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Article abstract

This essay examines the history of the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC) in Toronto, looking at how the tragedy of the Holodomor led Ukrainian-Canadians to come together in speaking out against the Soviet regime and equally, reaffirming Ukrainian nationality on the world stage. It also examines how the UCRDC evolved from mainly studying the Holodomor to exploring other topics of interest to Ukrainians worldwide. Through filmmaking, archival development, and publications, the UCRDC has worked in ensuring that the voices of Ukraine and Ukrainians be heard.



A Short History of the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre on the Fortieth Anniversary of Its Founding¹

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Abstract: This essay examines the history of the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC) in Toronto, looking at how the tragedy of the Holodomor led Ukrainian-Canadians to come together in speaking out against the Soviet regime and equally, reaffirming Ukrainian nationality on the world stage. It also examines how the UCRDC evolved from mainly studying the Holodomor to exploring other topics of interest to Ukrainians worldwide. Through filmmaking, archival development, and publications, the UCRDC has worked in ensuring that the voices of Ukraine and Ukrainians be heard.

Keywords: Holodomor, diaspora, archives, filmmaking, publications.

In 1932–33, millions of Ukrainians perished in the man-made famine, subsequently known as the Holodomor, that was orchestrated by Joseph Stalin. Despite the staggering losses in human life and the deliberate destruction of the Ukrainian intellectual and political elites, the Soviet government maintained formal denial of the Holodomor. Because it was forbidden to speak or write about the Holodomor in the Soviet Union including Soviet Ukraine, Ukrainians in the diaspora would play a critical role in educating the global community of the horrific events that took place in their homeland in 1932–33. This essay examines the history of the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC) in Toronto, looking at how the UCRDC evolved from initially focusing on the Holodomor to exploring other topics of interest to Ukrainians worldwide through filmmaking, archival development, and publications.

¹ The author wishes to express his heartfelt gratitude to a number of individuals for their support, guidance, and insights throughout the writing process. Interviews with Jurij Darewych, Iroida Wynnyckyj, Bohdan Onyschuk, and Yuriy Luhovy were of inestimable value. I also wish to thank Daria Darewych, Dagmara Turchyn-Duvirak, Bozhena Gembatiuk, Nadia Luciw, and Orest Chornomaz for all their encouragement and wise counsel.

A number of key events sparked renewed interest in the Holodomor in Toronto during the early 1980s. The fiftieth anniversary of the Holodomor was fast approaching and the Ukrainian-Canadian community wanted to commemorate the event in a special but also impactful way. The community, through leading representatives of its major Ukrainian-Canadian organizations like the Ukrainian Orthodox community (USRL-CYC Canada), St. Vladimir Institute,² the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) Toronto Branch, the UCC Ontario Provincial Council, the Ukrainian Canadian Professional Business Association (UCPBA), and the Ukrainian Catholic Brotherhood of Canada (UCBC), established a committee to take charge of this project, and in April 1982, the Ukrainian Famine Research Committee (UFRC) was established. Representing different organizations, the founding members of the UFRC were Wasyl Janischewskyj, Bohdan Onyschuk, Peter Smylski, Nicholas Kushpeta, Ostap Wynnyckyj, Jurij Darewych, and William Kereliuk (Darewych, 30 Sept. 2020).³

At the same time, it came to the attention of the UFRC that Marco Carynnyk, a Toronto-based author, researcher, and translator, was working on an English-language publication about the Holodomor (Darewych, *Informuvannia anhlomovnoho svitu pro Holodomor 2*). This was an interesting lead considering that in the early 1980s, publications on the Holodomor in English were still scarce. In his research, Carynnyk came across the writings of Malcom Muggeridge—a retired British correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* who while on assignment in Moscow, secretly visited Soviet Ukraine in 1932 amidst reports of a famine. Muggeridge concluded that not only was there a famine, but that it had been forced and was politically motivated. Carynnyk corresponded with Muggeridge and obtained his consent for a filmed interview. The Committee became very interested in Carynnyk's project and retained him as a researcher.

The UFRC then made the decision to move forward with a one-hour documentary film on the Holodomor. This prompted new ideas but also challenges. A high-quality and well-researched production would require a considerable budget in addition to the hiring of a professional film crew. Ostap Wynnyckyj and Nicholas Kushpeta took on the task of fundraising for the UFRC from private donors as well as organizations (Onyschuk, 30 Oct. 2020).⁴ Slavko Nowytski of Minneapolis was hired as director of the film while Yuriy Luhovy of Montreal was named editor. Both Nowytski and

² In December 2022 at the annual general meeting, board members decided that St. Vladimir Institute would be renamed to St. Volodymyr Institute.

³ The following individuals have served as presidents of the UFRC (and after 1989, the UCRDC): Wasyl Janischewskyj (1982–2003), Wsevolod Isajiw (2003–12), Jurij Darewych (2012–17), Nicholas Derzko (2017–20), Iryna Revutsky (2020–present).

⁴ In the end, over \$225,000 were raised for the production of the film.

Luhovy would be producers (Luhovy 1). Then came the long and painstaking process of collecting information. Because the Soviet Union still existed, documents from Soviet archives as well as other countries of the Eastern Bloc were off limits, as were the testimonies of survivors who lived on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain. Even in the West, there were Holodomor survivors who remained traumatized, too afraid to speak about 1932–33. They feared for their own safety, but also the safety of their loved ones still in the Soviet Union (Luhovy 3).

Carynyk's work in British archives proved indispensable, as was his interview with Muggeridge filmed in May 1982. Other interviewees included Archbishop Mstyslav of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Bohdan Bociurkiw, professor of political science at Carleton University, historian James Mace of the United States Congressional Commission on the Ukraine Famine, Robert Sullivan, professor of political science at Toledo University, witnesses General Petro Hryhorenko, actor Joseph Hirniak, former German Ambassador to the United Kingdom (UK), Johann von Herwarth, and the former consul of the Weimar Republic in Kyiv—Andor Hencke (Smyski 25; Isajiw 2). Also very powerful was the interview with Lev Kopelev—a former communist activist who having joined one of the grain confiscation brigades in Soviet Ukraine in December 1932, was directly involved in carrying out the Holodomor (Applebaum 137; Darewych, *Informuvannia anhlomovnoho svitu pro Holodomor* 8).⁵ Kopelev is unique in that he was the only interviewee who was personally implicated in planning and executing the Holodomor and who was courageous enough to speak about his experiences on camera.⁶

By the summer of 1984, work on the documentary known as *Harvest of Despair* had ended, its premiere taking place at the University of Toronto on 21 October 1984 (Darewych, *Informuvannia anhlomovnoho svitu pro Holodomor* 4). The question now was how to publicize the film. Those involved with its production knew that entertainment companies, movie theatres, and television networks would only grant marginal attention if any at all to a documentary on an unknown historical event which could potentially further strain relations between the West and the Soviet Union. Such a lackluster response was anticipated even before production had ended, accounting for the fifty-five-minute length of the film, which would make room for televised commercials (Darewych, *Informuvannia anhlomovnoho svitu pro Holodomor* 5). The film had its critics. In academia, scholars such as John Getty attacked the film as did radical Soviet apologists

⁵ Kopelev was born in Kyiv in 1912 to an educated Jewish family, studied in Kharkiv, spoke Ukrainian and Russian but identified himself as “Soviet.”

⁶ After becoming disenchanted with communism, which led to his expulsion from the Soviet Union, Kopelev settled in West Germany. He died in Cologne in 1997.

like Douglas Tottle⁷ and Jeff Coplon of the *Village Voice* who tried to discredit the film through the use of false assertions about its producers (Isajiw 2). The Soviet embassy in Ottawa also tried to disrupt the project, denying at first that the famine ever existed only to admit afterward that there was a famine but that it had occurred as a result of natural causes and not political motives (Isajiw 2).

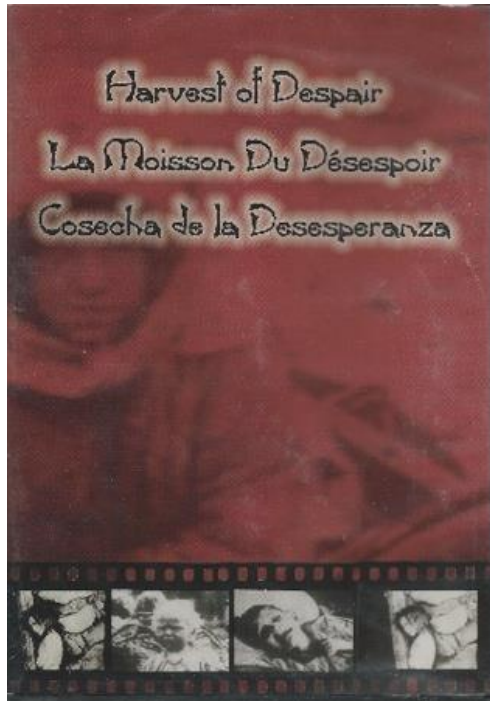
Shortly after the premiere, a dozen showings at major film festivals were organized in large part by Zorianna Hrycenko-Luhova, wife of Yuriy Luhovy. *Harvest of Despair* went on to win numerous awards at prestigious film festivals, beginning with the Strasbourg International Film Festival in France in April 1985. Other distinctions included the first prize at the Film Festival of Educational Films in Oakland, California, in June 1985; the Gold Medal and the Grand Silver Bowl Trophy and overall First Prize for all categories at the International Film and T.V. Festival of New York in November 1985; and the Chris Statuette Award for highest award in the social documentary category at the Columbus International Film Festival in November 1985 (“Uspishne lamannia lediv”).

Ukrainians in the diaspora demanded that the film be broadcasted in their respective countries. They were compensated for their efforts on a number of occasions, such as on 5 September 1985 when the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) broadcasted the film for the first time, followed by a second broadcasting in May 1986. The French language network *Radio-Canada* showed the French-language version of the film, *La Moisson du Désespoir*⁸, on 15 March 1986 (Smylski 25). In the United States, a two-year agreement was signed with the Educational Council of the State of New York for distribution of the film in their schools and institutions. After initial reluctance to show *Harvest of Despair*, the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) television network finally broadcasted the film on its program “Firing Line” in September 1986. By the fall of 1986, *Harvest of Despair* had also made its way to the UK where it was broadcasted by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and in Australia with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) (Darewych, *Informuvannia anhlomovnoho svitu pro Holodomor 6–7*).

⁷ In 1987, Tottle published *Fraud, Famine and Fascism: The Ukrainian Genocide Myth from Hitler to Harvard* (Progress Books). Describing the famine as a hoax invented and disseminated by Ukrainian fascists, he argued that any accounts of it constituted, by definition, Nazi propaganda. As such, he argued that members of the Ukrainian diaspora were Nazis and that all publications pertaining to the famine were anti-Soviet, Nazi propaganda.

⁸ Aside from the French and English language versions of the film, there was also a Ukrainian version (*Жнива розначу*) and a Spanish version (*La Cosecha de la Desesperanza*).

Figure 1. *Harvest of Despair*—DVD (The Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, “Harvest of Despair”).



The film had a long-lasting impact which could be felt in a number of different ways. Articles on the Holodomor appeared in major Canadian newspapers, generating much needed attention to the matter and a better understanding of the Ukrainian-Canadian community as a whole. For example, in Luhovy's province of Quebec in 2010, copies of *Harvest of Despair* were donated by the UCC Montreal branch to every member of Quebec's National Assembly. This led to the Quebec government unanimously passing Bill 390, recognizing the Holodomor as a genocide against the Ukrainian people and establishing the fourth Saturday of November as a day of remembrance for the victims of this mass atrocity (Ukrainian Canadian Congress, "Quebec Passes Bill"). Quebec was by no means alone in this respect. The provincial legislatures of Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario adopted similar statutes. Internationally, since 2006, sixteen UN countries and the Vatican have recognized the Holodomor as genocide on a state level (Shandra).

Immediately after *Harvest of Despair*, more books appeared on the Holodomor. Written in collaboration with the Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, Robert Conquest's 1986 book *Harvest of Sorrow* is considered to be the "first historical study of what must count as one of the greatest man-made horrors of the twentieth century" (Applebaum 402). The book was reviewed in all major British and American newspapers and in many academic journals—extraordinary, at the time, for a book about Ukraine. In the words of Frank Sysyn, "no work dealing with Ukraine had ever received such wide notice" (qtd. in Applebaum 402). As for *Harvest of Despair*, it was mentioned more recently for its enduring legacy in Holodomor studies by Anne Applebaum in her 2017 award-winning book *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine*.

In the process of producing the film, an extensive collection of film footage, audio tapes, and textual documents was compiled. When work on the film had ended, it became apparent that only a small fraction of the accumulated research had been used. Although not necessarily suitable for the film, the research proved to be of inestimable value. For example, over 300 pages of documents pertaining to the famine were discovered in Italian archives, many of them letters and reports of Italian consul Sergio Gradenigo⁹ who while on assignment in Kharkiv in 1932 witnessed firsthand the atrocities of the Holodomor (Cholij, Letter, Dec. 1988; Onyschuk, 30 Oct. 2020).¹⁰ Although work on *Harvest of Despair* had ended in 1984, interviews with Holodomor survivors did not. In total, 164 oral accounts were collected between 1981 and 1990 (Zakydalsky, "Toronto Conference").

In 1986, the UFRC was renamed as the Ukrainian Famine Research Centre, and in 1989, it became the Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre (UCRDC) (W. Isajiw and S. Isajiw 1).¹¹ To explain the 1989 name change, one must remember that the UFRC was a committee consisting of representatives from several different organizations. With the conclusion of *Harvest of Despair* and the realization that there was still much work left to be done, a need arose to create a permanent organization with a

⁹ Gradenigo was born in Trieste, Italy in 1886 and was a soldier of the Austro-Hungarian army during World War I as well as a soldier in the Italian army during the Second Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935–37. As a member of the Italian Fascist Party, he wrote letters about the famine from Soviet Ukraine, which were read by Mussolini himself. At the end of his diplomatic service in 1948, he emigrated to Buenos Aires, Argentina, where he died in 1966.

¹⁰ In 1982, the "fifty-year rule" for Italian government documents from 1932 had expired. In other words, Italian documents on the Holodomor were released publicly for the first time in 1982.

¹¹ Already in 1986, a Letters Patent of Canada established the UFRC as a charitable organization.

proper legal structure. There would now be a board of directors consisting of an executive director, an office administrator, and a treasurer. A special emphasis would be placed on research and documentation of not only the Holodomor, but other research areas of interest to the Ukrainian diaspora, encouraging the creation of an archive (Onyschuk, 5 Aug. 2022).

As a researcher with the newly founded Multicultural History Society of Ontario (MHSO), Iroida Wynnyckyj played a leading role in establishing a UCRDC archive at St. Vladimir Institute in Toronto. Wynnyckyj is particularly known for her work in oral history, interviewing and annotating much of the oral history collection at the UCRDC (Ukrainian Canadian Congress, “Iroida”). In terms of her work on the Holodomor, Wynnyckyj developed questionnaires on personal factors, institutions, names of individuals, the timing of the famine, and statistics, greatly facilitating interviews with survivors (Zakydalsky, “Toronto Conference”). This highly effective approach enabled the UCRDC to work with other organizations such as the United States Congressional Commission on the Holodomor. From 28–30 September 1990, the UCRDC was instrumental in organizing the first conference on the Holodomor in the West, which took place at the University of Toronto with scholars participating from not only Canada, the United States, the UK, and Italy, but also Ukraine, which was at that time still under Soviet rule (Janischewsky).

The UCRDC forged partnerships with Ukraine even before the breakup of the Soviet Union. In September 1990, viewers in Kyiv saw for the first time the Ukrainian-language version of *Harvest of Despair* at the *Zemlia* film festival. At around this time, the UCRDC took particular interest in the work of Volodymyr Maniak—a Ukrainian poet, journalist, and researcher who even during Soviet times openly spoke about the Holodomor and the transgressions of the Soviet system vis-à-vis the Ukrainian people. Along with his wife Lidiia Kovalenko, Maniak collected eyewitness accounts about the famine and other Soviet atrocities in Ukraine (Wynnyckyj). By the early 1990s, the couple had gathered approximately 6,000 testimonies (usually in the form of letters sent by regular mail), which eventually gave way to a ground-breaking work, *33-i: Holod: Narodna Knyha-Memorial (The Famine of 33: A People's Memorial Book)*, published in 1991 by Radians'kyi pys'mennyk. With the help of Wynnyckyj, copies of roughly 150 letters made their way to the UCRDC.¹²

The independence of Ukraine brought an even wider array of opportunities for the UCRDC in archival research and oral history. With help

¹² The letters were photocopied and amounted to a total of 530 sheets. On 15 June 1992, Maniak died in a motor vehicle accident near the town of Hlevakha south of Kyiv. Kovalenko died in Kyiv a mere six months later, on 25 January 1993. Both deaths were deemed suspicious.

from the Partners in Progress program, a Canadian federal government program, the UCRDC initiated a series of workshops, mentoring projects, and publications on oral history at the newly established Institute for Historical Research at the Ivan Franko University in Lviv.¹³ This paved the way for a tradition in oral history in Ukraine.¹⁴ Ukrainian independence also allowed for greater co-operation between Ukrainian scholars and the UCRDC. Ukrainian scholars have consistently visited the UCRDC for the purpose of sharing their research with the Ukrainian Canadian community by way of conferences and lectures in addition to conducting research for important scholarly works.

As previously stated, by the latter part of the 1980s, the UCRDC, while continuing to work on the Holodomor, began researching other aspects of Ukrainian history and culture. On the topic of oral history, one such project involved interviewing Ukrainian Canadians in the Canadian Armed Forces, a project which resulted in a total of thirty one-hour interviews being recorded. It is worth noting that this project was in part financed by the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre, an endowed institution within MacEwan University in Edmonton.¹⁵ In August 1989, Peter Potichnyj¹⁶ of McMaster University and film producer Bohdan Batruch travelled to western Europe where they conducted interviews with Ukrainian veterans of World War II. In the Netherlands, they interviewed officers of the Dutch Army who in 1940 were taken prisoner by the Germans and escaped from captivity in January 1944 with the help of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) (PP; The Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, "World War II").

Since the late 1980s, the UCRDC has sponsored and co-sponsored many different publications. Some examples include George Luckyj's *Keeping a Record: Literary Purges in Soviet Ukraine (1930s): A Bio-Bibliography* (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, University of Alberta, in association with Ukrainian Famine Research Centre in Toronto, 1987), Roman Serbyn's

¹³ The Institute of Historical Research was established in Lviv in October 1992.

¹⁴ As an example, the UCRDC assisted in publishing a coursebook on oral history in Ukrainian—*Zhyva istoriia: Metodolohichniy posibnyk (Live History: Methodological Handbook*, co-authored by Iroida Wynnyckyj, Viktor Susak, and Borys Gudziak, 1995).

¹⁵ Founded in 1988, the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre reached an agreement with the UCRDC in February 1989 regarding the financing of a series of interviews with Ukrainian Canadians of the Canadian Armed Forces. Half of the \$40,000 budget for the project was covered by the Ukrainian Resource and Development Centre, the other half—by the UCRDC.

¹⁶ Along with Nadia Skop, Roman Serbyn, and Frank Sysyn, Peter Potichnyj has served as a longtime academic advisor to the UCRDC.

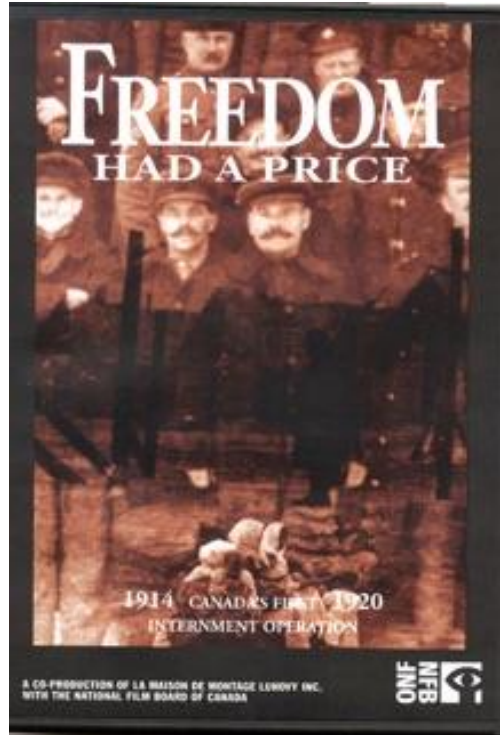
Holod 1921–1923 i ukrains'ka presa v Kanadi (*The Famine of 1921–1923 and the Ukrainian Press in Canada*, Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre in Toronto, 1992), and Wsevolod Isajiw's *Famine-Genocide in Ukraine 1932–1933: Western Archives, Testimonies and New Research* (Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre in Toronto, 2003), the latter winning the 2004 Best Book Award with the American Association for Ukrainian Studies (Isajiw 8; W. Isajiw and S. Isajiw 3). Ukrainian-language publications include *Ukrains'kyi Holokost 1932–1933* (*The Ukrainian Holocaust of 1932–1933*), published by the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Publishing House as the fifth volume of the series *Ukrains'kyi Holokost 1932–33*, edited by Iurii Mytsyk of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy as well as *Nezvychaini doli zvychainykh zhinok: usna istoriia XX stolittia* (*The Extraordinary Lives of Ordinary Women: Oral History of the Twentieth Century*, Vydavnytstvo L'viv's'koi politekhniki, 2013),¹⁷ containing twenty-one interviews with Ukrainian women from the diaspora who lived through the horrors of both world wars, the Holodomor, deportation, and imprisonment in Soviet and Nazi concentration camps.

Harvest of Despair sparked the UCRDC's interest in filmmaking. Directed and produced by Yuriy Luhovy, *Freedom Had a Price* tells the little-known story of those 80,000 Ukrainians who between 1914 and 1920 were treated as enemy aliens by the Canadian government. As enemy aliens, they were forced to report on a regular basis to the police and carry government issued identification papers at all times. Worse still, some 5,000 Ukrainians were imprisoned in twenty-five internment camps across the country in extremely difficult conditions (The Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, "Freedom Had a Price"). This forgotten chapter of Canadian history is brought to life by way of archival footage, old photographs, the moving testimonies of survivors, and the commentaries of such renowned Canadian historians as Desmond Morton and Donald Avery. With its contribution of a \$50,000 grant, the UCRDC provided critical funding for the fifty-five-minute documentary film, which premiered in Toronto on 27 May 1994 and was later broadcasted on the CBC (Isajiw 3; "Documentary Captures War Internments" 7).¹⁸

¹⁷ Unlike the Ukrainian version of the book, which contains twenty-one interviews with Ukrainian women from the diaspora, *The Extraordinary Lives of Ukrainian-Canadian Women: Oral Histories of the Twentieth Century* is a collection of life stories of ten Ukrainian Canadian women. Edited by Iroida Wynnyckyj, the book was published in 2022 by the Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press. Although the book is among the more recent achievements of the UCRDC, it should be seen as the culmination of an important project initiated by the UCRDC in 2001.

¹⁸ Although falling outside the scope of this present study, since its inception, the UCRDC has produced numerous historical exhibits. For example, *Freedom Had a Price*

Fig. 2. *Freedom Had a Price*—DVD (The Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, “Freedom Had a Price”).



As early as December 1986, the UCRDC announced its intention to produce a documentary film about Ukraine and Ukrainians during World War II. Such a decision ensued from the general realization that few in the West knew about Ukraine or were easily misled by dishonest reporting. Unlike *Harvest of Despair*, which cost approximately \$200,000, the estimated budget for the new film would be closer to \$600,000, later revised to \$850,000 (“Kampaniia pochalasia”; Cholij, “Fundraising Campaign”). In 1988, a sub-committee consisting of about a dozen volunteers was formed with the goal of collecting audio and video interviews with World War II

constituted an integral part of the UCRDC’s travelling exhibit *The Barbed Wire Solution*, which explored the social, economic, and political circumstances that led to Canada’s first use of the War Measures Act.

survivors¹⁹ as well as gathering funds from Canadian government institutions (Zakydalsky, "Proiekt dokumental'nykh fil'miv"). The subcommittee also zeroed in on a series of themes to be explored in the film: the aftermath of World War I in eastern Europe and the relations between Ukrainians, Poles and Russians; Soviet and Nazi occupations between 1939 and 1941; Ukrainian underground resistance movements; the capitulation of Nazi Germany and postwar Nazi resistance; Ukrainians in displaced persons camps; and the Cold War (Zakydalsky, "Proiekt dokumental'nykh fil'miv").

Throughout the 1990s, work on the film continued. Although initially the project was to be a six-part series, by 1994, the decision was made to produce a one-hour documentary. That same year, Slavko Nowytski was named director and producer ("Interview: Film Producer Nowytski"). Interviews were conducted with Ostarbeiters who were taken to Germany as workers, with members of the UPA, and with other victims of repressions.²⁰ There were also interviews with figures like Norman Davies, Robert Conquest, John Armstrong, and Zbigniew Brzezinski. The film incorporated archival motion picture footage of World War II from Soviet, German, and American archives and also made use of still photos from secondary sources, like monographs and UCRDC archives. It was narrated by the Oscar-winning actor Jack Palance, an American of Ukrainian descent.

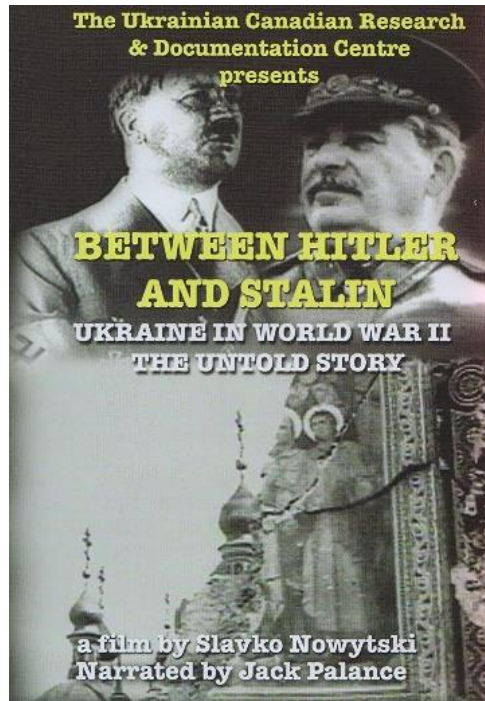
Between Hitler and Stalin: Ukraine in World War II, the Untold Story was completed in 2003. At the premiere of the film in September 2003, Wsevolod Isajiw stated that the film touched on three main themes: (i) Ukraine was not a passive element in World War II and that among Ukrainians there was a widespread active element that strove to protect the Ukrainian people from both the Nazis and Soviets while fighting to gain independence for Ukraine; (ii) this struggle had roots in the past history of Ukraine and continued right up to independence in 1991; (iii) the devastation brought upon by World War II to Ukraine was unprecedented with millions of people killed, tens of thousands of villages destroyed, and numerous cities reduced to rubble ("Introductory Remarks"). The Ukrainian version of the film was released in

¹⁹ UCRDC archives reveal a sense of urgency in conducting interviews with World War II survivors in large part due to their declining health and advanced age in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Using print media, the UCRDC requested that those with stories pertaining to World War II come forward to share their experiences. Such appeals garnered interest from around the world, including North America, Europe, and Australia. By September 1990, the UCRDC had collected 175 videos and 150 audio interviews with important World War II witnesses.

²⁰ There was a total of about eighty hours of interviews from Ukraine alone. Much like in *Harvest of Despair*, not all of the interviews were included in the film. All interviews are kept at the UCRDC archives.

2005 followed by the Russian subtitled version in 2016 (Darewych, *Do istorii*; Zakydalsky, “Between Hitler and Stalin”).

Figure 3. *Between Hitler and Stalin*—DVD (The Ukrainian Canadian Research and Documentation Centre, “Between Hitler and Stalin”).



One of the UCRDC’s most recent projects was the production of *A Canadian War Story*, a 2020 documentary focusing on the contributions of Ukrainian Canadians during World War II. Directed by the renowned Ukrainian Canadian filmmaker John Paskievich, the documentary makes clear that despite being seen as second-class citizens by mainstream Canadian society, Ukrainian Canadians served in all branches of Canada’s Armed Forces (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies). In the words of Paskievich, “their enlistment was the highest out of any ethnic group outside of the British” (qtd. in Guly). The documentary travels across continents and generations, incorporating first-person accounts with archival documents to tell an interesting story of immigration, settlement, service, and dedication.

Forty years after its founding, the UCRDC continues to be a cornerstone of the Ukrainian Canadian community, an active centre of research known

for its impressive but also diverse collections—photographs, written documents, audio and video testimonies, personal memoirs, etc. In studying the history of the UCRDC, one also gains valuable insight into how the Western world has come to understand Ukraine and Ukrainians throughout history. It goes without saying that since 1982, the global geopolitical situation has changed considerably. The UCRDC has aptly responded to these changes, assisting Ukraine and Ukrainian scholars in fostering a well-rounded national identity and strong research skills. In many respects, the laying of the groundwork was completed through the tireless and dedicated work of the UCRDC's founding members. For them, the end goal of bringing the truth about the tragic fate of Ukraine and Ukrainians, be it during the Holodomor or World War II, was of capital importance. The UCRDC welcomes visitors from different *milieux* and backgrounds—scholars, educators, researchers, journalists. With new volunteers of younger generations taking on leadership roles, the UCRDC's future appears bright and optimistic amidst changing times for both Canada and Ukraine.

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