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IN THE FAMILIAR, COMPACT BOTTLES.**

Genocide, war

by Ken Shipka

From the turn of the century to the 1920's, thousands of Ukrainians immigrated to Canada's prairies to become Alberta's second largest minority. However, the Ukrainians were met with persecution and their dreams of farming prosperity were shattered with the Great Depression of the 1930's. These Ukrainians were the lucky ones.

Their relatives in Ukraine were to face the destruction of their nation through genocide, war and oppression.

Outside Edmonton City Hall is a monument dedicated to the victims of the 1932-33 Ukrainian famine. During this holocaust an estimated "eight to ten million Ukrainians and Cossacks" were murdered through starvation. (*Time*, May 23, 1983).

The massive starvation Moscow's policy created drove the Ukrainians to "peeling bark off the trees, and roots from the fields. Dogs and cats went early. Cannibalism came later. Fresh corpses were dug up and boiled for stew" (*Alberta Report*, Oct. 31/83).

However, the destruction of Ukraine — once a free and independent nation — had only just begun.

During 1937 and 1938, five years after this man-made famine, Stalin began another series of purges designed to eliminate all threats of political opposition. It was during this period "the NKVD (today's KGB) set up torture and execution chambers in the basements of many churches..." (*The Gulag Archipelago*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, p. 438). It was later "discovered that a large number of the exhumed victims had been killed by the usual Communist technique of tying the victims' hands behind their back and then shooting them in the back of the head." (*The Second Interim Report*, Charles Kersten - Chairman, p. 3). As many as 1.7 million military officers, political figures, and peasants throughout the Soviet Union "had been shot by January 1, 1939" (*The Gulag Archipelago*, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, p. 439). Ukraine was not spared.

However, Stalin's efforts to eliminate potential opposition at home cost him dearly when three million Germans invaded three years later. The loss of thousands of high-ranking officers from the purges crippled the Soviet army's ability to oppose the Nazi Blitzkrieg. Furthermore, the human massacres of 1937-38 gave few Soviet citizens the willingness to defend their country.

Explained Alexander Solzhenitsyn, a former officer in the Soviet Red Army during the war, "the Red Army retreated as if swept away by the wind, in spite of its numerical superiority and its excellent artillery. There was no precedent for such a rout in a thousand years of Russian history and, indeed, in all military history....Here was a clear statement of our people's desire to be rid of Communism." (*Time*, Feb. 18/80).

When the German army invaded Ukraine in 1941, the entire three and a half million Ukrainians in the Red Army surrendered. In fact, "some 100,000 anti-

There are currently Ukrainians who were and deported to Sibe tration camps.

Communist Ukrainians volunteered (for the German army)...." (*Hitler's War Machine*, Robert Cecil, p. 103).

However, the Nazi invasion proved not to be a liberation, but instead a replacement of one kind of evil with another. The same soldiers who surrendered to the German army were put into concentration camps and left to starve. Hitler's hatred of the Slavic people was evident in the German treatment of the ethnic Russians and Ukrainians. Nearly four million Slavic POW's died under German captivity.

Even Joseph Goebbels, Germany's Propaganda Minister, had said "he was horrified by the brutal course being pursued in occupied sectors of the Soviet Union" (*Inside The Third Reich*, Albert Speer, p. 237).

In fact, within two weeks of Nazi occupation, the Ukrainians organized into an effective underground movement designed to combat German rule. Explained U of A Chancellor Peter Savaryn who lived in Ukraine during the war, "The Germans posted signs everywhere which read, 'Only For Germans.' Were we to accept living as dogs? The Ukrainians fought against the Germans because they would not accept the Germans as their masters."

What could have been Germany's ally became their adversary. Nazi treatment of the Slavs ignited a nationalistic drive that helped turn the tide in the war.

As the Germans were driven out of Ukraine by the Russian soldiers, the Ukrainian underground battled the Russians as they had the Germans. However, the poorly trained and equipped Ukrainians were no match for the Soviet Red Army. The struggle for

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