

Academic Material Relating to Holodomor Famine

Email between FCO Officials – dated 01 Dec 2006

Thank you for showing me this.

You might want to pass the following on - only thoughts from the top of my head.

I think that this is a very well researched, sound note which draws together all the key strands of the debate.

I recall that on my brief visit in February 2004 seeing photographs of the famine and events commemorating it on noticeboards on Kiev's (or Kyiv's?) main thoroughfare.

I tend to agree with the late Professor Alec Nove's view (quoted in paragraph 7 of the note) that it was not an attempt to simply annihilate all Ukrainians but there was an attempt to eliminate elements of the Ukrainian population, in line with similar policies being pursued across the Soviet Union. The 'Kulaks', the clergy and the bourgeoisie certainly suffered. The combination of forced collectivisation and fast-paced industrialisation involving rigid agricultural deliveries was always going to have a disproportionate impact on Ukraine as one of the breadbaskets of the Soviet Union.

There is no doubt the Soviet leadership could have done more to tackle the suffering - they could hardly have done less. However, I don't think that Stalin sought to exterminate all the inhabitants of the Ukrainian SSR (30-40 million in the early 1930s?) - it would have been too big a job and would have scuppered his economic objectives. Stalin wanted and needed to exploit Ukraine's rich mineral resources. [On the current domestic Ukrainian policy front is there an east and west Ukraine angle here - did the famine have a lesser impact in the more industrial and more Russian east of Ukraine?]

I am drawn to my own research on eastern Germany in 1945. Stalin did not set out to systemically annihilate the remaining Germans in Königsberg (Kaliningrad) but it is reckoned that between 1945 and 1947 the German population dropped from 100,000 to 25,000 through starvation, neglect, epidemics, ill-treatment and deportations. Human life was cheap in the Soviet Union and Party cadres accepted this fact - the Civil War (the brutality of 'War Communism' and the famine immediately thereafter) and the Great Patriotic War were examples of this. Huge losses of life were a by-product of radical Soviet policy initiatives.

Historians
IMG