idea of dialogism. According to it, each individual utterance should be understood in the chain of other utterances that precede it. Genre, a common way of expression, possesses its own logic that should be contextualized and historicized. In such dialogical analysis, all utterances are products of both immediate context and earlier usages. Such historical contingency, Olick (1999) stressed, does not imply determinism. Rather, it points out the path-dependency aspect of commemorative forms that unfold in particular dialogs in and through time. Commemorations are ritual actions that are repetitive and continuous in their nature (Connerton, 1989).

Although exhibiting a similar developmental mechanism, Famine commemorations have been more heterogeneous and diffused in their forms than the ones discussed by Olick. It is believed that because the Famine was largely denied by the Soviet state until its collapse, no official commemorations could take place. Accordingly, it was only in 1993 that the Famine was commemorated on the state level in the independent Ukraine. Thus, scholars largely overlooked that since 1933, the Famine has been continuously commemorated outside of the Soviet state on regional (in Galicia and across Central Europe) and global (North America and Australia) scales. Driven mostly by Ukrainian emigres and refugees, these commemorations reflected diverse ways of coming to terms with the repressive Soviet past. They also exhibited a striking similarity in challenging the Soviet authority and expressing the desire to reclaim a shared past.

These heterogeneous and transnational features of Famine commemorations are reflected in the character of sources through which they can be traced. In order to understand the evolving Famine memory genre, I traveled between different sites and engaged in numerous conversations with archivists, historians, and activists. During my archival research conducted in Kyiv, Cherkasy, Warsaw, Vienna, Munich, Cleveland, New York City, and Toronto, I noticed that for many activists, including survivors, record-keeping was not only an intellectual passion but also a deeply personal and emotional process. In the course of their often voluntary work, they developed a strong attachment to various archival materials. These sites then not only are manifestations of community activism but also represent a very intimate struggle to re-imagine the past (Halilovich, 2016). Thanks to the persistent labor of these mnemonic activists, I managed to recover many emigre periodicals, documents of Ukrainian community associations, posters, commemorative pamphlets, brochures, and photographs that form the basis of this study.

The process of the making of the Holodomor, including its performative dimension, is marked by not only these forms of displaced community archives (Caswell, 2010; Lowry, 2017) but also by actual erasure and oblivion (Koziura 2024). The records of the Ukrainian Civil Committee for Saving Ukraine (*Ukrainskyi Hromadskyi Komitet Riatunku Ukrainy*), the organization that in 1933 set the tone for the future commemorations of the Famine, were nearly destroyed during the Second World War. Stolen from Lemberg/Lviv by the retreating German army in the end of the war and abandoned in a remote village in Western Poland, they were hidden by Polish librarians until the early 1990s. Today, this little known and largely understudied records can be accessed at the Warsaw National Library (Biblioteka Narodowa—BN).

Last but not least, this article is informed by my numerous formal and informal conversations with second-generation Famine survivors and diaspora memory activists who have driven Famine commemorations in North America and whom I met during annual commemorations of the Famine. In many cases, Famine survivors themselves retreated from participating in early commemorative ceremonies, keeping their memories within intimate domestic spaces or through *panakhyda*, known as church services in the memory of the deceased. It was only when the more personal and

vivid "communicative memory" (Assmann, 2010) of starvation was turning into collective memory that they started to participate in public commemorations.

These various sources helped me to grasp the continuity of Famine commemorations since 1933, their similar forms across time and space but also their fragmented nature. Although participants in such "memory events" (Etkind et al., 2013 [2012]) left material traces of their activities, they rarely documented the complexity of these events by preserving various speeches and appeals in their full length. That is why I decided to modify Olick's (1999) discursive approach to the memory genre by focusing on a "thick description" of Famine commemorations that discusses the relationship between an event, its mnemonic form, and context (Vinitzky-Seroussi, 2001).

Famine commemorations across time and space

Outside the Soviet Union, the Famine was commemorated almost continuously since 1933. Even in the DP camps, Ukrainian refuges marched the streets of major German towns in commemoration of Famine victims. However, for understanding the complexity of the 1983 Famine commemoration, three other commemorations especially should be taken into account, namely the one of 1933, organized during the developing Famine; that of 1953, marking the first wave of commemorations in the North American context by the DPs; and that of 1973, marking the 40th anniversary of the Famine and organized in response to political repressions in Soviet Union. Although expressing simultaneous continuities and departures in their rhetoric, two Famine memory genres have been a persistent feature in this process, namely the genre of Famine as a national mourning and as an anti-Soviet protest.

All of these commemorations were organized in a different socio-political context and were driven by different groups of transnational "memory activists" (Gutman, 2017). The year 1933 marked the first known commemoration of the Famine. Organized on 29 October 1933, "the Day of Mourning and Protest" (as the commemoration was called) took place simultaneously in various towns across Galicia and the Central European centers of Ukrainian emigres. "The Day of Mourning and Protest" was organized by the Ukrainian Civil Committee for Saving Ukraine (*Ukrainskyi Hromadskyi Komitet Riatunku Ukrainy*), a civic association based in Lviv, the regional capital of Galicia. The organization was formed to provide humanitarian narrative of compassion for the starving and expressed political convictions of a particular national-liberal fraction of Ukrainian elites such as Vasyl Mudryi, Milena Rudnytska, Zynovii Pelenskyi, and Dmytro Levycky.[16] The organization was soon joined by a network of Ukrainian exile communities that worked across Europe and North America. Their public campaigns aimed to create transnational solidarity among Ukrainians while also distributed anti-Soviet rhetoric.

The 20th anniversary of the Famine was commemorated in a very different socio-political context. Organized by national(ist) Ukrainian intellectuals—at that time turned into post-war refugees—it was set in the context of displacement as well as a strong utilization of Famine history in the radical politics of the early Cold War. In the American context, the early 1950s was marked by various congressional commissions devoted to the study of, what they framed as, the Stalinist-era atrocities, led by, among others, Republican Congressmen Charles J. Kersten of Wisconsin and Michael A. Feighan of Ohio. During numerous proceedings—often based on extensive witness testimonies—the memory of the Famine along with the Katyn massacre of Polish officers and the system of Gulag prisons were mobilized in service of anti-Communist propaganda.[17]

The wave of 1953 commemorations was the first one led by West Ukrainian intellectuals and activists who had spent the war in forced labor camps in Germany and Austria organized in North American context. Their memory of the Famine came not only from their direct knowledge of the Famine shaped through the 1933 commemorations in Galicia but also from the utilization and early

nationalization of its history inside the DP camps. In a hostile post-war environment, the camps became national microcosms, a safe and secure space that became central for reworking, shaping, and often radicalizing national identity. The main components of such reimagined national belonging were a strong connection to the national past and a moral attachment to the homeland, which the nation was deprived of.

The slightly less visible 1963 and certainly the 1973 commemorations were driven by the diasporic institutions that the DPs founded or transformed in the early Cold War years. The commemorations of the Famine also brought together DPs with other Ukrainians living abroad for protesting against Soviet officials. Thus, the main focus behind Famine commemorations was bringing light to the waves of repression against Ukrainian intellectuals, writers, and priests in Soviet Ukraine. The memory of the Famine was brought up in order to raise awareness of the situation in the Soviet Union, the repressive politics of Leonid Brezhnev, and his planned visit in the United States. The 1983 commemoration, as I show in the next section, was built upon these earlier commemorations. It marked both a significant generational change within various local Ukrainian communities and the broader consolidations of Ukrainians living abroad into an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983) of Ukrainian diaspora. Its main memory activists became the second-generation DPs, those already born and educated in North America, and from whom their parents' activism became a form of post-memory. They managed to attract significant resources and made the commemorations of the Famine more visible.

Commemoration as a national mourning and anti-Soviet protest

The primary goal of the 1933 commemoration was to unite Ukrainians against "the Communist dictators in Moscow who led to starvation of our brothers living in Dnipro, Kuban, and Don."[18] The Ukrainian Committee, together with the hierarchies of the Greek Catholic Church, set October 29 as "the Day of Mourning and Protest," an official day of mass protests against the developing starvation to be organized in all the district towns of Galicia as well as in the centers of Ukrainian emigre communities. According to local Ukrainian elites, public gatherings organized across Galicia would help the often nationally indifferent peasants imagine being a part of a bigger group, not only Galician Ukrainians but the Ukrainian nation in general. The public mourning rituals would further bring comfort and ease in difficult times. Across all district towns, specially designed posters hung in public spaces, and *panakhyda* was performed simultaneously in all Ukrainian churches to express "compassion for our brothers (*vspivchuvania dla bratam*) in Ukraine" (Figure 1).[19]

The direct outcome of the Ukrainian Committee's work was the unification and consolidation of local elites (priests, teachers, lawyers, doctors, and other community activists) under the banner of public awareness of the Famine. Even more significant, however, was the mobilization of peasants in Galicia around feelings of compassion for the starving.[20] Prominent leaders from Eastern Ukraine would visit Galicia and Bukovina to give lectures, publish articles, and cooperate with Galicians. Nonetheless, the national consciousness of peasants was a different story. In Right-bank Ukraine, developed under Imperial Russia and later under the Soviet Union, most of the peasants self-defined as locals, members of local, village-level communities. In Galicia, the national consciousness of peasants, mostly thanks to the influence of the Greek Catholic Church and the activism of Ukrainian Galician elites, was stronger. The terrible news of the Famine, heartbreaking stories of the refugees, and public mourning organized by priests contributed to the emergence of a national compassion-narrative uniting Ukrainians across borders. The language of Ukrainian brotherhood and the framing of Ukraine as a womb brought Ukrainian leaders across the border together, created a strong feeling of unity, and enforced national(ist) interpretation of Ukrainian

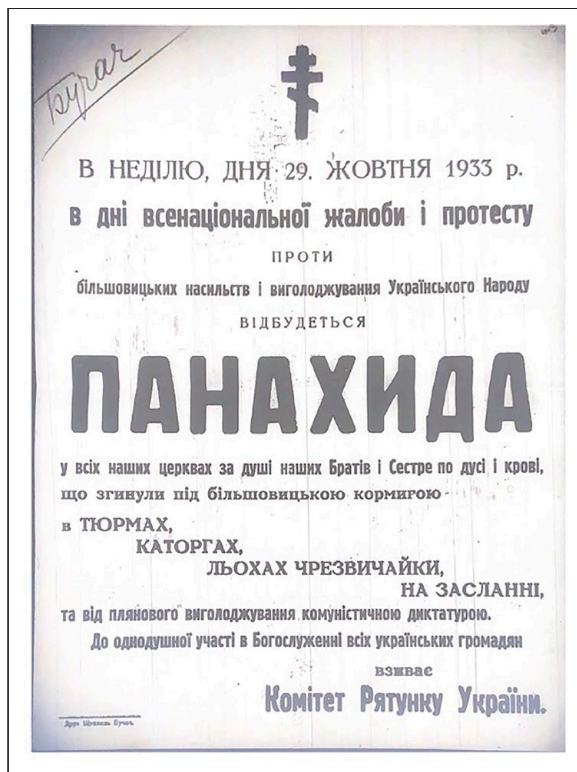

Figure 1. The commemorative poster distributed by the Ukrainian committee across Galicia during the day of mourning and protest in October 1933.
Source: Biblioteka Narodowa w Warszawie [National Library of Poland in Warsaw] BN 68694(1933); the copy from the microfilm by the author.

identity as a victim of foreign oppressions. These feelings of national compassion toward the starving were brought back in 1948, the first known commemoration after the Second World War, organized by the Ukrainian DP activists in Munich.

In 1953, marking the 20th anniversary of the Famine, a wave of protests was organized across North America. From May till October, the Ukrainian-American Diaspora members united in peaceful marches and church services to commemorate "victims of a famine arranged purposely by the Kremlin regime."[21] As some of the booklets published throughout 1953 explain, "The famine of 1932–1933 was needed by the Soviet Government to break the backbone of Ukrainian opposition to complete Russian domination."[22] In *Tortured But Unconquerable Ukraine* (Stewart, 1953), the Famine is discussed as an intentional policy created by Moscow to "break the resistance of the Ukrainian peasants to the collective farm system."[23] Yet another booklet describes the Famine as "organized by the Soviet government to break the resistance of Ukrainian people to forced collectivization."[24] In Toronto, the participants in the rally protested against the "artificial famine engineered by the Soviet authorities,"[25] and in Philadelphia, the rally mourned the victims of "purposely arranged hunger."[26]

In 1953, one of the biggest memorial manifestations took place in New York City on September 20. According to the *Ukrainian Weekly*, over 1500 "Ukrainian Americans Marched in Protest Parade Marking the 20th Anniversary of Soviet Fostered 1932–1933 Famine in Ukraine." The

march, which had the participation of Ukrainians, Ukrainian clergy of all confessions, and representatives of Ukrainian National Association, started on Washington Square and ended in midtown. At the march's end point, the crowd was lectured by Rafael Lemkin, who presented the case of Famine as an example of genocide. "What I want to speak about," Lemkin began, "is perhaps the classic example of Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment in Russification—the destruction of Ukrainian nation . . .. The third phase of the Soviet plan was aimed at the farmers," he went into detail,

> the large mass of independent peasants who are the repository of tradition, folklore and music, the national language and literature, the national spirit, of Ukraine. The weapon used against this body is perhaps the most terrible of all—starvation. Between 1932 and 1933, 5,000,000 Ukrainians starved to death, an inhumanity which the 73rd Congress decried on 28 May 1934.[27]

In 1965, a similar speech condemning the starvation, stressing its devastating impact on Ukrainian culture and its genocidal intent, was delivered by Archbishop Mstyslav, one of the most important leaders of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States, during the consecration of St. Andrew Memorial Church in Bound Brook, New Jersey. The Church was dedicated as a monument to the victims of the Communist regime and to those of the Famine in particular. As Archbishop Mstyslav, an eyewitness to the Famine, described it,

> [It was] a combined monument over the graves of our forefathers—those related to us and dearest to us. This is the expression of our deep respect for the heroes and martyrs of our Ukrainian nation. This is the very humble cross over the graves of millions of victims of the genocidal famine sloughed over the enemy.[28]

Each year, thousands gathered during the first Sunday after Easter to honor the dead in traditional Ukrainian requiem masses.

The 40th anniversary was a more publicized and nationally held commemoration of the Famine. On March 9, the presidium of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the main organization uniting Ukrainian Americans in the country, designated the third week in May as a "Week of Mourning." The UCCA called for organizing local manifestations between May 19 and 20, and a national rally was set in front of the newly erected monument of Taras Shevchenko in Washington, D.C., on May 26. Recalling for "the heinous crime perpetrated by the Bolsheviks against the Ukrainian people," as the Famine was defined, was just one purpose of the commemorations. The other, no less important, was to inform "our fellow citizens that this genocide is continuing here and now under various guises—Russification, persecution, inhuman exploitation, incarceration, exile, confinement, and [in] insane asylum[s]." Over 1500 people gathered in front of the Taras Shevchenko monument. The crowd was first greeted by Dr. Lev E. Dobransky, the key Ukrainian national(ist) politician and anti-communist activist of the 1950s who was responsible for the Captive Nations Commission. In his speech, he recalled the Famine but also expressed anger over the recent waves of arrests in the Soviet Union. He was followed by Senator Paul Yuzyk, who pointed to the Western ignorance in face of the catastrophe in his speech. "Millions of innocent men and women and children died an agonizing death of starvation," he exclaimed, "yet the world [has] learned little or nothing about this human tragedy." Famine survivors were also given a voice. Among them was Vera Kochno, whose "husband was tortured to death in Siberian concentration camps." Mrs. Kochno recalled starvation in her native village as well as cannibalism widespread in the famine-driven Ukraine. The angry crowd of participants responded by chanting, "Free Ukraine!" and "Russians, Go to Hell!"

Together with the developing Famine memory trope of national mourning, that of anti-Soviet protest took shape as well. At the core of the Ukrainian Committee's humanitarian efforts in the 1930s was the conviction "to fight with Bolshevism as a socio-political system, take Ukrainian lands from Russia, and create an independent Ukrainian state."[29] During the 1933 Day of Mourning and Protest, in Galicia and elsewhere in Europe, special resolutions were passed that discussed the cause of the Famine as linked to "the colonial regime of Bolsheviks in Moscow on Ukrainian lands as well as their failed agricultural economy."[30]

In 1933, numerous local commemorative events stressed that it was only through "distributing information [that] a pressure could be exercised on [the] Bolsheviks to accept international relief in Ukraine."[31] That is why many other Central European Ukrainian emigre associations in cities like Berlin, Bucharest, Paris, Prague, and Sofia decided to organize similar commemorative events to protest the Bolshevik rule. For example, the Czechoslovakia Committee of Rescue to Ukraine organized the "Day of Mourning and Protest" during which the Famine was framed as "not a result of natural conditions but that of the Bolshevik economy."[32] A Prague-based Ukrainian Women's Association led by Professor Sofia Rusova warned that "information is the only tool through which the situation in Great Ukraine can get better." The Famine, Rusova stressed in her speech, "is not created by natural causes, lack of harvest, or climate issues. No, it is created artificially by the political situation in which the Ukrainian nation lives under Moscow Bolsheviks."[33]

For Galician and Central European emigre communities, protest against the Bolsheviks became a major discursive mechanism through which they tried to share the awareness of the catastrophe as well as challenge Soviet rule. Starting in 1933, each commemoration of the Famine was organized as a protest against the Soviet regime not only for its role in developing the Famine but also for more contemporaneous repressions against Ukrainians. In 1953, more than 3500 Ukrainians took to the streets of Newark, New Jersey, "in memory of the five million Ukrainians who were brutally starved to death and murdered by the Soviet Government in 1932 and 1933."[34] This demonstration, according to the poster distributed by the Ukrainian Manifestation Committee of the State of New Jersey, was "A Reminder for the West—A Warning for the Future." In Cleveland, a crowd gathered at the main square to commemorate the Famine while at the same time to protest the imprisonment of Ukrainian clergy in the Soviet Union and the terror experienced by Ukrainians in the Soviet Union (Figure 2).

The 40th anniversary of the Famine was organized as a direct response to a wave of repression and mass arrests of intellectuals and anti-Soviet political activists working in Soviet Ukraine including Vyacheslav Chornovil, a Ukrainian journalist and author; Mykhailo Osadchy, a writer and university professor; and Ihor Kalynets, a poet and writer. "Fellow Americans! Defenders of Freedom!" one of the pamphlets warned,

> the USSR has not changed since 1933! At present the Kremlin is ruthlessly oppressing and persecuting the Ukrainians and other captive peoples conquered by Communist Russia! In Ukraine alone over 100 Ukrainian intellectuals were arrested in 1972! Many of them have been sentenced to long prison terms. (See Note 34)

In the commemoration held in Miami Beach, the participants were warned that "the Soviet regime has returned to Stalinism. Mass repressions and arrest are sweeping the USSR. There is unjust incarceration of Ukrainian intellectuals and a systematic cultural and religious genocide."[35]

During the 1973 commemorative rally in Washington, D.C., participants protested against the planned visit of Leonid Brezhnev, the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and his meeting with President Richard Nixon.[36] For many, Brezhnev's visit in the United States marked a new period in Soviet-American relations that aimed to strengthen diplomatic ties.

Figure 2. The 1953 Famine commemoration in Cleveland, OH.
Source: The Ukrainian Museum-Archives (UMA) in Cleveland, OH.

During the meeting, known as the Washington Summit, both presidents signed the Agreement on the Prevention of Nuclear War and agreed to cooperate on numerous economic issues such as agricultural research, transportation, and cultural exchange. For Ukrainian Americans, this meeting was obviously ironic. At the time when a wave of arrests of political and cultural activists swept the Soviet Union, the American government openly chose to strengthen ties with Soviet government instead of condemning such actions. This tension that many experienced boosted Famine commemorations and turned them into political spectacle.

The 1983 Famine commemoration

The 1973 demonstration held in Washington, D.C. set the tone for the next decennial anniversary of the Famine. In 1983, the 50th anniversary of the Famine was an event widely commemorated in North America through requiem masses, rallies, and public marches. In many places, it was led by the group of new memory activists, namely second-generation Ukrainian emigres. As one of the participants in the 1983 Washington rally explained to me, "We were no longer immigrants, we were Americans! We graduated from colleges and universities. We had jobs outside of our ethnic communities." Nonetheless, at the same time, this new generation shared their parents' commitment to their Ukrainian heritage. Being a part of the Ukrainian community was a source of pride and positive self-esteem. This new group of memory activists was equipped with better tools to make Famine commemorations even more public. They also reached out to representatives of other ethnic communities in search of support and solidarity.

The 1983 commemorative agenda was set already on February 15 in Chicago. On that day, Myron Kuropas, a supreme vice president of the Ukrainian National Association, called a meeting of the Illinois Consultation on Ethnicity in Education.[37] The Illinois Consultation was a civic platform that brought together leaders of various ethnic communities around common issues. In early 1983, the Famine was a topic of special interests. During the meeting in Chicago, business and

community leaders, government officials, artists, scholars, educators, lawyers, and other professionals from the Illinoi' Black, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Jewish, Greek, Lithuanian, Mexican Polish, Puerto Rican, and Ukrainian communities sat together and listened to a special lecture about the Famine and a film about the Ukrainian diaspora. "In the early 1930s," Kuropas read,

> Stalin moved to collectivize the farms of Ukraine to finance the industrialization of the Soviet Union[;] Ukrainian farmers resisted because they did not want to give [away] their grain. To break this resistance, Stalin exported much of the food produced in the region, causing 5 to 7 million[38] Ukrainians to starve to death.

However, as Kuropas concluded, "the American press corps in the Soviet Union shared part of the blame for the famine as they supported Stalin's regime." The oppression of Ukrainians was not just a matter of the distant past. On the contrary, the Soviet leaders "continue to culturally Russify Ukrainians [but] . . . Ukrainian Americans abhor being called Russians and embrace their mother tongue and culture so closely."[39]

The launch of this public campaign was a success. In the special issue of the *Ukrainian Weekly* dedicated to the Great Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933, published on March 20, 1983, the editors reprinted letters of support written by many ethnic leaders to the Ukrainian National Association. This support was even more important, as, from the beginning of 1980s, there were attempts to lobby the U.S. Congress to organize hearings and form a U.S. Congress Commission on the Great Famine. That special issue, which also included articles about and by Ukrainian dissidents and political prisoners next to the coverage of the history of the Famine, was sent and distributed to members of Congress, the American government, and news outlets.

The 1980s was an important period of the consolidation of various ethnic communities around the struggle to gain a public recognition of the past atrocities that their communities experienced. This included the formation of the Cambodia Documentation Commission in regards to the Khmer Rouge rule of Cambodia from 1975 to 1979 and the campaigns to seek genocide trial of Khmer Rouge; the political contest surrounding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C., and the struggle to recognize Irish Famine, among others. It was also a moment when the memory of Holocaust reached the status of a universal trauma (Alexander, 2002). On 1 November 1978, President Jimmy Carter established the President's Commission on the Holocaust. Chaired by Elie Wiesel, a prominent author, activist, and Holocaust survivor, its aim was to supervise the creation and maintenance of a national memorial to the victims of the Holocaust that was to be built in Washington, D.C. In 1980, after a vote in the U.S. Congress, the Federal Government dedicated a plot for the Holocaust Museum in the National Mall right next to the Washington Monument. The success of Jewish activists in uniting Holocaust survivors and bringing the federal government to acknowledge their trauma became a source of inspiration for other ethnic communities who had struggled to bring a similar recognition of their own repressive past for decades.[40] The treatment of the Holocaust became a guide for other groups, including Ukrainians, who wanted to break through to the general public.

The editors of the special issue of the *Ukrainian Weekly* pointed to the Holocaust as well:

> The 12 pages of this special issue are devoted exclusively to the Great Famine in Ukraine, unquestionably the least known man-made holocaust of modern times . . . When Allied troops liberated the Nazi death camps at Treblinka and Auschwitz,[41] their senses verified that an unspeakable crime had been committed against humanity . . . in contrast, the Ukrainian tragedy is unknown and unavenged. At the time, the Soviet Union was not a vanquished enemy, but an ally. Ironically, the United States formally recognized the Soviet Union in 1933, the same year that millions were dying of starvation.[42]

Figure 3. The 1983 Washington rally commemorating famine victims.
Source: The Ukrainian Museum-Archives (UMA) in Cleveland, OH.

The Holocaust was also frequently brought up by the participants of the Washington rally, which concluded the Great Famine Memorial Week (Figure 3).

During that week, participants from across the country took part in the requiem services in Ukrainian churches in the capital; visited a special exhibition organized by the Oserodok Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Center in Winnipeg, Canada; and participated in a memorial concert. The Great Famine memorial week concluded with a bill, introduced by New Jersey Representative James J. Florio, to establish a special congressional commission to study the Famine of 1932–1933 “in order to expand the world’s knowledge of the famine” and “provide the American public with a better understanding of the Soviet system.” One of its main results was the biggest collection of oral testimonies from Famine survivors in the United States gathered under the supervision of James Mace, a Harvard-based historian.

In the 1980s, the memory of the Famine provided basis for the political mobilization of the members of the diaspora. The suffering of the starving as well as the western indifference surrounding the Famine became incorporated into a powerful narrative of Ukrainian victimization and further used by the most radical parts of the diaspora. As rightly pointed out by Vic Satzewich (2002: 166), this incorporation of victimization into a self-identification marker of the emerging community of the Ukrainian diaspora coincided with the birth of another victimization narrative connected with the allegations that Western Ukrainians were predominantly anti-Semites and war criminals. The accusation against John Demjanjuk, a Ukrainian-born, naturalized American citizen and a retired Cleveland auto worker, of being “Ivan the Terrible,” a sadistic prison guard from the Treblinka concentration camp, turned into the most publicized cases that divided Ukrainians and the broader public. Many members of the Ukrainian diaspora took the case of Demjanjuk as the allegation against the entire national community (Himka, 2006: 23). The trial confirmed the believes of many on the broader left that among the DPs were mostly alleged fascists, nationalists, and anti-Semites. In response, the memory of the Famine became incorporated into the radical right ideology. For example, in Edmonton, a prominent cultural center for Ukrainian-Canadians,

the same Ukrainian nationalist elites were responsible for constructing three monuments: a 1973 monument to the nationalist leader Roman Shukevych, a 1976 memorial to Ukrainian Waffen-SS, and a 1983 memorial to the Famine (Rudling, 2011). Moreover, some of the most radical nationalist leaders would further claim that Jews, as members of the NKVD (Narodny Komissariat Vnutrennih Del – The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), were responsible for engineering the Famine (Satzewich, 2002: 186).

As a consequence, the multidirectionality between the Holocaust and the Holodomor turned into a mnemonic competition (Moore, 2012). Perhaps the most vivid example of this trend was the politics behind the Famine death toll. Due to the destruction of local death registrars and the falsification of the 1937 Soviet census, it is difficult to establish the exact Famine death toll. Since 1933, different booklets, articles, and public statements provided varying numbers of Famine deaths, from 6 to 10 and even 15 million. The shreds of evidence behind these numbers were highly speculative and anecdotal. Also, the various demographic retrojections are rare estimates based on the assumed population growth, fertility rate, outward migration, and census results for 1926 and 1939.[43] Yet, in the 1980s, the Famine death toll became a political game. For the most radical parts of the diaspora, advocating the greater Famine mortality rate confirmed its status as the genocide of Ukrainians. The more the numbers were inflated, the more pressing the acknowledgment of the Famine became. The bigger the death toll, the more important it was than the Holocaust.

Conclusion

The political intensity of ideological debates and the success of the public campaign around the Famine led many scholars to believe that the narrative of the Holodomor was a mere product of the 1980s. However, this article aimed to demonstrate the dynamics of the formation of the public memory of the Holodomor were more complex and transnational. Similarly, the main claim of many during the 1983 commemorations that the Famine had been "forgotten" and "unknown" has been an oversimplification. On the contrary, since the 1930s, the knowledge of the Famine resurfaced through multiple channels and was mobilized in the service of often contrasting political ends.

The Famine was clearly not forgotten by the survivors, many of whom had moved to North America as post-Second World War refugees. They struggled with painful memories their entire lives. The Famine was not "unknown" for Ukrainian civic and mnemonic activists who, beginning as early as 1933, protested against the Famine and tried to create transnational humanitarian narrative of compassion for the starving. It was not "ignored" by the international public as the events in Soviet Ukraine were closely monitored by politicians and diplomats. Finally, the Famine was not entirely "unknown" by academics who, despite the Soviet denial, managed to research the nature of Soviet modernization and collectivization of agriculture in particular. Thus, the 1983 Washington rally was a culmination of a decades-long struggle to inform people about and raise awareness of the Famine outside of the Soviet Union.

This article has aimed to demonstrate that the making of the Holodomor and the processes that led to the establishment of a public memory of the Famine have been transnational and multidirectional. A careful study of the developing Famine commemorative genres has provided an especially fruitful empirical window into understanding how the movement of concepts, forms, and mnemonic practices shaped the meaning of the Holodomor across time and space. Transnational "mnemonic activists" (Gutman, 2017), those who did not have a direct contact or memory of starvation, played a key role in this process. The importance of the Holodomor and the contestation surrounding it in North American and Ukrainian context cannot be fully grasped without this transnational dimension.

The analysis of the Famine commemorative genres of national mourning and anti-Soviet protest that evolved across time and space hoped to offer a more nuanced perspective on the place of the Famine in cultural and political life of Ukrainians living outside Soviet Ukraine since the 1930s. Especially those commemorations of 1933, 1953, and 1973 set the foundations for the form of the 1983 event. The slow path-dependency of commemorative forms further demonstrate how the Soviet denial of the Famine kept informing the subsequent attempts to reclaim authority over Famine history and memory and further contributed to the utilization of Famine knowledge by the most radical, national(ist), and anti-Soviet groups. Since 1933, the Famine commemorative genres of national mourning and anti-Soviet protests were competing with the hegemonic Soviet narrative and aimed to break through the Soviets' control over the symbolic means of production about this event.

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ORCID iD

Karolina Koziura https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0142-7722

Notes

1. Commemorative photos from the 1983 rally are stored at the Ukrainian Museum-Archives in Cleveland, OH. Some of them were printed in the special issue of *Ukrainian Weekly* (9 October 1983) devoted to the event.
2. Throughout the twentieth century, the disaster experienced by peasants in Ukraine has been called by many names. Thus, in the following article, I use the term "the Famine" to refer to the production of knowledge in relation to starvation that developed in Soviet Ukraine. I further acknowledge that the Famine in Ukraine was just one among many collectivization famines that developed across the Soviet countryside. My preferences are related to the fact that frequently used terms, such as the "Ukrainian Famine," overshadow the fact that the starvation affected many minorities living in Soviet Ukraine as well. Moreover, the term Holodomor should be further contextualized within a particular socio-political and ideological movement of the 1980s.
3. In the North American context, major disputes over the Holodomor have emerged after the publication of major historical works on Soviet collectivization famines including the public criticism that has surrounded Robert Conquest's (1986) book from, among others, Craig Whitney (1986). Whitney questioned the uses of emigre sources by Conquest and downplayed the national factor. The monograph by R.W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft (2004) was criticized by, among others, Michael Ellman (2005) and Hiroaki Kuromiya (2008) over the nationality issues. The most recent wave of heated debates surrounded the publication of Anne Applebaum's (2017) book. Applebaum's national interpretation of the Famine was criticized by Sheila Fitzpatrick (2017), Tauger (2018), and Tarik Cyryl Amar (2019). For

a more detailed summary of recent Western debates surrounding the Famine, see the works of Edele (2020) and Marples et al. (2014).

4. On the extensive criticism of the politicization of the Holodomor, also in the context of a relative silence surrounding the Holocaust in post-1991 Ukraine, see especially the works of Nicolas Dreyer (2018), Grigoriy Kasianov (2022a, 2022b), Olga Klymenko (2006), and Tatiana Zhurzhenko (2011).
5. One of the most interesting and multilayered discussions of the problem of the framing of the Famine as a genocide can be access on the pages of the special issue of the journal *Contemporary European History* (Cameron, 2018b; Etkind, 2018; Getty, 2018; Naimark, 2018 [2010]; Suny, 2018; Wheatcroft, 2018). For a more comprehensive discussion on the contested framing of the Holodomor as genocide, see Rebekah Moore's (2012) analysis.
6. Next to the Holodomor, the Great Irish Famine of 1845–1852, an Gorta Mor, also passed through numerous reframing that pointed out its genocidal character. However, the growing research on its history has been intertwined with the emergence and politicization of memory. Despite several attempts to recognize the famine as the Irish genocide, most historians and politicians oppose this view and mainly call it a nationalist standpoint. For more details on the contested politics of famine's memory in Ireland and among the Irish diaspora, see the work of Mark-FitzGerald (2015).
7. For a socio-historical analysis of denial of mass violence, see especially the work of Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995), Fatma Müge Göçek (2016 [2014]), and Giorgia Donà (2019).
8. For more information on the severe repression of memory of the Famine in Ukraine, see, in particular, the work of Applebaum (2017) and Kulchytsky (2018).
9. In the North American context, Famine' survivors from Ukraine who became refugees after the Second World War were mobilized to give testimonies about their experience of starvation in various—and often contrasting—political projects. In the United States, these were state-financed The Harvard Refugee Interview Project (1950s) and the Oral History of the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine (1980s). In Canada, the projects were mostly diaspora-driven, including "Share The Story" (2000s) organized by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. Also, testimonies of the Famine became a part of memoir-writing competitions organized by Oseredok, a Ukrainian diaspora organization in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Also, the second volume of the famous Cold War-era's Black Deeds of Kremlin focused on Famine testimonies. Most of the memoirs about the Famine, such as the one by Miron Dolot (1985), were published in the 1980s. For more details on the discussion of the early Cold War eyewitness testimonies, see the work by Olga Andriewsky (2021).
10. Mark Wyman (2014) estimates that the early German success on the Russian front brought a flood of 3.5 million Soviet prisoners to the Third Reich.
11. Due to official registration strategies that silenced the ethnic background of refugees from Eastern Europe, it is hard to estimate the exact number and geographical origin of Ukrainian refugees residing in the DP camps. Most scholars, however, agree that over 80% of the total number of Ukrainian refugees who refused returning to the Soviet Union came from Galicia. For more details on the Ukrainian refugees in the DP camps, see the works of Himka (2006), Salomon (1991), and Satzewich (2002).
12. To know more on the political and ideological composition of the Second World War refugees, see the work of Ann Lencyk Pawliczko (1994) and Vic Satzewich (2002).
13. As scholarship on collective memory points out, it is not self-evident for collective memory to develop after extreme violence. In fact, the first and most natural impulse of victims of violence is to remain silent about their past unless they find a frame through which they can shape the meaning of their experiences (Kuijpers and Pollmann, 2013; Wajnryb, 2001).
14. These diverse groups also differed in their respective symbolic and epistemic strength, with Famine survivors being the weakest and most silenced group to the nationalist fractions who were frequently the most active and vocal parts of the diaspora. To know more on the tensions between different fractions of the Ukrainian diaspora and the politics of victimization, see especially the works of Himka (2006), Marples (2007) and Satzewich (2002).
15. For example, Viktor Yushchenko sponsored the translation and publication of materials that favored the interpretation of the Famine as genocide and enforced the criminalization of Holodomor denial, while Viktor Yanukovych promoted the interpretations of Russian scholars and those from Western academia

who opposed the genocide argument. To know more on a changing political labeling of the Famine on a regional level, see the work of Oxana Shevel (2011) and Tetiana Zhurzhenko (2011) and for more on legislating historical memory in Ukraine, see the work of Georgiy Kasianov (2022b) and Tetiana Zhurzhenko (2022).

16. BN 68694(1933), 1. The founding document and the public appeal to help the starving was also reprinted in Lviv-based newspaper *Dilo* on 14 August 1933.
17. A result of this political activity was numerous publications, often financed by the Congressional Commissions and (in)directly supported by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Yet, also as the Soviet secuity agency the KGB (Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnostki – The Committee for State Security) archives reveal, the work of Ukrainian elites and various communities was also closely surveilled by the Soviet agents.
18. BN, f. 68694, p. 1.
19. BN, f. 68694, p. 425.
20. The issue of extent to which peasants on both sides of the state divide felt themselves to be members of the same Ukrainian nationality has been a subject of significant debate among Ukrainian scholars. It is clear that, at least since the 1860s, when modern Ukrainian nationalism was born, the community organizers in Galicia and in Dnipro, Ukraine, saw themselves as members of one national group.
21. *Ukrainian Weekly*, 16 May 1953.
22. S. Sosnowy (1953: 225).
23. John F. Stewart (1953: 6) (The Scottish League for European Freedom was an organization financed by the CIA.)
24. *Soviet Russian Genocide in Ukraine! 40th Anniversary of the Man-Made Famine (1932–1933)*, 1973.
25. *Novi Dni*, June 1953 issue.
26. *Ukrainian Weekly*, 16 May 1953.
27. Raphael Lemkin (1953). To know more on the Lemkin's approach to the Famine that also shifted through time, see Alexander Etkind's (2018) analysis. On a socio-historical discussion of the emergence of the genocide context, see the excellent analysis by Philip Sands (2021 [2017]).
28. Bound Brook, NJ. In the East Coast, Bound Brook became the cultural and spiritual center of Ukrainian Americans, and Archbishop Mstyslav was its main leader.
29. BN, f. 68694, p. 20.
30. BN, f. 68694, p. 21.
31. BN, f. 68694, p. 1101.
32. *Tryzub*, no 41, Nov. 12, 1933, p. 20.
33. *Tryzub*, no 2–3, Jan. 6, 1933, p. 36.
34. Commemorative poster, the Ukrainian Museum Archive in Cleveland, Ohio.
35. Commemorative pamphlet, the Ukrainian Museum Archive in Cleveland, Ohio.
36. The Brezhnev visit took place on 18–25 June 1973.
37. Myron Kuropas, an OUN(m)-affiliated Ukrainian activist and a promoter of the Famine genocide narrative, did not have a direct contact or memory of the starvation. He was born already in Chicago as a son of a Galician military veteran. Yet, his case demonstrates ho, the knowledge of the Famine has been gradually utilized by national(ist) fractions of the diaspora while Famine survivors themselves remained largely silent. The author thanks the anonymous reviewer for this feedback.
38. Although I address the issues of politics behind the Famine death toll in the later parts of the article, it should be noted that according to the most recent demographic estimates, the Famine cost the lives of almost 4 million people (Wolowyna et al., 2015).
39. Kuropas' speech was reprinted in the special issue of Ukrainian Weekly (20 March 1983) together with the letters of support written by many ethnic leaders who participated in the meeting.
40. It goes outside the scope of this paper to discuss the various responses of scholars to the mnemonic traveling of the Holocaust concept and the uniqueness of Jewish experience. For a more comprehensive discussion, also in regards to the Holodomor, see the analysis by Rebekah Moore (2012).
41. This brief historical note silenced the fact that both death camps were liberated by the Soviet Red Army.
42. *Ukrainian Weekly*, 20 March 1983.
43. For example, the team of Jaques Vallin et al. (2008) estimated the Famine death toll at 4.6 million indirect losses and 2.9 direct losses; Robert Conquest (1986) estimated the number of deaths to be 5 million;

Timothy Snyder (2012: 53) provides a figure of approximately 3.3 million deaths by starvation and hunger-related diseases; and Anne Applebaum (2017) follows the estimates of Oleh Wolowyna and his team that stated 4.5 million total death toll, including 3.9 direct losses.

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Author biography

Karolina Koziura is a cultural and historical-comparative sociologist. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology and Historical Studies from The New School for Social Research. Her research explores the intersections of culture, politics, environmental history, and knowledge production with a special focus on Central and Eastern Europe. Currently she is a Max Weber Postdoctoral Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence.