
Foreword

What Was Sown Shall Be Reaped

Those who survived knew that the famine of 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine was a deliberate, politically engineered catastrophe whose victims numbered in the many millions yet few dared even whisper about this devastation of their nation to others in the generations following. It was not until the late 1980s as the Soviet empire stumbled into the dustbin of history and an independent, internationally recognized Ukraine re-emerged in Europe that restored freedom allowed for the truth to be set free. Until then those who had endured the horror now known as the *Holodomor* remained trapped in the very place where it could not be spoken of.

Meanwhile those in the Ukrainian diaspora who had grasped the terror-famine's mainsprings and weight found their admonitions largely ignored, completely unaware that intelligence reports about conditions in the USSR, compiled by several governments, often corroborated their understanding of the causes, course, and consequences of this man-made famine.¹ Yet knowing what they did those very same Western governments sent no relief and lodged no formal protests with Moscow, even as millions starved. A Foreign Office mandarin confided why: "the truth of the matter is, of course, that we have a certain amount of information about famine conditions...and that there is no

obligation on us not to make it public [but we] do not want to make it public...because the Soviet Government would resent it and our relations with them would be prejudiced." ii

Brave, and few, were the survivors who, just after the Second World War, tried to remind the West of this atrocity, expecting their witnessing to find fertile soil during the Cold War. They were mistaken. Ukraine's genocidal Great Famine was not accepted as a reality and remained mostly unknown as a subject of historical inquiry until quite recently. Indeed those attempting to till its memory were subjected to a barrage of defamation, denounced as embittered émigrés - either Nazi collaborators or apologists for such miscreants. Echoes of those prejudices persist. Where testimony could be given about the famine it was usually rejected or ridiculed.

A noticeable resurrection in the debate over the causes and impact of the famine was precipitated by the release of the documentary film, *Harvest of Despair*, by Robert Conquest's book, *Harvest of Sorrow*, by the publication, in 1988, of the *Report to Congress* of the US Commission on the Ukraine Famine and in 1990 of the *Final Report* of the International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-1933 Famine in Ukraine (see appendixes B and C). Even so, for almost a decade after Ukraine's independence was secured, in 1991, no more than token initiatives were made to commemorate the Great Famine. Succeeding Ukrainian governments likewise demonstrated no interest in bringing the perpetrators and enablers of Communist war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice, a negligence sometimes excused by reference to the post-genocidal nature of post-Soviet Ukrainian society. This indifference persisted until November 2004-January 2005 when, and as the world watched, democracy prevailed during Ukraine's Orange Revolution. But what also became apparent is just how fragile the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity are. So while Ukraine played no official role in the 2003 campaign to have Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize revoked for his mendacious

reporting - an effort that unexpectedly harvested extensive and overwhelmingly positive coverage internationally –ⁱⁱⁱ by 2006 the *Verkhovna Rada* had, at President Yushchenko's urging, promulgated a law defining the *Holodomor* as a genocide (see Appendix D). Kyiv then undertook diplomatic efforts to build international recognition for this position, achieving modest success (see Appendix E), even as archival evidence about the *Holodomor* and its authors began emerging from long-sealed repositories, initiatives predictably protested by the voices of the Russian Federation. Contemporary efforts aimed at enshrining the *Holodomor* as a core experience in Ukrainian history and gleaning international sympathy for Ukraine as a victim nation^{iv} reflect Kyiv's gradual awakening to a critical geopolitical certainty: Ukraine may be in Europe but its place there, perhaps even its right to exist, are far from secure.

Just how many perished during the Great Famine may never be calculated precisely but that millions were scythed down as Ukrainian resistance to Soviet rule was consummated is no longer in doubt. Even if the victim total was 'only' 2.6 million, and it was likely higher, the intensity of mortality in Soviet Ukraine over a duration of less than a year confers upon the *Holodomor* the unenviable status of being a crime against humanity arguably without parallel in European history. That is not yet well understood but someday it will be, everywhere.

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7 November 2008
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Notes

i. Walter Duranty privately informed British officials in Moscow, in September 1933, that he thought "it quite possible that as many as 10 million people may have died directly or indirectly from lack of food in the Soviet Union during the past year," an assessment described as "horrifying - particularly coming from Mr. Duranty." See Document No. 50 in M. Carynnyk, L. Y. Luciuk and B. S. Kordan, eds., *The Foreign Office and the Famine: British Documents on Ukraine and the Great Famine of 1932-1933*, (Kingston: The Limestone Press, 1988), 309-313.

ii. See Laurence Collier's remarks, Document No. 71, 30 June 1934, *Foreign Office and the Famine*, 397-398.

iii. See Lubomyr Luciuk, ed., *Not Worthy: Walter Duranty's Pulitzer Prize and The New York Times* (Kingston: Kashtan Press, 2004) and "Ukraine must pursue perpetrators of Holodomor," *Edmonton Journal*, 4 June 2008. It is now known that Duranty, passing through Germany on his annual summer vacation, told Mr. A. W. Kliefoth at the American Embassy that "in agreement with the *New York Times* and the Soviet authorities, his official dispatches always reflect the official opinion of the Soviet régime and not his own." See George A. Gordon, the Berlin embassy's *chargé d'affaires*, 5 June 1931, Roll 37, "Records of the Department of State Relating to Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union, 1930-1939," T1249.

iv. Similarly, the Holocaust would be emphasized after Israel's security was imperilled in the 1973 Yom Kippur War. See Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

In his “Forward”, author Lubomyr Luciuk refers to appendices B,C, D, and E, which are included in the book. These appended documents, except for C, may also be found elsewhere as follows:

Appendix B: “**Findings of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine**”; U.S. Commission on the Ukraine Famine, *Report to Congress*. High quality digital access at: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007398237> ; Findings on pp. vi-vii of the Executive Summary.

Appendix C: International Commission of Inquiry into the 1932-33 Famine in Ukraine; *Final Report*, 1990. Author appends extensive excerpts from Section B of this lengthy report. Please see the book.

Appendix D: **Law Of Ukraine No.376-V "On Holodomor In Ukraine In 1932-1933"** . Parliament of Ukraine, Verkhovna Rada, Nov 28, 2006, Kyiv, Ukraine. English translation by Action Ukraine Report (AUR), Washington D.C. Available online at: <http://www.telusplanet.net/public/mozuz/holodomor/holodomor20080921AUR909.html> [*scroll down to #18 for the Law!*]

Закон України про Голодомор 1932-1933 років в Україні . Original Ukrainian language text of the law. Available online at: <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/376-16>

Appendix E: **Bill C-459, Statutes of Canada, 2008, Chapter 19. “An Act to establish a Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (“Holodomor”) Memorial Day and to recognize the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33 as an act of genocide”**, Available online at: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=3544638&File=24>