

Holodomor

Written by Sambucus

Some thoughts

I consider, you know everything about roleplaying, and I do not want to bore you with lengthy descriptions, or texts about the nature of roleplaying. If you don't know what roleplaying is, you will not understand this game.

This game was written for the 2005 November Ronnie awards, and uses the keywords Soviet and Mud.

I am Hungarian, so I have never lived in the Soviet Union, I have only been living in a much lighter socialist regime, under much more humane leaders. I was 10 years old, when the Soviet Union collapsed, but it was enough to get a glimpse of the twisted logic of the system.

Originally communism was a utopia, an experiment, to create the most just society, based on the equal distribution of material wealth, and on total equality and on the rule of the worker class. However it soon turned into the nightmarish absolute rulership of bloody handed dictators, the rule of mindless terror, and total oppression of the mind and body.

This game is about probably the saddest chapter of the Soviet Union's history, the Holodomor in Ukraine, a man - made famine which claimed several millions of lives. I can not imagine the true horror of this famine, I doubt anyone can. Nevertheless, this is a sad game. It is about survival, which is usually a dirty process. It is about humanity, and the lack of it. It is about morals, about what you are willing to sacrifice for your own life and what you will not. It is about fighting against the odds, and doing the impossible.

What to say? "Enjoy it!" would seem contradictory. "Think about it!" is much more appropriate.

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History and background

Ukraine... the breadbasket of the Soviet Union, where the soil is legendarily rich. Where wheat fields run till the eye can see. A relatively newly acquired province of the mighty Soviet Union. The Great Socialist Revolution of October has triumphed, the tsar has been executed along with his family long ago, the empire suffers in the iron grasp of Josip Stalin (Stalin means Man of Steel), also called secretly the Red Tsar. Stalin wanted to take the whole agriculture into the state's hands, but did not have the power needed to do it until '29. On the 27. of December in 1929 Stalin has declared war on the kulaks.

What is a kulak? Originally, the wealthy farmers were called kulaks, and everyone, who owned more than a fixed quota of land, has been taken to "kulak list". In the Soviet Union, kulaks, as a social class were declared the ultimate enemy. A kolkhoz system was established. A kolkhoz is simply a communal farm, where every peasant donates his land, machines and livestock to the kolkhoz, and they work together on the fields for a fixed salary. Naturally it is good for anyone who does not own any land at all. It is a tragedy for anyone else. By the end of 1929 the terms have changed, effectively every independent peasant was called a kulak, not just the wealthy ones. In the beginning of 1930 Stalin created a kulak - committee, directed by Molotov who had a plan for the elimination of the kulaks as a social class: *"Shoot in the head, or lock to a lager 60 thousand kulaks, deport their families - along with 150 thousand kulak - sympathizer families - to faraway parts of the country."*

"There was a meeting, where agitators tried to persuade everyone to join the kolkhoz. The three poorest farmers joined willingly, the others did not. The next day, in the middle of the night three men in black leather coats came for my grandfather. They took him away and have beaten him until he passed out. Then took him back. The next day the agitators came to us, and asked my grandfather if he wants to join the kolkhoz now. He did not want. That night they took him away again, and has beaten him again. The next day, another activist came to our house to persuade him to join the kolkhoz. He did not want to. That night they took him away and has beaten him so badly, that he died by the next morning. The next day an activist came, and congratulated my father for inheriting the farm. Then he asked whether he wanted to join the kolkhoz? My father understood the situation, and signed the paper."

Quotas were set up for independent peasants, who had to fill these quotas, and give their crops to the state without receiving any payment or compensation for it. With these conditions, by the end of 1934, 75% of the farms in the Soviet Union joined a kolkhoz, and Molotov reported proudly, that from the 5 and a half million kulaks registered in '28, only one and a half hundred thousand remained. The kolkhoz owned only the land it cultivated, it had to rent the machinery needed from the state's machine shops in exchange for 20% of the crop, which ensured total government control over agriculture.

By 1932 the average crops from wheat dropped to the 70% of the former, and the farm animal population dropped to the 65% of that, measured 20 years ago. The stage was set for a famine, never before seen.

Holodomor... the great famine. The turn of 1932 - 33, the darkest winter of Ukrainian history. It is estimated that nearly eight million Ukrainian people starved. Unbelievable suffering was laid upon the peasants, and unimaginable atrocities were committed, which crippled a nation for a generation to come. It is hard to believe, but it was a man - made famine, the work of the

communist government, the government, which turned upon its own citizens. Stalin wanted to eliminate the Ukrainians as a nation, because only a homogenous population ensured the long - lasting rule of the Soviet Union upon these lands. The priests, and the intellectuals were sent to lagers to perish, to crush the leading social classes, but it was not enough. Stalin announced, that the Ukrainian independent peasants did not fill their quotas, so as a penalty, the new quotas issued, were much higher than that of last year. And they collected the quotas with no mercy. Cheka raiding parties roamed the country, searching every house, every shed, every granary, looking for hidden crops. They left peasants with absolutely no food, at the beginning of winter. They took away cattle, pigs, every farm animal they could find. Any who dared to oppose the mighty cheka received severe beatings, or could be executed on the spot. The only law was the will of the cheka activists, and life was terribly cheap.

Historians define Holodomor, as the famine in Ukraine from April of 1932 till November of 1933. 17 months. 500 days. In five hundred days a whole nation starved. What would have your chances been to live to see the next harvest?

The grain collected this way was sold on the international market for half price, or cheaper to get the funds needed for industrial expansion.

Setting

As you can imagine, the setting is pretty dull, at least for a roleplaying game. A village, or a smaller town. The inhabitants: peasants, a priest, a blacksmith, a teacher. The cheka activists, and the kolkhoz leaders. That's all there is here. Before Stalin this land was rich. The soil was fertile, the peasants worked hard for generations.

Now it is hell on earth. No food. No hope. The Ukrainian peasants are effectively outlaws. There is no law, no justice, only communist activists. The government has forbidden the railway stations to sell tickets to peasants. The government has forbidden to deliver any foreign aid to the starving Ukraine. Police checkpoints were set up, to catch the peasants fleeing from the hunger. Many hundred thousand tons of food was exported to Europe in 1932 from the Soviet Union, to buy machines for the industry.

In Ukraine, many trade points opened where the state bought the valuables of the peasants in a ridiculously low price, especially gold or silver jewellery. Many fled to Russia, to buy food for their families, but most of them never returned, they were arrested by the police, or robbed somewhere on the way.

In the august of 1932 a new law has been announced. From this date any "stealing of the socialist property" were punished with death, but at least with 10 years of forced labour. In many cases this was used against children, who were caught gathering leftover seeds on the fields after harvest.

" In 1932 plenty of crops were harvested. My father's storage was full of grain. Then came those men, who were called activists, and have sealed our pantry, and the next day they took away every single grain seed. We cried a lot. I had four siblings, mother, father, and the old grandmother. First my youngest sister died, then my brother on the fields, then my other sister in kindergarten. Shortly after grandmother my father, and mother died. I do not know how I survived."

When the hunger was at its worst, when people has hit the Mud by the thousands every day, the distilleries worked day and night to produce vodka from grain that could have saved countless lives.

Cannibalism spread across the land. So many cases were reported, that the government had to inform policemen, that eating human flesh is not a crime in the Soviet Union, so do not investigate these claims.

"A man was arrested for selling meat at the market. Soon he admitted, that it was human meat. The policemen laughed, and set him free. "You ate a kulak? One less to worry about." They told him."

"In the height of hunger, aspic could still be bought, made from leftover leather, and meat byproducts. Sometimes human nails were found in it."

And as you face almost certain extinction, you can see posters everywhere about Stalin, our great leader, who brought peace and prosperity to the nations of the Soviet Union. Activists

roam the land, who speak about the spoils of the people's rule. Yes, theoretically, the people rule the Soviet Union, the leaders only communicate the will of the masses.

"So many people died in the villages, that the deceased were laid for days without burial. The government has appointed some men to bury the deceased. They got a food packet every day for this work. The corpses were buried into shallow mass graves, the grave diggers were too weak themselves. They had quotas themselves, and not filling the quota meant half rations, or no food at all. It was a common sight that the soil of the fresh graves moved, because living people were buried alongside the dead. Sometimes the still living begged for the grave diggers not to bury them, but they replied: "You die either way."

Some kolkhoz leaders tried to help the starving. They were all arrested, which meant a death sentence, or 10 years of forced labour in Siberia.

"The peasants were desperate enough to eat meat from the carcass well, where the dead horses and cows were dumped. In the village everyone knew exactly what kind of animal has died in the kolkhoz. People took home not only the meat, but the bones and skin of the animals as well. For some time, a teacher from the only school in the village had to raid the carcass well, to sustain himself, and his old mother. One night he arrived late, and nothing was left. The peasants cried in anger, to see that things have come to this: A teacher has to eat carcass, and nothing is left for him."

Game mechanics

Character: Your character is an average human being. A poor farmer, a kulak, a factory worker, or the child or wife of any of them. Nothing extraordinary. You can do anything a healthy farm boy can do. Run, swim, climb a tree, lift your own weight, read, write, etc. You have learned nearly eight years in the village school, know a few things about the world. You know your homeland fairly well, and the surroundings of your village like the lines of your palm.

Russian: It is only a bit of information, whether you can speak the Russian language? Everyone understands it, and every peasant can speak Russian at some degree. The question is, whether a native Russian would identify you as a member of a minority? It costs nothing to learn Russian, and pass as a Russian, but consider that on many occasions peasants rather starved than to beg for food in Russian. You surely will not earn the respect of your fellow Ukrainians, if they hear you speak the loathed language of the oppressors.

Nutrition: The main statistic in this game. Nutrition starts at 40, and for every day you have not eaten anything, subtract 1. If you can eat at least half of the food required by a healthy man, you shouldn't subtract any. If you can eat enough for a healthy man, on the first day subtract none, and on any additional day, following the one, you can eat, add one to your Nutrition value. If you eat less than a quarter of what a human needs, you still lose a Nutrition point every day.

Taras has a Nutrition value of 23. He doesn't find any food for a week. His Nutrition drops to 16. He finds a whole bread in a clay pot, buried in the garden of a neighbour's house. He successfully resists the temptation to eat it all at once, so he cuts it into six slices. From now on, he eats a slice of bread every day. On the first day, his Nutrition does not decrease any further. On the second day his Nutrition increases to 17. When the bread finally runs out, he is left with a Nutrition score of 21.

The sensation of hunger goes away after a few days. Only a faint aching remains. That stays until you can find some food, or you finally hit the Mud.

In the game, you use your Nutrition score for almost every challenge. When you are starving, even the easiest task is almost impossible. You cannot move, you cannot speak, you cannot even think clearly. If you have to take a test, your Nutrition score is used, divided by 4, roll a ten sided dice (d10), and add the result to your Nutrition/4. If it is higher than the difficulty, you have succeeded in whatever you have tried.

Any damage you take decreases your Nutrition. The most energy - consuming processes in your body are the upkeep of the huge nervous system and the immunity and healing systems. The body needs to keep up control, so if you are starving, the immune system is cut back. The healing of wounds and diseases are seriously impaired under these conditions.

The Mud: The end of the line. The final stage. The point of no return. If you have run out of the Will to survive, you give up. Crawl to a corner, and fall asleep. Eat some mud, or soil, and pass away with the pleasant feeling of a full stomach. You will probably not be buried until the next spring, because no one has the strength left to dig a hole into the frozen earth. In the spring, when your ice - cold corpse finally melts hopefully someone will cover you in some dirt. No one speaks of the end. Merely saying the word out loud could bring bad luck. If anyone says the word "death" or "dead", the GM should instantly award him with a Despair point. Instead refer to "The Mud" "hitting the Mud" "reaching the Mud", "resting in the Mud". If your Nutrition reaches 0, then it's the Mud for you. You will not collapse right at the spot, but your body has suffered unhealable damage. You can live for a few days, but you can not walk, only crawl, and your mind is clouded by hunger. You loose every contact with the outside world, you are completely lost in your hallucinations. In a few days it will all be over. If your Will to survive reaches zero, you give up. You can not bear it any longer, you will destroy yourself on the first occasion. It is surprising how easy it is to hit the Mud: Just go to a cheka activist and slap him on the face. He will beat you senseless in minutes, if not execute you on the spot with a well placed bullet. Hang yourself, jump to the river. You will not feel anything more painful than your experiences so far. They say, that before freezing you dream pleasant dreams.

Difficulty: A common task's difficulty is 6 - 10. To climb a tree, to work a whole day, to lift your own weight, to carry a sack of grain a kilometre to knock out a grown man, to read a book. A Difficulty of 15 means a challenging task, something you will not accomplish automatically, even fully fed. For instance, work three days without sleep, to lift one and a half of your own weight, to take two sacks of grain a kilometre, or to break a grown man's bone with a single blow, to write a book. 20 is the difficulty of the hardest tasks. These things are usually not possible, it qualifies as a heroic deed, which will be remembered in your village for almost a century. To work for a whole week without rest, to lift thrice your weight, to walk a kilometre with five grain sacks, to kill a man with a single blow, to write a book on quantum physics. On the other hand, there are difficulties for other activities like: To walk straight (Difficulty: 5) To crawl on your knees (Difficulty: 3), to lift 10 kilograms (Difficulty: 5), to run for 10 minutes (Difficulty: 6) and so on. Use your common sense. Anything that is natural for you can be a nearly impossible feat for a starving body.

Three cheka activists bang on the door in the middle of the night, they are looking for Taras. He wants to sneak out into the garden, and flee to the nearby woods. The difficulty is 10 to sneak out, and 6 to run a kilometre for the forest. His Nutrition is 40, so he doesn't even have to roll any dice, he succeeds automatically. With a Nutrition of 12, however, he would need a 3 on the d10 to successfully sneak out to the garden, and a roll of 7 to safely reach the woods.

Despair: The lack of perspective. The fear of tomorrow. To see life as it is: Pointless. Despair starts at 0, but will quickly increase. The GM can award you with Despair points, or you can voluntarily take one each time you feel your hopes and expectations have been shattered. The more desperate you are, the more easy it is to act against your Moral or your emotions. But beware! Wasting emotions can be a hazard. Soon nothing else remains, but your Will to survive, and when it's gone, it's the Mud for you. High Despair is a dangerous thing to have. At the GMs discretion, at some stressful situations the GM can ask for a Test to

overcome despair. It is done as usual, take the $\frac{1}{4}$ of your Nutrition, any Emotions you want to add, and the result of a d10 dice. If this is higher than your Despair, you can act freely. If it is lower, you can not act on your own, until someone does not push you out of your state. Lonely people hit the Mud easier.

Taras managed to acquire a large piece of bread. He takes it home for his family. Three cheka activists wait for him in his home. He fails to hide the bread, they take it away. Taras feels devastated. The GM calls for a Despair roll. Taras has a 12 Despair score. He has 16 nutrition, and rolls a 5. He does not want to use any of his Emotions. $4+5 < 12$ so Taras is completely overcome by Despair. He falls onto the ground and cries like a small kid, until his wife and daughter come and comfort him.

Moral: Your inner strength. Your spine. Your ideals, and the will to defend them against the world. Your Moral equals the Number of Emotions you still have. A higher moral means you still have emotions, you hold things dear, other than a loaf of bread. You care for others, and the world around you. During conflicts, the initiative is measured in Moral. The participants act in the order of their Moral scores, whoever has the highest moral acts first. Moral can be used in a very strange matter. You can command respect from others with your moral. The participants roll a d10 and add the result to their Moral score. Whoever has the highest score wins. All the others have a +3 to the Difficulty of any actions taken against him.

An activists burst into Taras' home. He is drunk, and wants some entertainment. He chooses Taras' twelve years old daughter. Taras stands in front of him. (They make a moral check, Taras rolls a fat 10 and adds it to his Moral score of 11. The activist rolls an 8 and adds it to his Moral of 3. Taras wins by a mile.) The activist suddenly stops. They both know that he could shoot Taras right here, but somehow he feels insecure in front of the peasant. He shouts warnings, breaks the table and two chairs, and leaves.

Emotions: Your basic feelings, your drives in life. Anything you hold for dear, anything you loathe, anything you give a damn about. Every emotion is a strength and a weakness in itself. You can have as many Emotions as you see fit, but you can not act against your emotions. What does this mean? If the game master (GM) decides, you are about to act against one of your Emotions, you have to take your Despair rating, add the result of a d10 to your Despair. Take the strength of the Emotion, and add it to your Moral rating. This represents the inner struggle, that takes place in your soul. If your Despair result is equal, or higher than your Emotion's and your Moral's combined strength, you can act against it, but then the Emotion's strength is decreased by 1 permanently, and you gain two Despair points. If your Moral is stronger, you can still act against your emotion, but then it decreases by the difference in your rolls.

You can have as many emotions as you like, at any strength. Only the "Will to survive" is compulsory with a strength of 10. Anyone whose will to live was weaker has long ago hit the Mud. Either by his own hands or by the cheka.

Taras is a simple man. He likes to read in the evenings (+Read 1), he loves his wife and their daughter (+Wife 5;+Daughter 8),he hates communists (-Communist 3) and the cheka activists, who took away his farm (- Cheka 10), he loves his village (+Village 4), he loves his

parents (+Parents 6), he is not too religious (+Religion 2), he hates his neighbor, Andriy (-Andriy 2), and he loves his cattle (+Cattle 4).

Taras:

+Will to survive 10

+Read 1

+Wife 5

+Daughter 8

-Communists 3

-Cheka 10

+Village 4

+Parents 6

+Religion 2

-Anriy 2

+Cattle 4

Taras has a Moral of 11. If he wants to invite a cheka raiding party for a glass of wine, he has to have at least 11 Despair points to be able to even try a roll (11Despair+10=11Moral+10"-Cheka")

Emotions are not just limitations. You can gain strength from them. If you want, you can use any of your Emotions to boost any of your rolls. You should announce it to the GM though, like *"Taras clenches his teeth, and thinks of his daughter, Svetlana, as he runs faster than lightning to get away from the cheka raiding party"* Thus he gets the strength of the emotion as a bonus to his roll. (*Taras gets +8 to his roll, but his love for his daughter decreases to 7*). The downside: The Emotion's strength is decreased by 1 permanently. You can not exploit your Emotions for ever.

Taras is held at gunpoint by a chekist, while another one slowly beats his wife for hiding a kilogram of flour in the attic. Taras knows that he will be shot without hesitation, if he moves a muscle, but he loves his wife dearly. He has to roll a d10 add it to his Despair and if it is higher than his Moral of 11 combined with his love for his wife (5), he can stand still while his wife is being tortured.

Healing: You are a tough farmer. You will heal almost any damage, but without food it is hopeless. If you eat, your body heals along as Nutrition points are increased. When you reach the Nutrition of 40, you are healthy again.

Conflict: If any conflict occurs, the participants should act according to their Moral scores. The one with the highest Moral acts first, the others after each other. You can do two separate things per round. He can attack, defend, move, say a sentence, and such. You can attack twice, or attack and defend, or defend two attacks. Any attack not defended automatically succeeds.

Bare hands do 1 points of damage (Nutrition loss), melee weapons (axe, club, knife etc.) cause 4 damage. Who ever reaches 0 Nutrition, is knocked out. He can regain his consciousness in an hour, or so, but he will hit the Mud anyway within a day.

Three other villagers notice the smoke coming from Taras' chimney. They run to his house to beg for food. Taras tries to drive them away, they do not have enough food for fellow villagers, his family is starving. The villagers desperately try to knock Taras aside, and run into his house. The participants: Taras (Moral: 11, Nutrition: 30); Villager1 (Moral: 7, Nutrition: 16); Villager2 (Moral: 9, Nutrition: 22) Villager3 (Moral: 10, Nutrition: 26)

I. round: Taras grabs his axe first (Moral: 11), but he does not want to hurt his fellow villagers, therefore he only defends himself. Villager3 attacks him first (Moral:10), with bare hands. They both roll d10 Taras rolls a 5 (+7 ¼ Nutrition), Villager3 rolls a 10 (+6 ¼ Nutrition). Villager3 hits Taras for 1 point of damage. Villager2 acts next, he attacks Taras, who blocks the attack. They both roll d10. Taras: 2 (+7 ¼ Nutrition), Villager2: 7 (+5 ¼ Nutrition). Villager2 hits Taras for 1 point of damage. Taras has no actions left this round, so he can not block any more attacks. Villager1, Villager3, Villager2 hits him for 1 point of damage each.

II. round: Taras feels, he is in trouble. He Attacks Villager1 twice with his axe. First, he rolls 8 (+6 ¼ Nutrition), while Villager1 rolls 5 (+4 ¼ Nutrition) Taras hits Villager1 for 4 points of damage. Villager3 hits Taras for 1 point of damage, Villager2 hits Taras too. Taras attacks Villager1, Taras rolls 6 (+6 ¼ Nutrition), Villager1 rolls 2 (+3 ¼ Nutrition) Taras hits him for 4 points of damage. Villager3 and 2 hit Taras for a point of damage.

After two rounds Villager 1 is left with a Nutrition of 8, Villager2 has 22 Nutrition, Villager3 has 26 Nutrition, while Taras is left with 18 Nutrition. He is in serious trouble. If no one helps him out, he will hit the Mud in minutes.

Additional info

About Nutrition: A grown man needs approximately 2000 - 2500 kcal per day to maintain his health. By this game's terms on any day you eat less than 1000 calories, your Nutrition drops by one. Under normal circumstances a man should bear 8 weeks of starvation, but you have already seen hard times lately, so your body is already low on reserves. The effects of starvation are well known: The body loses fat, so the adipose tissues shrink. Muscles shrink, the skin becomes thin and dry, and is less resistant to outside stress. The body becomes dry, and falls out. Sexual desire is lost in both men and women, and starving people become apathetic and irritable. Work capacity reduces greatly. Immunity is compromised, so any disease can prove fatal. Below is a table of the energy values of foods commonly found in villages. With this you can count the amount of food needed for sustaining your life.

<i>Food 100g</i>	<i>Energy kcal</i>	<i>Protein g</i>	<i>Fat g</i>	<i>Carbohydrate g</i>
Flour	375	12,3	1,3	76,3
Rice	353	8,0	0,3	77,5
White bread	250	8,8	1,5	53,1
Chicken	124	22,8	3,1	0,5
Pork	309	16,6	25,7	0,3
Fish	123	15,9	6,3	0,1
Bacon	501	16,8	46,5	0
Fat	924	0,1	99,7	0
Sunflower oil	928	0,1	99,7	0
Milk	62	3,4	2,8	5,3
Yoghurt	66	3,4	3,6	4,6
Cheese	394	27,8	29,4	1,5
Egg, 1 piece	68	5,4	4,8	0,3
Potato	94	2,5	0,2	20
Cabbage	32	1,6	0,2	5,7
Corn	131	4,7	1,6	23,6
Tomato	23	1	0,2	4
Carrots	40	1,2	0,2	8,1
Pumpkin	80	1,5	0,6	16,5
Cucumber	12	1	0,1	1,7
Onion	40	1,2	0,1	8,3
Peas	90	7	0,4	14
Mushroom	40	5,9	0,2	3,3
Bean	338	22,3	1	57,9
Apple	31	0,4	0,4	7
Cherry	63	0,8	0,7	14
Watermelon	29	0,5	0,2	6,5
Pear	52	0,4	0,3	12
Peach	41	0,7	0,3	9
Nut	654	18,6	57	11,7

What to eat? Traditional foods, like bread, potatoes, meat, vegetables are nonexistent, but alternative sources can be found, if you are smart enough to get them. Birds, toads, mice, cats,

dogs, wild animals are all sources of Nutrition, as well as grass, leaves, and any plants in the forest, not poisonous. There are stories about peasants, who built secret pigpens, where they keep pigs. Three villagers were looking for the hidden grain of an executed farmer for many days, but came home empty - handed. You could always go to a city and buy food. The only problem is the lack of money. You do not earn anything, your crops have been taken by the state, naturally without any form of payment. You can have as much jewellery, or any valuables, as you see fit.

To GM's: This is a grim setting indeed. Apocalyptic even. The players struggle to stay alive, while almost certainly sacrificing many of their passions, much of themselves. The slowly become more ignorant, cold, and hard. Do they have to desecrate everything they held dear in their lives?

Hunger leaves only the most able, and the most aggressive ones alive, so they have to look for foods themselves. Outside help is not an option. Rebellion was punished severely by the authorities, by executing the leaders on the spot, and deporting whole villages to Siberia. It is not easy to stay alive. The players have to work as a team. It is best, if they are closely related by blood, because complete strangers can have a hard time gaining each other's trust.

The objectives are usually quite simple: Get food, hide it, and eat it. Sources of food include kolkhoz granaries, stables, other farmer's secret stashes, towns. Anyone living close enough to the borders could try Poland or Hungary, but the borders are closely guarded.

Try to think with the heads of those people, half mad by hunger, and completely without hope. The far future means maybe a slice of bread tomorrow. There is nothing, only pain and suffering, only apathy and despair. Justice, law, respect, freedom, love, hate, fear are just hollow words. Still some can keep themselves and even their families alive. As a survivor said, that the idle has eaten Mud first. Those who worked day and night were able to scrape together just enough food to not let themselves and their families waste away, and perhaps live until this madness ends. Some of them did not even break. A few survivors did not turn into maniacs, did not become loyal Soviet Union citizens. They kept their hatred buried deep inside themselves, but they remembered. They carried on, thus the Ukrainian nation has not been completely wiped out, despite Stalin's efforts. They are the only heroes in this game.

These are ideals. Ideals are useless. Ideals are dangerous. Whoever lives to see the next harvest, wins.

Character improvement: Not too much place for that in this game. For exceptionally good roleplaying, the GM may decrease Despair points, or increase Emotion levels. And don't forget the ultimate reward: A slice of bread.

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