

Transcript of Speech by;
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At an event commemorating the 1932-33 Ukrainian Famine (the Holodomor)

Parliament Hill
Ottawa, Ontario
November 22, 2011

Reverend fathers, colleagues, distinguished guests, friends and everyone participating in tonight's event,

This is Holodomor Awareness week. Three years ago, Parliament made the right decision in supporting my private members bill, to not only establish the Holodomor Memorial Day, 4th Saturday of every November, but to call it for what it really is, a genocide. A genocide that was denied for generations. A genocide that had been swept under the rug. A genocide that those who survived it were scared to talk about it because of silly oppression, because of how they escaped from Ukraine to come to other parts of the world, and now are scared to dig up those old memories. We are fortunate to have Holodomor survivors still amongst us. We can talk about the tragedy, the disaster, the killing of a lot of loved ones.

Let us never forget that Joseph Stalin, those communist thugs, his allies who tried to extinguish Ukrainian nationalism. They tried in 1921-22, with their first experiment in using food as a weapon. They tried again by collectivization pushing all the farmers off, the kulaks, off their land to send them off to Siberia in the Gulags. They tried to oppress all of the uprisings that were happening in the villages in the 20's and across the country, and weren't successful even though they moved in the Red Army - the Russian Red Army - to quash the uprising, the Ukrainian nationalists that were proud of who they were.

So, in 1932-33 Stalin and the communists starved millions to death. As I have said in many speeches before, to put it into context today: Ukraine in 1932 had a population very similar to Canada today. So if we picture Canada, say Joseph Stalin came here and just decided that western Canadians were just too proud, saying, "we are going to teach these guys a lesson." They would come into Manitoba. First of all, he would make sure that all the political leaders, all the clergy, all the academics were shipped off to the Gulags and those who resisted were shot on the streets. Then, he would go out and take all the food, all the crops, all the livestock; go into every house and just empty all the pantries and cupboards bare; take everything out of the fridge. And if they didn't sell it to help build the nation and industrialize their country, they would throw it into Lake Winnipeg. But then, just watch, everybody starve to death. Every man, woman and child in Manitoba starve to death.

But still, we haven't even approached the millions that died in Ukraine. So, we'd have to go to Saskatchewan. We'd have to go to every farm and every household. We would take their production, all their harvest, all their livestock, all their food, from the pantries, from the kitchens, from the fridges to the stores and throw it all into Lake Winnipeg.

But we still don't have the picture. We'd have to go to Alberta and do it again. Take all that food and starve every man, woman and child. But we still haven't even accomplished what Stalin did to Ukraine in 1932-33.

We'd have to go to British Columbia and raid every house, take every kernel of grain and every animal that is walking on the farms and down the streets and ship them away and throw away what isn't sold into Lake Winnipeg and watch every man, woman and child starve to death. Horrific, horrific deaths.

Then, only then, after you have starved everybody to death in Western Canada, would we understand the impact of what happened under Joseph Stalin in Ukraine.

You know, I said earlier today in the House of Commons, “Stalin tried to kill Ukrainian nationalism.” And all of us here are proud of our Ukrainian heritage and those who are friends of Ukraine are proud to stand and say “Stalin failed.”

It’s important that each and every one of us get out this week throughout Holodomor Awareness Week and make sure people understand what happened in Ukraine. It’s the only way that we can honour the memories of those who perished and those victims who survived. And it’s only through that type of education and public awareness that we will ever be able to prevent these types of genocides from happening again. Raphael Lemkin defined what genocide is. As a Hungarian Jew, he witnessed three genocides: the Armenian genocide; he lived and survived the Holocaust; but he also witnessed and wrote about the Ukrainian Holodomor.

We have to make sure that never happens again. Vichnaya Pamyat. In remembrance everlasting.