

seven million deaths ignored?

people die from hunger. What of it? It is still worth the price of communism" (*New York Evening Journal*, May 29, 1935).

Why Did the World Ignore The Terrible Suffering and Deaths of Millions of Innocent Ukrainians?

As brutal as the communist actions were, perhaps no less guilty was the Western World which refused to act in an effort to stop the slaughter. As Dr. Krawchenko stated, "To observe an evil and be silent, is to contribute to the crime itself."

The May 23, 1983 edition of *Time* magazine described the situation as follows: "This is the 50th Anniversary of the enforced famine engineered by Stalin in which some eight to 10 million Ukrainians and Cossacks perished. Their extermination was a matter of state policy....They died, and yet the grass has grown over the world's memory of their murder. Why? The numbers of the dead would surely qualify an entry (one thinks mordantly) for some genocidal hall of fame."

In the October 31, 1983 edition of the *Alberta Report*, Marco Carynnyk, a Toronto-based free-lance writer and translator, explained the relative silence about the famine: "For the most part, says Mr. Carynnyk, the Moscow press consisted of western journalists sympathetic to the cause of the Russian Revolution, inclined to believe what the Soviets told them."

"When word began leaking into Moscow from foreign engineers and technicians returning from the Ukraine, their reports were discounted by most. There was a prohibition on travel, for another thing."

"For a third, in the spring of 1933, a group of British engineers working in Moscow had been put on trial for espionage. The story was top priority for the press corps, and the Soviets told them if they wrote about the famine they would not be allowed to cover the trial."

"Some got the story in spite of all this. Malcolm

Muggeridge had gone to Moscow for the *Manchester Guardian* as a Communist sympathizer, and indeed, was fully expecting to live the rest of his life in the USSR. When he heard of the famine, the embittered Mr. Muggeridge simply eluded the security net and hopped on a train to the Ukraine. He saw for himself and sent back to Britain by diplomatic pouch to avoid the censor."

Little did the world realize that within a few years, another propaganda effort would be made, this time by Germany, to deny the occurrence of a second holocaust.

To be sure, efforts were made to help the starving victims. Marco Carynnyk, who five years ago embarked on a single-handed research to document this

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holocaust, wrote the book, *Black Spring: A Documentary History of the Ukrainian Famine of 1933*.

In his 1983 book he goes on to explain a number of the appeals that were made to the Western leaders, including Canada's R.B. Bennett. One such appeal pleaded "to the opinion of the civilized world in the hope that it will force the Soviet government to cease this inhuman policy...." The pleas fell on deaf ears.

The Western governments, however, ignored the famine for a number of reasons. One factor was that the Western powers were preparing to allow the USSR to enter the League of Nations, and they were therefore afraid to "offend" the Soviet Union for their slaughtering of the Ukrainians.

Another reason was Hitler's rise to power in 1933,

which found countries such as France and Britain seeking possible alliance with the USSR.

Marco Carynnyk summarized the situation best in his 1983 book, where he states: "The primary reason for the conspiracy of silence, of course, is the calculated campaign of misinformation that the Soviet authorities mounted to keep their doings secret.

Remarked William Chamberlin, an American correspondent who had visited the famine regions, "They are as sensitive as the most temperamental artist when the effects of their ruthless policies are criticized, or even when they are stated objectively, without comment."

"The Soviet campaign was largely successful.

"But the Soviet lie would not have been so widely believed if many Western quarters had not tacitly accepted it. Long ignored archival evidence shows that the major Western governments....were well informed about the horrors of the famine in Ukraine and yet turned a blind eye to murder."

Marco Carynnyk suggests that this indifference and silence "is itself little short of criminal."

The suffering of the Ukrainians should not be forgotten.

To quote U of A President Myer Horowitz from the Oct. 23 "hungry dinner," "And in 1983 dare we rest easily? Are we confident that nowhere on earth, at this very moment, is there a child being subjected to artificial famine and, therefore, real hunger?...We whose kin perished in the 1930's and 1940's because of willful, conscious and bestial acts against humanity have a double obligation: firstly, to join my university colleague Professor Slavutych who in yesterday's *Edmonton Journal* (Oct. 22) told us of his oath to his grandfather to tell and retell what happened and, secondly, as citizens in a land of freedom to accept greater responsibility to support each other and to protect people in every part of the world in a universal and solemn pledge: "Never Again!"

Famine survivor recalls genocide

Last week, I had the opportunity to interview recently retired U of A Professor Yar Slavutych, a Ukrainian famine survivor. Mr. Slavutych has taught Slavic languages here since 1960. He was 14 when the famine hit Ukraine, and later fought both Germans and Russians in the underground Ukrainian army. Like most Ukrainian refugees, he escaped Ukraine for freedom at the end of the last war. Some of his experiences are almost mind-boggling.

Mr. Slavutych, what experiences can you remember about the Ukrainian Famine?

In 1932, there was an excellent harvest. I was 14 years at that time. My father was a farmer.

In August of 1932, we received a household quota. That is, we had to give away to the government a certain amount of grain. We fulfilled that household quota. Two weeks later, they sent us another household quota, which was even bigger. It was impossible to fulfill and have enough to last through the winter, so we were marked for destruction.

As a result, they encircled our farm one night and arrested my father and myself and took us to a railroad station to be deported out of Ukraine. At the railroad station, there were hundreds of local Ukrainians under arrest and put into cattlewagons. They were to be deported outside of Ukraine, because we did not want to join the collective farms. When the train I was put on left the Ukrainian territory, I managed to escape with other fellows about my own age. We made a hole in the ceiling, then jumped out when the train was in motion.

I returned to my home about one month later. What I saw was complete destruction — our farm was destroyed, ruined, burned. The water well covered with earth. My mother and younger sisters were chased away from the farm because we did not want to join the (state-run) collective farm.

Their purpose was to destroy the good Ukrainian farmers, and just to make them slaves in the collective farms.

Our family consisted of 10 persons....grandfather, grandmother, father, mother and 6 children — 3 died because of the famine. The first who died was my youngest sister who was 5 months old, and then my grandmother.

After I returned home, I went to the state farm to work. I was receiving twice a day soup in the morning and in the evening a slice of bread.

Then I wanted to save my grandfather. I was bringing him whatever I could spare almost every week. He was living about 20 kilometers away. On my way to my grandfather I saw corpses lying and decaying. Well, my grandfather was completely swollen from starvation. His legs were five times the normal size, but he was still conscious when I came that day to bring him food. He just touched the piece of bread to his lips and then passes it back to me and said: 'You eat it. You survive, but you must promise to tell the world how the Russians are killing off our people.' He then made me swear an oath to tell the world about this. He died in my arms

within half an hour. As he asked me, I then went and buried him on what had been our farm for generations. He did not want to be buried in one of the mass graves with 10, 20, 30 corpses.

I heard of instances of cannibalism and I know of one instance. There was a good family. One of the daughters went to school with me. I was 10 years old and she was about 7. Well, the mother was grateful that I walked to school with her daughter, so she awarded me

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with apples and candy. And what I have learned later was that this girl's father died, her sisters died, and her mother went mad....she lost her mind. Once she saw a huge turkey in the yard. She took the knife, killed it and boiled it, ate it, and then she wanted to share this with her daughter. "Where is my daughter?" She then came to her senses and discovered that her daughter's head was lying on the floor in the house. While going insane, she killed her daughter. After that, she ran outside and was cursing the Soviet government for what they did to us. "I committed such a sin, I slain my daughter." She was crying. She was, of course, arrested and shot.

In that territory where I lived, which encompassed 1200 persons, almost half disappeared....either died of famine or deported and disappeared.

And now, do you know what is now in Ukraine? There are so-called freedom fighters, who are opposing forceful Russification. That means, everybody has to forget his or her native tongue, and speak Russian only.

This is forcefully imposed on Ukrainians against their will. They protest, and are arrested for that. In Siberia, there are currently thousands of such Ukrainians arrested and deported to concentration camps for hard labour, for the defense of the Ukrainian language. That is being done not only in Ukraine, but in other republics.

How would you compare the horrors of your experience in the famine, with the horrors of your experience in the Second World War?

During the Second World War, I was in the Ukrainian underground. We were fighting for a free and independent Ukraine. We were fighting Germans and Russians alike.

Well, both were terribly bad. But famine was, I guess, the worst, because it was in peace. In a war, innocent people are killed. But in peacetime, people are dying for what? Just because they had that spirit of being independent. They did not want to join collective farms. In my memory there are many scars.

During the war, of course, it was bad. I have seen many villages destroyed, burned. Well, my first wife

with our child who was only 3 or 4 hours old were burned alive by the Nazis. So you see, it was a terrible experience for me.

International Relief Agencies offered to enter Ukraine and help prevent more starvation. Joseph Stalin refused their request on the grounds that there was no famine. Do you feel that if the western world took more notice of what the Communists were doing, that they could have pressured the Soviets to relent on their extermination of the Ukrainian people?

You are absolutely correct. If the Western press would write about the famine in Ukraine, and people expressed protest through the League of Nations or other sources, then I am sure that the famine would not have gone on so long. We would have received the grain back which was taken from us and was stored in piles.

Even now we should exercise pressure through the United Nations, that Moscow should be judged and brought to the court of conscience. The whole world should know what they have done, in order not to repeat that in other countries.

Let's say the Communists take over Canada. I am sure something similar would be invented by the Communists.

A number of famine survivors have said they are afraid to give their full name in public because of fear of repercussions in the Soviet Union against their families. How could repercussions occur in the Soviet Union when it is thousands of miles away from Canada?

The Soviet system is (designed) to scare others, that people would not feel that they are free to tell the truth.

They have plenty of spies. They inform the Soviet embassy in Ottawa. As soon as you publish this article, the Soviet embassy in Ottawa will be transmitting the article.

If I go to the USSR, they will arrest me for "anti-Soviet propaganda." So that means I should never tell the truth? I have told 100 per cent truth!

What can, say, university students do to prevent something like the Ukrainian Holocaust from ever occurring in Canada or any other nation?

Well, first of all to know the truth of why the famine was deliberately organized.

Instead of demonstrating against missiles, we have to demonstrate to give freedom to those enslaved nations. If the whole world would shout, 'Stop destroying Afghanistan. Give independence to those people who want to be independent,' then they would think of it. But the Soviet government are masters of propaganda. Instead of admitting that they are guilty, they always find somebody else who is guilty.

We can act through our governments and the United Nations. We should tie economic trade with human rights. That would give moral support to the people. Perhaps that would be detrimental to further Soviet expansion.