

About Raphael Lemkin

The term GENOCIDE –from the root words *genos* (Greek for family) and *cide* (Latin for killing) was first coined in 1943 by Raphael Lemkin, a lawyer of Polish-Jewish descent. As we commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine, it is befitting for Ukrainians throughout the world to recognize this scholar who not only developed the concept of GENOCIDE, but also, tirelessly and successfully sought to have it adopted in 1948 by the General Assembly of the United Nations as the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*.

In his monumental, as yet unpublished monograph *History of Genocide*, Raphael Lemkin devotes an entire chapter to the Holodomor in Ukraine. Excerpts from this chapter, *Soviet Genocide in Ukraine* appear below:

“...What I want to speak about is perhaps the classic example of Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment in Russification – the destruction of the Ukrainian nation...”

...As long as Ukraine retains its national unity, as long as its people continue to think of themselves as Ukrainians and to seek independence, so long Ukraine poses a serious threat to the very heart of Sovietism...

...For the Ukrainian is not and has never been, a Russian. His culture, his temperament, his language, his religion – all are different...

...The nation is too populous to be exterminated completely with any efficiency. However, its leadership, religious, intellectual, political, its select and determining parts, are quite small and therefore easily eliminated, and so it is upon these groups particularly that the full force of the Soviet axe has fallen, with its familiar tools of mass murder, deportation and forced labor, exile and starvation.

The attack has manifested a systematic pattern, with the whole process repeated again and again to meet fresh outburst of national spirit. The first blow is aimed at the intelligentsia, the national brain, so as to paralyze the rest of the body. In 1920, 1926 and again in 1930-33, teachers, writers, artists, thinkers, political leaders, were liquidated, imprisoned or deported...

Going along with this attack on the intelligentsia was an offensive against the churches, priests and hierarchy, the “soul” of Ukraine...

...These attacks on the Soul have had and will continue to have a serious effect on the Brain of Ukraine, for it is the families of the clergy that have traditionally supplied a large part of the intellectuals, while the priests themselves have been the leaders of the villages, their wives the heads of the charitable organizations. The religious orders ran schools, took care of much of the organized charities.

The third prong of the Soviet plan was aimed at the farmers, the large mass of independent peasants who are the repository of the tradition, folk lore and music, the national language and literature, the national spirit, of Ukraine. The weapon used against this body is perhaps the most terrible of all – starvation...

...The fourth step in the process consisted in the fragmentation of the Ukrainian people at once by the addition to the Ukraine of foreign peoples and by the dispersion of the Ukrainians throughout Eastern Europe. In this way, ethnic unity would be destroyed and nationalities mixed...

...These have been the chief steps in the systematic destruction of the Ukrainian nation

... This is not simply a case of mass murder. It is a case of genocide, of destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation.”

The entire text of this chapter is soon to be published in English in the USA as well as in other countries and languages.