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CONTEMPORARY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE HOLODOMOR IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN MEMORY POLITICS: THE CONTRIBUTION OF POLISH RESEARCHERS

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Abstract

Purpose of the study. The aim of the study is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the contribution of Polish historiography, diplomatic documentation, and state memory policy to the research and international recognition of the Holodomor of 1932–1933. Particular emphasis is placed on the significance of Polish consular sources from Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Odesa, which constitute an important corpus of primary evidence on the course of the famine. The study also examines contemporary memorial practices and the political decisions of the Republic of Poland regarding the official recognition of the Holodomor as genocide, thereby tracing the evolution of approaches to interpreting this tragedy within Polish scholarly and socio-political discourse.

Research methodology. The study is based on a combination of historical, historiographical, source-critical, comparative methods, and elements of discourse analysis. This approach made it possible to examine the events of the Holodomor within their chronological and socio-political context, assess the development of Polish research, and compare interpretations in Ukrainian and Polish historiography.

Scientific novelty. The novelty of the research lies in a comprehensive study of the role of Polish historiography and diplomatic sources in the investigation of the Holodomor and in shaping European memory policy. The paper emphasizes the significance of reports by Polish consuls and intelligence materials as independent historical sources, systematizes Polish academic publications, and analyzes their contribution to the internationalization of the topic.

Conclusions. The Holodomor of 1932–1933 stands as one of the largest humanitarian catastrophes of the twentieth century. Polish consular reports and intelligence materials documented the systemic nature of Stalin's policy of famine and became an important evidentiary foundation for its study. Polish historiography has significantly broadened the international discourse, while the official recognition of the Holodomor as genocide by the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland, together with the development of memorial practices, demonstrates the importance of historical memory in contemporary geopolitics. In the context of Russian aggression, Ukrainian-Polish cooperation in the field of memory politics acquires particular relevance and strategic significance.

Keywords: Holodomor of 1932–1933, Polish historiography, European memory policy, genocide, Polish diplomatic sources, Stalinist repressions, recognition of genocide, historical memory, Ukrainian-Polish cooperation

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**СУЧАСНА ІСТОРІОГРАФІЯ ГОЛОДОМОРУ В КОНТЕКСТІ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ
ПАМ'ЯТІ: ВНЕСОК ПОЛЬСЬКИХ ДОСЛІДНИКІВ**

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Анотація

Мета роботи. Метою дослідження є комплексний аналіз внеску польської історіографії, дипломатичної документації та державної політики пам'яті у вивчення та міжнародне визнання Голодомору 1932–1933 років. Особливий акцент зроблено на значущості польських консульських джерел із Харкова, Києва та Одеси, які становлять важливий корпус первинних свідчень про перебіг голоду. Окремо розглядаються сучасні меморіальні практики та політичні рішення Республіки Польща щодо офіційного визнання Голодомору геноцидом, що дозволяє простежити еволюцію підходів до інтерпретації цієї трагедії в польському науковому та суспільно-політичному дискурсі.

Методологія дослідження. Робота ґрунтується на поєднанні історичного, історіографічного, джерелознавчого (критико-джерельного), порівняльного методів та елементів дискурс-аналізу. Це дозволило проаналізувати події Голодомору в хронологічному та соціально-політичному контексті, оцінити розвиток польських досліджень і зіставити інтерпретації в українській та польській історіографії.

Наукова новизна полягає в комплексному дослідженні ролі польської історіографії та дипломатичних джерел у вивченні Голодомору та формуванні європейської політики пам'яті. У роботі підкреслюється значення звітів польських консулів і розвідки як самостійних історичних джерел, систематизовано польські наукові публікації та проаналізовано їхній внесок в інтернаціоналізацію теми.

Висновки. Голодомор 1932–1933 років є однією з наймасштабніших гуманітарних катастроф ХХ ст. Польські консульські звіти та матеріали розвідки фіксували системний характер сталінської політики голоду й сформували важливу доказову базу для її дослідження. Польська історіографія істотно розширила міжнародний дискурс, а офіційне визнання Голодомору геноцидом Сеймом і Сенатом Республіки Польща разом із розвитком меморіальних практик засвідчують ключову роль історичної пам'яті в сучасній геополітиці. У контексті російської агресії українсько-польська співпраця у сфері політики пам'яті набуває особливої актуальності та стратегічного значення.

Ключові слова: Голодомор 1932–1933 років, польська історіографія, європейська політика пам'яті, геноцид, польські дипломатичні джерела, сталінські репресії, визнання геноциду, історична пам'ять, українсько-польська співпраця

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** магістрантка першого року навчання Навчально-наукового інституту історії, права та міжнародних відносин Сумського державного педагогічного університету імені А.С.Макаренка, Суми, Україна. Е-mail: alinkalevhenkoo4@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5776-7516>

Formulation of the problem of the research. The Holodomor of 1932–1933 remains one of the most tragic and controversial events in the history of twentieth-century Europe. For a long time the Soviet regime deliberately concealed the causes, scale and consequences of the famine, presenting it as a natural disaster or the result of economic difficulties. As a result, the tragedy of millions of Ukrainians remained largely absent from the European historical narrative and collective memory for decades. Only after the collapse of the Soviet Union did the possibility of open scholarly research and international discussion of the Holodomor emerge¹.

At the same time, the integration of the history of the Holodomor into the pan-European politics of memory remains a complex and multifaceted process. In this context, the contribution of foreign historiographies, particularly Polish scholarship, is of particular importance. Due to geographical proximity and diplomatic presence in Soviet Ukraine during the interwar period, Poland possessed unique documentary evidence concerning the famine. Reports from Polish consulates and intelligence services recorded the catastrophic situation in Ukrainian villages and became an important source for later historical research².

Analysis of recent research and publications. The Holodomor of 1932–1933 has been widely studied in Ukrainian and international historiography. Scholars have examined the political, economic and social causes of the famine, its demographic consequences and its place within the broader context of Stalinist repression. A significant number of archival sources related to these events are preserved not only in Ukraine and other post-Soviet countries but also in the archives of several European states, including Poland.

An important contribution to the historiography of the Holodomor has been made by Polish researchers who have analysed both Soviet policies and the reactions of contemporaries to the famine. Among the most notable works is the monograph by Robert Kuśnierz *Ukraine in the Years of Collectivisation and the Great Famine (1929–1933)*, which offers a comprehensive analysis of collectivisation and its consequences for Ukrainian society. Polish historiography also includes numerous studies by scholars such as C. Rajca, W. Materski, R. Torzecki, P. Eberhardt, J. Bruski and O. Olszewska.

In addition, the publication of collections of Polish archival documents in 2008 significantly expanded the source base for Holodomor research. These documents include reports from Polish diplomatic missions and intelligence services, which recorded information about the famine and the socio-economic situation in Soviet Ukraine. Memoirs of contemporaries, photographic materials and studies devoted to the reaction of Ukrainians in the Second Polish Republic to the famine also constitute an important part of the historiographical corpus. Nevertheless, despite these contributions, the role of Polish historiography in shaping international awareness of the Holodomor still requires further scholarly analysis.

¹ Applebaum A. Holodomor. *Britannica*. 2026. URL: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Holodomor>

² Holodomor. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933. Warsaw–Kiev: Toruńskie Zakłady Graficzne ZAPOLEX Sp. z o.o., 2009. 649 p. URL: <http://history.org.ua/LiberUA/978-83-7629-077-5/978-83-7629-077-5.pdf>

The purpose of research. The purpose of this study is to analyse the contribution of Polish historiography and diplomatic sources to the research of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 and to determine their role in the formation of European memory politics regarding this tragedy. The research also aims to examine key Polish scholarly works on the Holodomor, analyse documentary evidence preserved in Polish archives, and investigate the role of Poland in commemorating the victims of the famine and recognising the Holodomor as genocide.

Main research results. Contemporary Polish historiography has actively used these sources to reconstruct the events of the famine and to challenge Soviet narratives that attributed the catastrophe to natural causes. The monograph by Robert Kuśnierz occupies a central place among Polish studies of the Holodomor, offering a comprehensive examination of collectivisation policies and the mechanisms that led to mass starvation. Other Polish scholars have contributed to the development of this research field by analysing memoirs, photographic materials and archival documents.

The study also highlights the role of Ukrainian society in the Second Polish Republic in drawing attention to the famine in Soviet Ukraine. Public initiatives, memorial services and humanitarian campaigns organised in Galicia sought to support the starving population and raise awareness of the tragedy. At the same time, the official authorities of the Second Polish Republic maintained a cautious position due to diplomatic considerations³.

In the contemporary period, Poland has played an important role in the international recognition and commemoration of the Holodomor. The Polish Senate recognised the Holodomor as genocide in 2006, and the Sejm adopted resolutions condemning the policies of the Soviet regime and expressing solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Memorial practices in Poland, including monuments in Warsaw and Lublin and annual commemorative events, contribute to preserving historical memory and promoting international awareness of the tragedy⁴.

The process of integrating the history of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 into the pan-European narrative of memory is one of the most complex and dramatic phenomena in contemporary humanities. For decades, this tragedy, which claimed the lives of millions of Ukrainians, remained an “unknown genocide” for most Western Europeans, overshadowed by the horrors of the Holocaust and distorted by Soviet propaganda. However, the Russian Federation’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine in 2022 caused a tectonic shift in European consciousness, highlighting the historical parallels between Stalinist totalitarianism and modern Rashism⁵.

³ Wysocki R. *The attitude of the authorities of the Second Polish Republic to the famine in Soviet Ukraine in 1932–1933*. *Res Historica*. No. 31. 2011. pp. 125–146.

⁴ Worldwide Recognition of the Holodomor as Genocide. *National Museum of the Holodomor–Genocide*. URL: <https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/recognition-of-holodomor-as-genocide-in-the-world/>

⁵ Holodomor: Parliament recognises Soviet starvation of Ukrainians as genocide | News | European Parliament. *News European Parliament*. URL: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20221209IPR64427/holodomor-parliament-recognises-soviet-starvation-of-ukrainians-as-genocide>

On August 7, 1932, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR adopted a resolution "On the protection of property of state enterprises, collective farms, and cooperatives and the strengthening of public (socialist) property", which became known in popular memory as the "law of five ears of grain" and became the legal basis for the Holodomor. The cruelty of this document lay in its practical application: the concept of "theft of socialist property" even included gathering a handful of grain or a few ears of corn left in the field after the harvest, turning a centuries-old tradition that allowed the poorest segments of the population to survive on crop residues into a crime punishable by death. Researchers have recorded thousands of cases where children who searched for grain in mouse holes or women who tried to bring home a little grain in their pockets were convicted. In this way, the law effectively placed state property above human life, turning peasants into criminals for trying to save themselves from starvation⁶.

The horrific reality of Soviet totalitarianism unfolded against a backdrop of cynical political manoeuvring: even during his exile, Lev Trotsky, in a telegram to Kemal Pasha, called the USSR a "country of barbarians" and predicted that soon they would be chasing "dead rats" there, and by 1932 this prophecy had turned into a real hell. At enterprises such as the porcelain factory in Tokarivka, workers with eyes swollen from hunger were forced to sign up for state loans under threat of repression, receiving in return inedible bread mixed with sand and chaff, which led to mass illness and even the cessation of physiological cycles in women – a symptom that doctors cynically explained as necessary for "industrialisation". Hunger pushed people to the brink: there were horrific cases of human flesh being sold as jelly in markets, and the moral decay of the system reached such a level that even the dead could not find peace – in Katerynoslav, a criminal scheme was uncovered in which a cemetery guard fed corpses to pigs, and the clothes of the deceased, including the well-known announcer Koryak, were handed over to second-hand shops. Government officials were also involved in this case and were tried in secret closed trials⁷.

A separate tragic chapter of the Holodomor was the fate of national minorities, in particular German colonists, whose large community in the south of the former empire suffered devastating repression. The Soviet authorities branded them as "enemies of the state" and "kulaks", deporting them en masse to Siberia and concentration camps to certain death. According to estimates at the time, more than 100,000 German colonists died of starvation in 1933 alone. Documentary evidence from the Kyiv region for February 1933 records the complete depletion of food supplies: the peasants had no potatoes or beets left, and even cats and dogs disappeared from the streets, which people were forced to eat out of desperation. The horrific everyday life of that time is illustrated by photographs from

⁶ Professor Volodymyr Hrehenko: "The Holodomor is a huge tragedy of the Ukrainian people". *Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs*. URL: <https://umivd.edu.ua/en/news/8253>

⁷ [Testimonies of Ivan Oleksiyovych Marchenko, Anikiy Kurochkin, Ivan Orlenko, and Pamfil Sesya about the Holodomor and repressions in Ukraine in 1932–1933. Ukrainian, English.]. 27 June 1954. Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine. 1219. case 2087. sheet 42.

Kharkiv, where passers-by indifferently walked past the bodies of those who had died of starvation right on the sidewalks, and mass graves were growing on the outskirts. Even in the most fertile black earth regions of Europe, hopes for salvation were fading; drought and food confiscation led to a situation where, by the end of May 1933, people found themselves in a state of complete helplessness, not knowing where to find even a piece of bread⁸.

The Holodomor was part of a broader campaign against Ukrainian identity. In parallel with the famine, the Soviet authorities arrested and repressed intellectuals, writers, artists and religious leaders who were considered a threat to Soviet ideology. Stalin feared losing control over Ukraine, which had a history of fighting for independence, so he combined physical extermination with cultural suppression. One of the instruments of terror was the “black boards” – lists of villages that did not meet grain quotas. Such villages were banned from trade, supplies of goods and even travel. Communist brigades searched houses, taking away everything edible, including domestic animals, seeds and even dishes. This led to people eating grass, tree bark, or even the leather from their shoes.

Polish historiography and state memory policy played an invaluable role in this complex process of restoring historical truth. As a direct neighbour of Soviet Ukraine in the interwar period, Poland had unique surveillance tools at its disposal – an extensive network of diplomatic missions and effective intelligence services. Documents created by Polish consuls in Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Odesa, as well as reports from the Second Department of the General Staff of the Polish Army (“Dwójka”), today constitute a golden fund of source material for research on the Great Famine⁹.

The issues of collectivization in Ukrainian villages and the Great Famine of 1932–1933 have been thoroughly examined in contemporary historiography. Documentary evidence of these tragic events is preserved in the archives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, other post-Soviet countries, as well as in the archives of a number of states, including Poland. This article analyzes the first publications on the Holodomor of 1932–1933 that appeared before 2005, as well as monographic studies of the Holodomor beginning with the 2005 publication of Robert Kuśnierz’s (Robert Kuśnierz) “Ukraine in the Years of Collectivization and the Great Famine (1929–1933)” (“Ukraina w latach kolektywizacji i Wielkiego Głodu (1929–1933)”; collections of Polish archival documents published in 2008; photographic materials illustrating life in Ukrainian villages during the period under study; scientific works devoted to the attitude of Ukrainians in the Second Polish Republic towards the famine in Soviet Ukraine; as well as memoirs of contemporaries of the Holodomor, which reflect its consequences for Ukrainian villages. A special place within the outlined subject matter is occupied by the aforementioned monograph by Prof. R. Kushnezh, which

⁸ [“Don’t let them starve to death,” published by the German Imperial Committee “Brothers in Need” with photo illustrations about the life of Russian-German colonists in the past and present and about the Holodomor of 1932–1933 in Ukraine. German language. Brochure.] Central State Historical Archive of Ukraine. 1219. description 4. case 2120. sheet 9.

⁹ Holodomor. The Great Famine in Ukraine 1932–1933. Warsaw-Kiev : Toruńskie Zakłady Graficzne ZAPOLEX Sp. z o.o., 2009. 649 p. URL: <http://history.org.ua/LiberUA/978-83-7629-077-5/978-83-7629-077-5.pdf>

comprehensively and multifacetedly explores the stated topic¹⁰.

Silvestr Fertac's archaeographic article focuses on analyzing the memoir work of Ukrainian emigrant Myron Dolot (S. Stariv) "Execution by Starvation," while also providing a brief overview of literature published in Poland on the Great Famine in the USSR in the 1930s. The researcher emphasizes that a full scientific understanding of the history of the Holodomor began only in the 1980s, after an information breakthrough connected with the 50th anniversary of the Ukrainian tragedy. Among the leading Polish works on this topic, S. Fertacz highlights articles from the 1990s by C. Rajca, W. Materski, R. Torzecki, P. Eberhardt, as well as monographic studies from the 2000s by R. Kushnezh, J. Bruski, and O. Olszewska. At the same time, in his opinion, Polish historiography on the famine remains limited in scope, and the range of published sources on this topic is "very modest"¹¹.

Poland acted not only as an ally in this process, but also as a "witness for the prosecution". Unlike Western countries, which often relied on journalists' reports (some of whom, such as Walter Duranty, deliberately lied), Poland had its own independent sources of information. This allowed Polish researchers to deconstruct the Soviet myth of "crop failure" and prove the deliberate nature of the famine.

First of all, it should be noted that the Great Famine of 1932-1933, later known as the Holodomor, began to be actively discussed in the statements and works of opposition figures in Soviet Ukraine only from the mid-1980s onward. From that time, alongside the term "Great Famine," the word "Holodomor" became increasingly common, although the Ukrainian anti-communist opposition initially hesitated to define this tragedy as a crime against humanity. The term "Holodomor" was used both to describe the mass famine that primarily affected the rural population and, in a broader sense, to denote a deliberate assault on the Ukrainian people, including repression of culture, religion, and political elites. Analyzing the etymology of the term, Roman Serbyn argues for its applicability to the concept of genocide, emphasizing that it derives from the words "holod" (hunger) and "moryty" (to exhaust or kill by starvation). During the presidency of Leonid Kuchma, the term was extended to other episodes of famine in Soviet Ukraine, including those of the 1920s and the post-war famine of 1946-1948, while in the early twenty-first century the Great Famine of 1932-1933 was often linked to the Great Terror of 1937 as part of a prolonged period of repression, without always stressing its artificial and deliberately planned genocidal nature¹².

The issue of quantitative estimates of human losses from the famine attracts particular attention. According to S. Zabelo, Soviet publicist K. Radek mentioned a figure of

¹⁰ Pazder P. Contemporary Polish historiography of the Holodomor of 1932-1933. *Ukrainian Historical Journal*. 2024. No. 2 (575). pp. 170-182.

¹¹ Hoodz V. The Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine in the studies of Polish scholars. *Scholarly Works of the Faculty of History, Zaporizhzhia National University*. 2019. Vol. 1, no. 52. pp. 197-204.

¹² Hudz V. The relationship between the terms "artificial famine" and "holodomor" in semantic and chronological terms. *Ukrainian peasant*. 2024. No. 33. P. 87-93.

about 2 million deaths in a private conversation. At the same time, the former Polish diplomat himself suggested that the actual number of victims could have been between 2 and 3 million, taking into account deaths caused by collectivisation measures. It is important to note that representatives of diplomatic circles and intelligence services provided different data. In particular, J. Karsho-Sedlewski and V. Garlyand spoke of 5 million deaths in their reports. The latter justified this estimate with information obtained during a trip to Ukraine in August 1933, in particular, a conversation with the head of the telegraph service in Kryvyi Rih. This gives reason to believe that the figure of 5 million circulated among the population of the republic as a probable indicator of the scale of the tragedy¹³.

The Consulate General of the Second Polish Republic in Kharkiv and the consular office in Kyiv, whose activities were coordinated by the Polish Embassy in Moscow, played a decisive role in shaping perceptions of events in the USSR. In 1932–1933 the Consulate General in Kharkiv was headed by two experienced diplomats: Counsellor Adam Steblowski, who had been in the Ukrainian SSR since 1928, and, from March 1932, Jan Karsho-Sedlewski, who was well acquainted with the socio-economic situation in Ukraine. Consular work in Kyiv was headed by Henryk Janowski from September 1930, but from the second half of 1932 his functions were effectively transferred to Piotr Kunicki, who authored a significant number of reports on the Holodomor in Ukraine. In their reports, Polish consular officials in Kharkiv and Kyiv analysed in detail the processes of “dekulakisation” and forced collectivisation, focusing on the scale of rural repression and the extremely difficult situation of the kulaks as a social group displaced by the Soviet authorities. At the same time, the reports recorded various forms of protest among the peasantry in response to the introduction of a new agrarian policy by the Soviet authorities¹⁴.

In modern Ukrainian historical and historical-legal science, the Holodomor is seen as part of a multi-level preventive repressive action against the Ukrainian nation, whose revival was a threat to the integrity and existence of the Soviet empire. The artificially created famine was used as a means of delivering a decisive blow to the Ukrainian peasantry with the aim of physically exterminating a significant part of it and weakening the nation’s liberation potential. This was due to the fact that the peasantry formed the basis of the Ukrainian ethnic group: according to the 1926 census, over 81% of Ukraine’s population lived in rural areas, of which almost 88% were Ukrainians. This demographic structure remained unchanged in the early 1930s, when the rural population of Ukraine constituted the majority, and in some regions the proportion of Ukrainians exceeded 90%. At the same time, it is widely argued in academic discourse that the Holodomor was not exclusively national in character, as representatives of other ethnic groups also fell victim

¹³ Kushnezh R. An unknown Polish document about the Great Famine in Ukraine: from the memoirs of Stanislaw Zabella, head of the Soviet section of the Eastern Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Second Polish Republic. *Ukrainian Historical Journal*. 2020. No. 6. pp. 36–44.

¹⁴ Vovchuk L., Kornovenko S. The Holodomor of 1932–1933 through the Eyes of Foreign Diplomats. *Eminak*. 2019. No. 4 (28). pp. 71–82.

to the famine. In this context, the position of S. Kulchytsky is indicative, who believed that Stalin's terror by famine in Ukraine and the Kuban was genocide against Ukrainian citizens, not Ukrainians as an ethnic group¹⁵.

In contrast, the Polish press did not place much emphasis on the phenomenon of famine in the USSR and its scale. After signing the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact on 25 July 1932, officials of the Second Polish Republic behaved very cautiously in their relations with their eastern neighbour. Only the Ukrainian population of Galicia reacted vividly to the tragedy of their compatriots beyond the Zbruch River. Public initiatives arose aimed at drawing attention to the catastrophe, condemning the Soviet regime, and collecting material aid for the starving. Church services and memorials for the victims of the famine in Greek Catholic churches received wide publicity. The Public Committee for the Rescue of Ukraine in Lviv declared Sunday, 29 October 1933, a day of national mourning and protest against the famine in Greater Ukraine. The official authorities of the Second Polish Republic reacted cautiously to this national revival among Ukrainians, sometimes resorting to banning public events. The Polish government did not give its consent to the transfer of financial aid collected by Ukrainian organisations to the starving. A desperate act of revenge against the "country of the Soviets" for its mistreatment of the Ukrainian population was the murder of Soviet Consul O. Maylov by 20-year-old OUN member M. Lemik on 22 October 1933 in Lviv¹⁶.

The process of commemorating the victims of the 1932-1933 Holodomor in Ukraine has gone far beyond national mourning, becoming an important factor in international relations, human rights activism and global memory politics. In the 21st century, the recognition of the Holodomor as an act of genocide has become a kind of marker of the geopolitical orientation of states and an indicator of their attitude towards the totalitarian legacy of the Soviet Union. While in the 20th century the memory of the Great Famine was preserved mainly through the efforts of the Ukrainian Diaspora in North America, the current stage is characterised by the active involvement of parliaments, governments and civil society in Europe, Latin America and Australia.

In 2006, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law "On the Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine", which officially classified the Holodomor as genocide of the Ukrainian people. At the parliamentary level, this definition was supported by a number of states, including Georgia, Ecuador, Estonia, Colombia, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Poland and Hungary. In addition, the Holodomor was recognised as genocide at the parliamentary and regional levels in Australia, Canada and Portugal. At the municipal level, relevant decisions were taken in Argentina, Brazil, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and the United States of America. Along with this, a number of countries officially commemorate the victims of the Holodomor: resolutions dedicated to perpetuating the memory of those

¹⁵ Redko A. Historical and legal assessment of the 1932-1933 famine in Ukraine. 'Artificial famines in Ukraine in the 20th century': Materials from the International Conference, Kyiv, 16 May 2018. pp. 259-266.

¹⁶ Stronsky G.Y. The Polish population of the Ukrainian SSR during the Holodomor of 1932-1933. *Ukrainian Historical Journal*. 2017. No. 4. pp. 95-128.

who perished have been adopted by the legislative bodies of Spain, France, Chile, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Andorra, Argentina, and Mexico¹⁷.

Official recognition of the Holodomor in Poland began in the mid-2000s and took place gradually, in the context of the development of Polish-Ukrainian relations and the growing historical responsibility of the Polish political elite. A key milestone was the Resolution of the Senate of the Republic of Poland of 16 March 2006, which unequivocally recognised the Holodomor as an act of genocide. That same year, on 6 December 2006, the Polish Sejm adopted a resolution combining the commemoration of the victims with the condemnation of the policies of the totalitarian Soviet regime and an expression of solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Further confirmation of the stable political consensus came in the form of a 2015 Sejm resolution, supported by all parliamentary factions, which once again emphasised the tragedy of the millions of victims of the Holodomor. Together, these decisions cemented Poland's position on the interpretation of the Holodomor as a crime of genocide and demonstrated its consistent support for Ukrainian historical memory¹⁸.

Lublin, a city with deep traditions of multiculturalism, unveiled its monument to the victims of the Great Famine in 2014. The monument is located on the roundabout named after Metropolitan Peter Mohyla, symbolising the spiritual connection between nations. The architectural design of the monument is concise but emotionally powerful, becoming the venue for the annual "Light a Candle of Remembrance" events. It is noteworthy that Lublin actively uses its status as the "Gate of Remembrance" (Brama Grodzka) for educational projects, linking the memory of the Holodomor with the memory of the Holocaust and the extermination of the city's Jewish population¹⁹.

The central place of commemoration in the Polish capital is the monument at the Orthodox cemetery in the Wola district (Cmentarz Wolski). Opened in 2009, this monument is the work of sculptor Gennady Yershov and architect Bogdan Bobersky. The location was chosen for a reason: the Wolski Cemetery is the resting place of many soldiers of the Ukrainian People's Republic Army, creating a historical continuity between the struggle for independence and the tragedy of the Holodomor. Every year in November, ecumenical memorial services are held here with the participation of Ukrainian diplomats, representatives of the Polish authorities and students from Ukrainian schools. In 2021, for example, the ceremony included the laying of wheat ears and the lighting of lamps, which has become an established tradition²⁰.

¹⁷ The Holodomor of 1932-1933 in Ukraine – genocide of the Ukrainian people. *Embassy of Ukraine in the Republic of Tajikistan*. 2018, <https://tajikistan.mfa.gov.ua/news/9316-golodomor-1932-1933-godov-v-ukraine-genocid-ukrainskogo-naroda>

¹⁸ The Polish Sejm honoured the victims of the Holodomor of 1932-1933 with a minute of silence. *News | Official website of the UIPN*. 2022, <https://old.uinp.gov.ua/news/sejm-polshchi-vshanuvav-zagiblikh-vid-golodomoru-1932-1933-khvilinoyu-movchannya>

¹⁹ Uczczenie pamięci ofiar Wielkiego Głodu (Holodomoru) na Ukrainie. *Lublin. Miasto inspiracji*. <https://lublin.eu/lublin/wspolpraca-miedzynarodowa/biezace-wydarzenia-miedzynarodowe/uczczenie-pamieci-ofiar-wielkiego-glodu-holodomoru-na-ukrainie.1432.1198.1.html>

²⁰ Anti-Soviet partisans' memorial in Wrocław won the CODAawards 2024 competition. *National Museum of the Holodomor-Genocide*. <https://holodomormuseum.org.ua/en/news/anti-soviet-partisans-memorial-in-wroclaw-won-the-codaawards-2024-competition/>

The current stage of Holodomor commemoration is marked by a sharp contrast between international recognition of the tragedy and the Russian Federation's policy of destroying historical memory. In the occupied territories of Ukraine, monuments to the victims of the Holodomor are being systematically dismantled, particularly in Luhansk, Mariupol and Kherson, which indicates that this memory is perceived as a threat to the imperial narrative. At the same time, the international community is responding with increased memorial, educational and informational initiatives, including global campaigns such as Light a Candle, which bring together millions of people in digital format to preserve the memory of the victims of the Holodomor²¹.

Conclusions. Thus, the research conducted by Polish historians, diplomats, and consular officials was of great importance for the early and subsequent understanding of the Holodomor of 1932–1933. Already in the interwar period, Polish representatives in the Ukrainian SSR recorded the consequences of forced collectivisation, mass starvation and repression against the Ukrainian peasantry, emphasising their systematic and deliberate nature. In contemporary Polish historiography, the Holodomor is seen as part of the Stalinist regime's repressive policy aimed at weakening Ukrainian society and destroying its social and national foundations. This interpretation generally correlates with the approaches of Ukrainian historical and historical-legal science, which qualifies the Holodomor as a crime of genocide committed using famine as an instrument of mass violence.

An important result of this scientific and social reflection was the official recognition of the Holodomor as genocide by the Republic of Poland, enshrined in the decisions of the Senate and Sejm in 2006 and confirmed by a parliamentary resolution in 2015. The Polish model of commemoration combines academic discourse, political responsibility and symbolic solidarity with Ukraine, which is particularly important in the context of the current confrontation over historical memory. Against the backdrop of international recognition and the development of global memorial initiatives, the demonstrative destruction of monuments to the victims of the Holodomor in the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine shows that the memory of this tragedy remains a key element in the struggle for historical truth and countering imperial narratives.

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²¹ Ukrainian World Congress. Holodomor-90: Light a candle. Join the global UWC campaign! *Ukrainian World Congress: International Organization.* <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/holodomor-90-light-a-candle-join-the-global-uwc-campaign/>

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