

## Our Veterans Need More Than a Day ; They Need a Career

By Thomas A. Kennedy

America is home to 21.2 million veterans -- men and women who were willing to risk their lives for our country.

Unfortunately, many of these veterans face a daunting personal battle here at home: finding work. According to the labor department, more than 700,000 U.S. veterans are currently unemployed. This simply isn't acceptable. Our veterans have earned the opportunity to earn a living and take part in the very society they fought to defend.

The most effective way to help them succeed in post-military life is through targeted efforts to extend educational opportunity.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, competition for jobs has become fierce. Positions that once required a high school degree or less are being filled by college-educated applicants. This development presents a particular challenge for former soldiers, airmen, and sailors, many of whom enlisted without much education or civilian experience.

Moreover, unemployed vets who find work typically take 43 weeks to land a job.

Joblessness is stressful for all who have experienced it. However, many veterans face additional obstacles. At least 3 million were wounded in battle and still suffer from some form of disability. Among those who served in Iraq or Afghanistan, about 20 percent are living with post-traumatic stress disorder or major depression, and one in three cope with a serious psychological trauma.

All these stats are troubling -- and illustrate why Americans must commit to making sure veterans have the tools they need to build successful post-military lives.

The best place to start is by broadening educational opportunity for our veterans. Indeed, education is often the determining factor in whether or not a veteran is able to thrive after returning to civilian life.

One initiative has already made important progress in this respect. At the beginning of this academic year, 250 community colleges and universities committed to implementing best practices established by the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of

Education, and more than 100 educational experts. These "8 Keys to Success" help connect veterans with academic, career, and financial help, and surround them with a community of students and fellow veterans who can encourage them as they further their education.

For similar efforts to grow in number and effectiveness, more Americans need to get involved with private initiatives like Student Veterans of America and the Wounded Warrior Project. These two groups enable soldiers to draw on the skills they have already developed through military service and apply them to their post-military careers.

We should always welcome opportunities to show our appreciation for those veterans who risked everything for our safety and security. But these brave men and women need more than our appreciation; they need our help. And, more specifically, they need more opportunities to arm themselves with the skills to create a prosperous, fulfilling life.

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**Grandparents:** a Christmas gift suggestion for your grandchildren. Like most other gifts given your grandchildren, it's something you've never experienced. Unlike your previous gifts its value is priceless; it will last all their lives and benefit future generations. The gift: an America with no income tax and without the evil IRS.

The income tax has been a thorn in your side since you first went to work. Over the years, you've spent many hours preparing your income tax returns. Even now you are probably gathering receipts and such for that annual task.

You can spare your grandchildren this drudgery.

The IRS which you have despised, and feared, will be an even greater threat to your grandchildren. The IRS now openly targets groups considered to be unfriendly to the federal government. It's used as a political weapon to keep would-be dissidents "whipped into shape." It plays favorites, grants "tax favors" to special interests and well-connected people; all stemming from actions of our congressmen; yours and mine.

You know from experience it's true. But it doesn't have to be for our grandchildren. Let's take back our country! Work to defeat your incumbent congressmen in his/her 2014 primary. Do it for your grandkids.

Submitted by:

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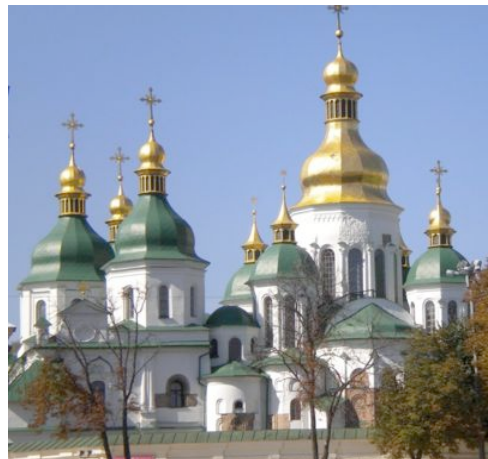
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# 基輔行之二：金頂大教堂，兼話大饑荒

夏曙芳

聖邁克金頂大教堂 (Mikhailovsky Cathedral)  
導遊領我們從酒店步行來到了基輔的地



聖蘇菲雅大教堂



基輔廣場一角



基輔街景：賣咖啡點心的小店

標，聖邁克金頂大教堂。大教堂是建造在第聶伯(Dnieper)河東岸的一塊高地上，在這裡可以俯瞰基輔市內的商業中心。這座宏偉的東正教堂始建於中世紀的1108年，主要為供奉天使長聖邁克。在後來的世紀裡繼續有擴建，如圍牆、鐘樓等。1934-36年間，在蘇聯統治時期，教堂遭到

極大的破壞。不過在烏克蘭獨立後，1999年曾予以全面整修。修復後的教堂外表是18世紀烏克蘭的巴羅克式，內部裝飾則仍保持其原有的拜占庭式樣。這不是一座祇為觀光的大教堂，我們入內參觀時，見到許多信徒在殿內參拜，也看到幾位穿著長袍披著彩帶的東正教神父在祝禱。不過對遊客來說，大教堂最引人注目的，恐怕還是那五六個閃閃發光洋蔥形的金頂罷。

與聖邁克大教堂遙遙相望的聖蘇菲雅大教堂，是基輔今日極負盛名的地標之一。教堂始建於1011年，原是基輔王室之葬地。以後的數百年裡，教堂歷經戰火損毀，到18世紀中葉，帝俄時代修復。其外觀亦為烏克蘭的巴羅克式樣。20世紀蘇聯統治下的30年代，政府沒收教堂，將之改為一座建築與歷史博物館。今日這座大教堂是烏克蘭基督教的博物館，訪者多為遊客。教堂內最有名的是那些拜占庭時代的馬賽克(Mosaics)與壁畫。1990年，被聯合國教科文組織列入《世界文化遺產目錄》。

從聖邁克大教堂出來，在廣場的一面牆上，看到一幅很大像海報似的壁畫。上面有英文字寫著1932-33烏克蘭的大飢荒。烏克蘭是有名的黑土地，農作物豐厚，怎麼會有飢荒呢？我很好奇地問那位當地的導遊。這位中年導遊面帶戚容，無奈地說：“據可靠的估計，那兩年裡烏克蘭餓死了七百萬人，不過，那是人為的災禍……”聽了她這句話，腦中閃過毛澤東時代，也是人為因素造成的中國大陸的三年大飢荒，不知是否同出一轍……回來後查閱有關資料，對此事件才有一點輪廓的概念，順此擇錄以為記。

**1932-33 烏克蘭的大饑荒**  
1932-33年間烏克蘭的大飢荒，是蘇聯獨裁統治者史達林一手策劃促成的。其目的是為了徹底消滅打擊烏克蘭地區想獨立人民的鬥志。據估計，在這塊有“歐洲糧倉”之譽的烏克蘭土地上，被餓死的饑民有七百萬人之多。

1917年，被帝俄統治了兩百多年的烏克蘭，乘俄國內部革命戰爭之機會，宣佈獨立為一共和國。但好景不長，列寧的無產階級十月革命成功後，宣稱要繼承帝俄時代的全部領土，自然就不會允許烏克蘭的獨立。於是從1917年底到1921年，烏克蘭的軍隊不斷與列寧的紅軍、俄國的白軍、及德國、波蘭、入侵的外國軍隊抗爭。到了1921年，塵埃落定，蘇聯將烏克蘭的西部劃給波蘭、羅馬尼亞、與捷克，同時將烏克蘭大量的糧食運往莫斯科。烏克蘭適逢大旱，糧食短缺，飢荒蔓延，引起全民的公憤，列寧為息民怒，採取了較為鬆緩的政策。

1924年列寧去世，史達林即位後，絕不允許小資產階級民族主義在烏克蘭復甦。為了擊碎烏克蘭人的自由意志，從1929年開始，有五千多名烏克蘭的學者、科學家、宗教領袖等精英人

士被捕，他們或被秘密槍決，或被運往西伯利亞的勞工營。同時，在烏克蘭本土，實行蘇聯那一套的土地改革，將擁有24畝以上土地的地主，列為“人民公敵”悉數掃地出門。據估計，約有一千萬人左右被運往西伯利亞，其中有三分之一的人因受不了嚴寒苦境而自然消失了。在史達林的鐵腕政策下，烏克蘭人民仍不斷反抗，蘇聯軍隊與秘密警員紛紛入住烏克蘭。

同時，在莫斯科的史達林決定了一個更加兇殘的對付烏克蘭的辦法：1932年中，他不斷增加每月從烏克蘭運往蘇聯的糧食指標，使烏克蘭斷糧。同時關閉所有從邊境進入烏克蘭的通道，不許外國的糧食入境。飢荒迅速蔓延烏克蘭全境。到了1933年春，在飢荒的高峰期，據估計烏克蘭被餓死的人數每天高達兩萬五千人，一村連一村的全村居民因飢餓而亡。

蘇聯一方面控制烏克蘭的邊境，不准外糧進入，另一方面，對外根本否認烏克蘭有飢荒一事，特意高格地接待一批來訪問蘇聯的西方名流政要，他們回去後，對蘇聯的社會主義制度讚賞有加，包括英國的大文豪蕭伯納在內。在蘇聯當局的威迫利誘下，在蘇聯境內的外國記者們，為了己身之利害，對烏克蘭的大饑荒也隻字不提，其中包括《紐約時報》榮獲普利茲獎的名記者杜藍第(Walter Duranty)。

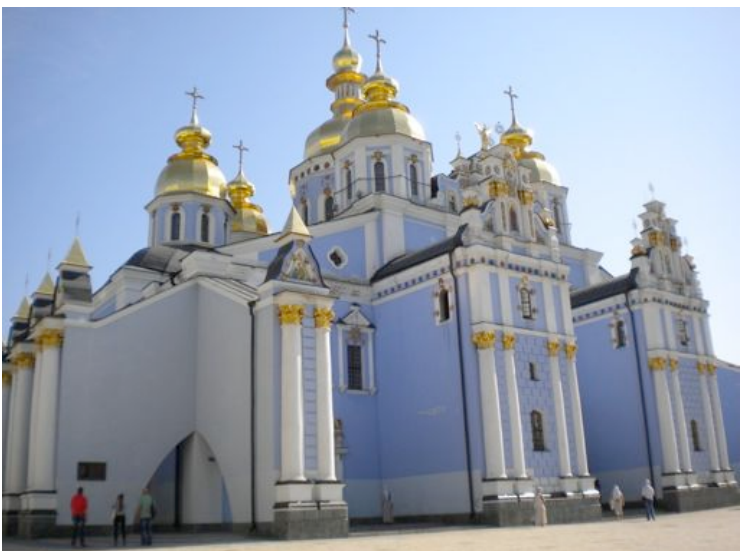
西方政府對烏克蘭大饑荒一事，可以說是睜一隻眼閉一隻眼，完全採取被動的姿態。1933年底，美國總統羅斯福正式承認史達林的蘇聯共產政府。次年，西歐多國支持蘇聯加入國聯。因為，史達林的五年計劃，將會向歐美諸國採購極大量的產品與科技。這些國家不願為追究烏克蘭違反人道的大饑荒一事，而失去了蘇聯這麼大的商機。

1933年底，幾乎有25%的烏克蘭人口被餓死，包括三百萬的兒童。至此，史達林的第一步目標已達，對烏克蘭的糧食控制告一段落。不過史達林對烏克蘭人民在政治上的迫害，從未中止過，直到1941年，納粹軍隊的入侵……

讀了這些敘述，不由想到近年來西方國家對中東、埃及一帶所謂“阿拉伯之春”的革命/內戰，支持造反派之態度。美國在伊拉克的戰爭，全是假“人道”之名，每天的晚間新聞上，敘利亞因政府軍與叛軍作戰而傷亡的平民有十名，二十名便大事渲染，指責該政府視人民若草芥，當年烏克蘭的人民，因為大饑荒斷糧而有上數百萬的人民被活活餓死，歐美諸國的“人道”精神又在哪裡？二戰期間，為了敦促史達林對日宣戰，拿“盟邦”中國的外蒙作為大禮……國際永遠



基輔歌劇院



聖邁克金頂大教堂

是只有“弱肉強食”的利害關係，沒有永久的敵人，也沒有永久的朋友。對那一段歷史，對那些受苦受難的無辜老百姓，後人也只能哀悼感傷了。君子當自強。我很高興看到烏克蘭經過這麼多的災難，今日終於能完全獨立了。