

## **Ukrainian Genocide Remembrance Day 2005**

### **Keynote Address by John Jaresko**

## **"See No Evil: The End of Ukrainian Famine Denial"**

### **September, 18, 2005**

Sponsored by the Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation  
Chicago, Illinois USA on September 18, 2005

Most Reverend Clergy, Consul Of Ukraine Mr. Shevchenko, Honorable Senator Jacqueline Collins, Honorable Representative John Fritchey, supporters, guests and most of all Ukrainian Genocide Famine Survivors, today we have gathered here together to remember and pray for the souls of over 10 million innocent Ukrainians who died between 1932 and 1933 as a result of Stalin's forced genocide famine.

While preparing to make this speech, I questioned why should I address you today? What could I possibly say to help each and everyone here today, realize the inhumane torture and pain that our Ukrainian people suffered during the course of this unequalled demonstration of genocide? Well, I think I found the answer...

The fact is that it is in my blood. Literally, I am a descendant of Ukrainian "kulak" land owners that refused collectivization in 1932-33. My Great grandparents Feofan and Natalia Brazhnyk were starved to death in the village of Marchenky in the Poltava state. I recall stories by my grandmother about the genocide and how she described my father's birth in November of 1932. That my father survived his first year of life was an unequivocal miracle because the majority of people around them were dying of starvation.

As you look at the screen beside me, you see the names of just some of the exterminated. To put this into its horrific perspective, by using a conservative number of 10 million starved victims, we could read a name per second for over 116 straight days. This averages out to 8,640 deaths per day. Yet even with such a gigantic number of innocent victims starved to death, the world was kept unaware.

Some of the questions that I would like to address today include: Who was responsible for such a heinous act? How could famine engulf one of the most fertile nations of the world? But of great importance is how this hideous act of genocide was hidden from the rest of the world?

The use of famine as a weapon of state against the land owning population is considered to be an innovation of Joseph Stalin, but in reality Lenin's famine of 1921-22 was a learning experience for the Soviet totalitarian government. Both Lenin and Stalin considered Ukraine key to the survival of the Soviet State, yet their independent-mindedness made Ukraine the most dangerous of all the republics. Therefore throughout the Bolshevik occupation of Ukraine every imaginable Ukrainian nationalist institution was purged and or eliminated. The culmination of this act of subjugation resulted in the genocide of 1932-33. It was Stalin's shining moment in his career of terror and destruction of the Ukrainian nation.

Collectivization was thought to be the means by which communist Russia could achieve the lofty and unrealistic goals set forth by Stalin's Five year Plan. The Agricultural exports would be used to fund Russia's military and industrial programs. At the very beginning of forced collectivization the Ukrainian landowning class assumed an attitude of determined opposition to the government and systematically refused to carry out its orders.

During the Third All-Ukrainian Party Conference in July of 1932, Communist Party politburo members V. Molotov and L. Kaganovich expressed the dissatisfaction of the central committee as to the progress that the Ukrainian party organization had made in the Ukrainian agricultural sector. With goals not being met, Moscow took steps to realize the plan of starving the Ukrainian land owners bringing them to their knees and ending all ideas of individual ownership. Systematically through various decrees the "kulaks," as an economic class were to be destroyed by a specially organized and trained set of armed forces. As Stalin continued to export 1.7 tons of grain and to store millions of tons in state reserves, the horror of mass starvation began.

As famine was raging across Ukraine and holding the Ukrainian people in its grip, the absence of food was slowly turning into an absence of life. Prominent author Vasilij Grossman writes "Within the villages mothers looked at their children and screamed in fear, they screamed as if a snake had crept into their house. And this snake was Famine, Starvation, Death." At first the children cried all day for food, and in the streets and villages the swollen bodies of the dead began to pile up. In order to hide the mounting death toll and prevent the dead from being used as food, communist party workers would come and collect the dead, transporting them to unidentified mass graves.

The physical harm that was inflicted upon the Ukrainian people was no more horrible than the psychological impact. Starvation often led to insanity and dehumanization. At this time I would ask everyone in the audience to visualize your child, your mother or father, your brother or sister to weak to scream or even cry, their abdomen swollen, nothing left but skin and bones and dying before your eyes. And then watch as they take the body away and leave you to suffer the same fate. This is the most cruel of all punishments that one can be subjected to.

How completely diabolical a plan, a plan which needed no bullets, and could kill more people in a short period of time, without leaving a trace as to who the perpetrator was. And could be explained as self-inflicted.

Lev Kopelev, later one of Russia's leading dissidents wrote "It was excruciating to see and hear all this. And even worse, to take part in it. We were realizing historical necessity, we were performing our revolutionary duty. We were obtaining grain for the socialist fatherland. For the five-year Plan. Our great goal was the universal triumph of communism and for the sake of that goal everything was permissible - to lie, to steal, to destroy hundreds of thousands and even millions of people, all those who were hindering our work or could hinder it, everyone who stood in the way. And to hesitate or doubt about all this was to give in to "ineffectual squeamishness" and "stupid liberalism".

As for the question of how the world was kept unaware, the plans were also very well thought out. At this particular time in history "socialism " was entrapping the minds of the western world, it provided a political and economic system free from guilt. Society would run the Soviet economy instead of private persons and the end result would be the end of capitalism. Soviet

sympathizers in the west saw the Soviet System as both anti-capitalist and a generally acceptable formula for social reorganization.

The western media fell right into the trap of Soviet propaganda and while always finding the faults and failings of their own governments they blindly accepted soviet reports and showed great loyalty to the soviet culture.

As the famine spread, many prominent western figures traveled to Ukraine. The incidence of deception and self-deception were very plain to see- for example: in preparation for a state visit to Ukraine by a French statesman , Edouard Herriot in 1933, the population worked from 2 am, cleaning the streets, decorating houses, removing the homeless, beggars and starving people. Shop windows were filled with food, the hotel he was to stay in was completely refurbished and his entire experience was confined to visiting model collective farms where all the peasants were selected communists who were well fed . As a result, he denied that any famine had taken place.

Another prominent example is that of the New York Times Pulitzer Prize winning correspondent Walter Duranty. Mr. Duranty personally told others that he estimated the famine victims at around 7 million. Yet, what the American public read in his column was that any report of famine was exaggeration or malignant propaganda. The recently released KGB files and cables of the U.S. State Department identified him as a cooperative individual to the Soviet State.

There were a few reporters like Malcom Muggeridge and other westerners who gave true accounts of the situation. These reports were deemed untrue and dismissed. These reporters were vilified or fired.

This act of not only ethnic but socioeconomic cleansing was hidden by the soviet government for many years. We commend the brave survivors, their descendants and Ukrainians worldwide who have not wavered in their battle to have The Ukrainian Genocide Famine recognized by the whole world.

So where are we today ? And what must we do to ensure that this genocide is never forgotten?

The events in Ukraine during the "Orange Revolution" have given the Ukrainian nation a new kind of leadership and a new view on the Ukrainian Genocide Famine. The new president Mr. Viktor Yushchenko has been very vocal in his feelings about the famine and has recently issued a decree on additional measures for honoring and perpetuating the memory of the victims of the famine. His initial plans include the identification and marking of mass-graves, a museum complex, study center and park system devoted to the Ukrainian Genocide Famine.

The Ukrainian Genocide Famine Foundation of The USA has also made significant strides in educating and propagating the history of The Ukrainian Genocide Famine. We are very pleased to have with us today the honorable State Sen. Jacqueline Collins and State representative John Fritvhey, unfortunately the other sponsor State Representative Peter Froehlich was not able to attend. They sponsored the recently passed bill by Governor Blagojevich which requires that public schools in Illinois teach about genocide worldwide, including The Ukrainian Famine Genocide of 1932-33. This is the first step in getting all States and the Federal Government to acknowledge and educate the public regarding the crime against humanity perpetrated by Stalin and The Soviet Union.

Another major achievement by the Genocide Famine Foundation was the creation of a professional, informative web site at [www.ukrainiangenocide.com](http://www.ukrainiangenocide.com). With the world getting most of their news and information via the internet this will play a vital role in educating and informing people around the globe of this tragic event.

Dear friends, as the old saying goes.. "education starts in the home"... How do we measure up? Do our families know this history? If not, then It is our duty to start this work in our homes, then our churches and youth organizations. Each parent should educate their children as to what happened and why. Each Ukrainian school curriculum must include instruction devoted to The Ukrainian Genocide Famine. We must not think that because we attend Ukrainian functions or our children go to Ukrainian summer camp...this satisfies our responsibilities. What kind of concerned Ukrainian or Ukrainian-American can barely find time once a year to discuss and commemorate the extermination of over 10 million innocent lives because they were Ukrainian! This must be a constant campaign to right the injustice that was inflicted on the Ukrainian nation. We must support the publication of educational materials for use in the schools tailored for various age groups and the society at large. In order to accomplish these goals we need the enthusiastic support of the community and your generous financial contributions. Without adequate funds we cannot achieve our goal, during the intermission you will have an opportunity to donate and help the foundation reach our common goals. " Let not their sacrifice be in vain!" Vichnaya Pamyat! Memory Eternal!