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THE UKRAINIAN DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE HOLODOMOR (LATE 1940S - EARLY 1950S)

Abstract: This article examines the role of the Ukrainian community in the United States in discussions around the topic of genocide and the UN Genocide Convention during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Based on US Congressional publications and articles in American and diaspora periodicals, the authors study the attempts of Ukrainian Americans to raise awareness about the Holodomor and hold the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) accountable for its crimes against the Ukrainian nation. Special attention is given to the cooperation between Raphael Lemkin, a prominent international lawyer who coined the term 'genocide', and Lev E. Dobriansky, the president of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), on the issue of advocacy for the ratification of the UN Genocide Convention.

Keywords: Holodomor, genocide, diaspora, Raphael Lemkin, Lev E. Dobriansky.

Introduction

In 1933, when severe man-made famine was raging in the Ukrainian SSR, the Ukrainian community in the United States was organising rallies to raise awareness about the mass starvation and force the US government to take action that could help alleviate the suffering of millions (Kovalchuk 2008, 386-387; Vronska & Ostashko 2003, 783-784). In particular, the protesters opposed the official recognition of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) by the United States. These campaigns were unsuc-

cessful, and on November 16, 1933, President Roosevelt established diplomatic relationships with the Soviet government.

After World War II, the Ukrainian population in the United States increased significantly because of the influx of refugees from the displaced persons (DP) camps in Germany, Austria and other European countries. During the third wave of immigration (from 1947 to 1952), about 85,000 Ukrainians moved to the United States (Lazebnyk 1991, 96). Although most of them came from western regions of Ukraine and emigrated for primarily political reasons, such as fear of persecution by the Communist authorities (Rovenchak and Volodko 2018, 36), some newcomers previously lived in the USSR and personally experienced the Holodomor, which stemmed from Soviet collectivisation involving forcible seizure of grain, food and land. Ukrainian émigrés in the United States demanded that Western governments condemn the Soviet policies that led to the deaths of millions of their compatriots.

As a result, starting from the late 1940s and early 1950s, the Ukrainian community in the United States was again actively drawing attention to the situation in the USSR, both in the past and currently, particularly to the systematic abuse of human rights. The geopolitical situation – the beginning of the Cold War and, consequently, the dissemination of anti-Communist sentiments – was somewhat more conducive to their efforts.

However, the majority of the scholarship devoted to the Ukrainian diaspora's work, which is aimed at popularising the topic of the Holodomor among the general public, focuses on the period of the 1980s, especially the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the famine in 1983 (Kovalchuk 2009; Mace 2003; Sysyn 2015). Much less attention is paid to the period of the 1950s. In particular, Bohdan Klid (2014) analysed how Ukrainian émigrés studied the famine and raised awareness about it through the prism of the two-volume *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A*

White Book, which was published in 1953 in Toronto (Volume 1) and 1955 in Detroit (Volume 2).

A scholar of the Ukrainian diaspora, Olha Sukhobokova (2023, 119), studied the history of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA) and mentioned the attempts of its leader, Lev E. Dobriansky, to include support for the national self-determination of Eastern European nations on the platform of the Republican Party. She also covered the connections of the UCCA with different US high-ranking politicians and political forces in the second half of the twentieth century. In the context of the Holodomor commemoration, Sukhobokova (2023, 121) touched upon such campaigns in the 1980s, but not in the 1950s.

Working in the field of memory studies, Wiktoria Kudela-Swiatek (2021) focused on the Holodomor discourse created by the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States during the Cold War, particularly by the clergy and parishioners of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Her detailed analysis of church source materials, however, does not cover the connections between the religious community and the leaders of Ukrainian émigré organizations.

Moreover, utilising the Communist Party's archival documents, Valeriy Vasylyev (2008) examined how the Soviet diplomatic representations in the United States monitored the Ukrainian diaspora's efforts to collect and publish information about the Holodomor.

The historian Olga Andriewsky (2021) studied early collections of Holodomor witness accounts, compiled and published in the United States and Canada during the first decade after World War II. She argued that the 'early Cold War empowered these refugees to tell their stories. It also provided them with a receptive audience willing to recognise and validate their suffering' (Andriewsky 2021, 170). Out of the four collections which Andriewsky focused on, namely the *Oseredok* collection (1947-1948),

the Harvard Project on the Soviet Social System (1949-1952), the Genocide Hearings in the US Senate (1950), and the Hearings of the House Select Committee on Communist Aggression (1954), the third one is of particular importance here, because it was produced with the aim of proving the genocidal nature of Soviet policies towards Ukrainians and other non-Russian nations.

Furthermore, Boriak (2024), who also focused on oral testimonies about the 1932-1933 famine collected outside the USSR after World War II, described how many witnesses were unwilling to speak openly about their experience, although they had left the Soviet Union and were living in democratic countries (Boriak 2024, 321). He briefly mentions the activities of the Ukrainian community in the United States aimed at disseminating information about the Holodomor and other Soviet atrocities against Ukrainians (Boriak 2024, 331).

Ukrainian intellectuals who lived in the United States after World War II actively discussed the topic of genocide in general and the possibility of using the 1948 Genocide Convention to hold the leaders of the USSR accountable for crimes against Ukrainians through the mechanism of the newly created United Nations. The centre for this movement was the UCCA, headed by Stepan Shumeyko from 1944-1949 and Lev Dobriansky from 1949-1954. The latter cooperated with Raphael Lemkin, a prominent international lawyer who coined the term ‘genocide’, on the matter of the ratification of the Genocide Convention and condemnation of Soviet crimes.

Some scholars have pointed out Lemkin’s connections with Eastern European émigré organisations, especially in the early 1950s (Weiss-Wendt 2005, 556; Cooper 2008, 212; Irvin-Erickson 2017, 205). Nevertheless, they could not and/or did not set themselves the task of revealing the exchange of ideas between Lemkin and these communities.

Therefore, this article will focus on the efforts of Ukrainians in the United States aimed at gaining recognition of Soviet policies as genocidal within a wider campaign for the ratification of the 1948 UN Genocide Convention by the US Congress during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Raphael Lemkin at Ukrainian rallies in 1951 and 1953

On April 8, 2009, the *Journal of International Criminal Justice* published the article 'Lemkin on Genocide of Nations' which consisted of a brief editor's note, a preface by Roman Serbyn, and Lemkin's essay 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine'. This document became influential in the interpretation of the Holodomor in the future. The editors' explanation stated, 'The document was known to Lemkin specialists and experts in genocide, although most scholars have tended to ignore it, or downplay it (notable exceptions are John Cooper, Ralph Lemkin, and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2007, 253), as well as J.-L. Panne, "Rafaël Lemkin ou le pouvoir d'un sans-pouvoir", in Rafaël Lemkin, *Qu'est-ce qu'un génocide? Presentation par Jean-Louis Panne* (Monaco: Edition du Rocher 2008)) (Serbyn 2009, 123).

Cooper, who studied Lemkin's biography, postulated that 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine' was the text of the lecture. He wrote, 'The outline of Lemkin's "History of Genocide" contains no mention of the self-imposed famine in the Ukraine in the 1930s, but Lemkin gave a lecture on the subject, possibly at a later stage he meant to incorporate it into the project' (Cooper 2008, 253). Indeed, the original typescript is stored in the New York Public Library Archives (*Raphael Lemkin papers*, b. 2, f. 16), among the materials for Lemkin's unfinished *magnum opus* 'History of Genocide'. However, the original outline of this book did not contain any mention of the 1932-1933 man-made famine (Cooper 2008, 253).

In the preface to his article 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine' in the *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, Serbyn stated that Lemkin had prepared this essay for his speech at the Ukrainian rally devoted to the commemoration of the Holodomor victims in New York in 1953 (Serbyn 2009, 123).

Other scholars affirmed this chronology. For example, the French scholar Annette Becker stated, 'He [Lemkin] gave a well-documented speech for the anniversary of the Great Famine in Ukraine on September 20, 1953, six months after Stalin's death' (Becker 2021, 165). Moreover, D. Irvin-Erickson, who scrupulously analysed Lemkin's mentions of Soviet crimes, considered Lemkin's experience during his early years in Poland as a factor that contributed to the development of his views on Soviet crimes, which he openly expressed after World War II (Irvin-Erickson 2017, 53-55).

However, in his prefaces to the 2009 and 2020 editions of Lemkin's essay translated into several languages, Serbyn (Lemkin 2009; 2020) acknowledged that Lemkin also attended the Ukrainian famine-commemoration rally in Manhattan on November 11, 1951. *The New York Herald Tribune* wrote that this rally resulted in a resolution to the US Senate 'which urged the United States to ratify the Genocide Convention and urged the UN Assembly in Paris to 'investigate Soviet genocide and to brand Soviet genocidists as common criminals according to the law' (*New York Herald Tribune* 1951, 12 November).

The full text of the above-mentioned resolution was published in the Ukrainian newspapers *Svoboda* (1951, 14 November) and *The Ukrainian Weekly* (1951, 19 November). The *Ukrainian Weekly* summarised the speech by Lemkin, who '[…] urged prompt ratification of the Genocide Convention by the US Senate, as a legal guarantee against the crime of genocide continually practiced by the Soviet apparatus of oppression, and as a guarantee of the punishment for the perpetrators' *(The Ukrainian Weekly*, 1951, 19 November).

A few days before the rally, the editors of *Svoboda* spoke with Lemkin. In this conversation, he 'expressed the opinion that individual American groups, particularly such as the Ukrainian Congress Committee and the American-Ukrainian citizens, can do much to help in this regard' [i.e. to apply the Genocide Convention to accuse the USSR — Authors] as they will urge the United Nations General Assembly at its current session in Paris to 'fulfill its duty and apply international law against genocide against the Cain of nations – the Soviet Union,' adding that 'every day of delay in this matter is an accomplice to the crime' *(Svoboda*, 1951, 7 November).

Svoboda described Lemkin's speech in more detail:

> [Dr. Lemkin] started his short speech by recalling the words he had heard in his youth and which he would never forget, namely: Ukraine is not dead yet! He is convinced that Ukraine will not die, will not perish because this is in the interest of all freedom-loving humanity and its development. But the Ukrainian people are mortally threatened by Soviet genocide. Therefore, Ukrainians in the free world, in particular in America, do well by seeking to implement the law against genocide in relation to the Cain of humanity – the Soviet Union. American Ukrainians and their representation – the Ukrainian Congress Committee – have already done a lot in this regard and must continue their efforts (*Svoboda*, 1951, 13 November).

In addition, the American press contains other materials containing Lemkin's criticism of the regime in the USSR as early as 1951: 'Communists fear the genocide convention. Such charges as these may be calculated to discourage ratification by the United States Senate to prevent honest invoking of the convention to save Estonians,

Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians and others from actual genocide' (Kihss 1951, 26).

Regarding the 1953 Ukrainian rally in New York, three media outlets published reports about Lemkin's participation in it: *The Ukrainian Weekly*, *Svoboda*, and *The New York Times.* All of them describe his speech differently. *The Ukrainian Weekly* wrote:

> Prof. Lemkin reviewed in a moving fashion the fate of the millions of Ukrainians before and since 1932-33, who died victims to the Soviet Russian plan to exterminate as many of them as possible in order to break the heroic Ukrainian national resistance to the Soviet Russian rule and occupation and communism (*Ukrainian Weekly*, 1953, 26 September).

The text of 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine' fits this description perfectly, as Serbyn also pointed out in his prefaces to the published translations of Lemkin's essay (Serbyn 2020, 34).

Instead, *Svoboda* wrote, 'Prof. Lemkin ended his speech by repeating in Ukrainian the first words of the Ukrainian anthem "Ukraine is not dead yet!"' (*Svoboda*, 1953, 22 September). The journalists also noted that his speech was not long: 'Prof. Lemkin spoke briefly about the crimes of genocide committed by Moscow, stating that the murder of one nation would mean the murder of humanity. However, he expressed his firm conviction and confidence that Moscow would not succeed in completing its crime against the Ukrainian people and that these people would achieve their goal – a free life in their independent state, for which they are so heroically striving' (*Svoboda*, 1953, 22 September).

In turn, the correspondents of *The New York Times* mentioned that Lemkin 'said that a high crime had been employed 100 years ago against the Irish' (*New York Times*, 1953*,* 21 September). Therefore, according to Serbyn, Lemkin 'was not able to give his integral analysis of the crime. Lemkin's unread text was not published during his lifetime and his innovative analysis remained unknown for many decades' (Serbyn 2020, 12).

Four components of the genocide of Ukrainians

One of the key arguments in Lemkin's 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine' is the concept of four elements of the genocide of Ukrainians (the destruction of the 'brain of the nation' – its intelligentsia, the 'soul of the nation' – the Ukrainian church; the 'body of the nation' – the farmers, and the fragmentation of the nation by means of forced migration). The 1932-1933 famine is seen as one of the integral components of a broader genocide, rather than as an isolated instance of genocide.

Similar ideas were expressed in the article 'The Genocide Convention' by Roman Smal-Stocki,[1] Ukrainian linguist and political figure of the Ukrainian National Republic, who emigrated to the United States in 1947. His text was published in *The Ukrainian Quarterly* in 1949. He wrote:

> What are the methods of Soviet genocide? […] The method progresses through four stages: (a) the first attack is directed against the intelligensia, the nation's leaders and distinguished personalities, its brains. A terroristic mass-blow on the head, on the brain, paralyzes the whole body of the victim-nation; (b) the second stage – often a part of the first – is against the nation's churches. Christianity as a religion, its hierar-

[1] An alternative spelling of his name is Roman Smal-Stocky (both versions can be found in his publications).

> chy and priests are considered forces most dangerous to Communism, and their 'elimination' from the 'battle front' by terroristic measures is necessary before the brain is fully unconscious. This is the attack on the soul of the nation; (c) the third attack uproots the farmers of the nation, the bearers of its traditions, of its folk music and folk literature, of its distinct language. Thus the ethnographical territory of a nation is disrupted, and the way is prepared for the (d) fourth and last stage: the settlement of Russians or Asiatic tribes in order to mix up the nationality in question and create a mixed territory (Smal-Stocki 1949, 153).

Moreover, Smal-Stocki's article was written before Lemkin's essay. This can be demonstrated by the fact that Lemkin cited the summer 1949 volume of *The Ukrainian Quarterly* (Serbyn 2020, 49), while Smal-Stocki's article was published in the previous volume of the journal (Spring 1949, 144-163).

In this article, Smal-Stocki sharply criticised the 1948 UN Genocide Convention as being incapable of protecting the non-Russian nations oppressed within the USSR. He emphasised that the USSR representatives in the United Nations insisted on including the phrase 'as such' in the definition of genocide, because it removes all previous crimes of the USSR from the scope of the Convention: Soviet authorities allegedly fought against the 'bandits', 'saboteurs', 'rebels', etc., but not with the respective national and/or religious groups (Smal-Stocki 1949, 145). He added, 'Is not the stipulation "as such" a mockery of justice, since it enables the Soviet government to deny that the separate stages of its scientific method directed against (1) the intelligentsia, (2) the church, (3) the peasantry are acts of genocide, when the separate stages taken together constitute the murder of a nation?' (Smal-Stocki 1949, 160).

In Smal-Stocki's opinion, for the Bolsheviks, 'the use of genocide against opposing groups and nations is lawful because to the Soviet there is no "peace-time".

Until the total victory of the Communist World Revolution, for the Soviet government, inside and outside the Soviet Union, there is "war-time"' (Smal-Stocki 1949, 152). He also called signing the Genocide Convention 'a heavy blow […] to the authority and the prestige of the UN and the idea of democracy and international law' (Smal-Stocki 1949, 160), because democratic countries signed this document with the USSR, which will continue to exterminate entire peoples without bearing any responsibility for it.

At the same time, Smal-Stocki's criticism is directed not against the concept of genocide in general, but against the compromised definition of this crime given in the 1948 UN Genocide Convention, as well as, for example, the recognition by democratic countries of the USSR's ability to investigate cases of genocide independently, which follows from the fact of the signing of the Convention by representatives of the Kremlin.

Another text where metaphors about the nation's 'brain', 'soul' and 'body' and its fragmentation were used is the speech delivered by Dobriansky, the chair of the UCCA, on February 9, 1950 (almost three years before Lemkin spoke at the Ukrainian rally in New York), during the hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also known as the McMahon Committee (*US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, 1950).

Factual data provided by Lemkin in 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine' often repeat the information from Dobriansky's and Smal-Stocki's works. These include, in particular, references to 51,713 (or 51,712) Ukrainian intellectuals exiled to Siberia during 1931; 10,000 Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church clergymen exterminated between 1926 and 1932; the sharp reduction in the size of the Ukrainian population in Ukraine from 80% to 63.2% between 1930 and 1939, etc. Moreover, these texts even share a similar mistake: Lemkin mentions the 'Soviet writer Kossies,' referring to S.

Kosior, while Dobriansky refers to the 'Soviet writer, Kossier'. Both authors quote the exact words of Kosior about the danger of Ukrainian nationalism. Previously in 1946, Dobriansky made the same mistake in spelling Kosior's last name in one of his articles published in *The Ukrainian Quarterly* (Dobriansky 1946, 148).

Finally, the text of Dobriansky's statement before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is kept among Lemkin's papers stored in the Centre for Jewish History in New York (*Raphael Lemkin Collection*, Box 7, Folder 10 (P-154): Source Materials, Clippings and Correspondence, Misc., undated, 1763, 1919, 1947-1948).

All these similarities between the earlier texts by Smal-Stocki and Dobriansky, and the later text by Lemkin, may indicate that Lemkin is unlikely to be the sole author of the concept of the four components of Soviet genocide. In our opinion, it was proposed by Smal-Stocki and later developed and promoted by Dobriansky.

Raphael Lemkin's cooperation with Ukrainian organisations

As noted by Douglas Irvin-Erickson, Lemkin and Eastern European communities in the United States had a common interest in the ratification of the UN Genocide Convention by the US Senate: 'In an effort to overcome this conservative opposition to the Genocide Convention, Lemkin turned to the Lithuanian, Polish, and Ukrainian diasporas to lobby elected officials. Lemkin's goal was to show the most conservative of US politicians that this law could be an essential weapon for them to use to combat communism' (Irvin-Erickson 2017, 205).

Andriewsky also characterised the cooperation between Lemkin and the UCCA on the matter of the ratification of the Genocide Convention (Andriewsky 2021, 165). In particular, she cited an article in *Svoboda* from May 21, 1952, in which Lemkin expressed his gratitude to the UCCA deputy chair Dmytro Halychyn for his actions aimed at the ratification of the said Convention in Canada (the Canadian par-

liament ratified the document on September 3, 1952) (*United Nations Treaty Collection*, 2025). In her article, Andriewsky briefly mentions the testimonies of the representatives of the Ukrainian community at the hearings regarding the ratification of the UN Genocide Convention by the US Senate, which took place on February 9, 1950, chaired by Senator McMahon (Andriewsky 2021, 165-167).

Along with Samantha Power (2013, 65), Anton Weiss-Wendt notes that Lemkin was not invited to testify at the hearing of the US Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, because he 'had annoyed a number of prominent politicians with his aggressive lobbying' of the Genocide Convention (Weiss-Wendt 2017, 149). However, he had a chance to prepare his 'contacts' from the Eastern European émigré environment to testify in front of the Committee.

At these hearings, Ukrainians were represented by Lev Dobriansky and Antin Batiuk, president of the Ukrainian Workingmen's Association. Their speeches were published in the *Congressional Record*.

Weiss-Wendt sharply criticises the testimony of Lev Dobriansky, as well as of other speakers who represented the Eastern European nations (Weiss-Wendt 2017). However, his critique of the 'inexplicitness' of Dobriansky's arguments raises some questions. Instead, in its February 15, 1950, issue, *Svoboda* cited the words of Sen. Brian McMahon, who chaired the hearings and later, in unofficial conversations, characterised Dobriansky's speech as brilliant (*Svoboda*, 1950, 15 February).

Moreover, in the same article, *Svoboda* mentions that it was quite difficult to organise Dobriansky's speech at the hearings, since 'at the very beginning […], the Committee issued strong warnings not to include the arguments and cases that could directly connect the Convention with the Soviets, who – by the way – are also the partners of the said Convention.' Nevertheless, owing to the active cooperation of the Ukrainian community, and especially thanks to the efforts of Lemkin and

Sen. McMahon, who had anti-communist views, Dobriansky was allowed to testify. In particular, this is how *Svoboda* characterised the importance of his speech: 'this is an undoubtedly historical document that, very likely, will create a basis for the future act of conviction against the Soviet international criminals in the courtroom in the new Nuremberg' (*Svoboda*, 1950, 15 February).

On the day of the hearings, Batiuk handed 15 eyewitness accounts and/or their annotations over to the Committee; mostly, they described the famine of the early 1930s (*United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*, 1950, 354-355).

Svoboda called the corpus of the documents collected by the UCCA a 'Blue Book' (*Svoboda*, 1950, 11 February 1950). The text of Dobriansky's speech (without the added documents) was published in separate installments under the title 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine' across four issues of *The Ukrainian Weekly* newspaper during February-March 1950 (*The Ukrainian Weekly*, 1950, 20; 27 February; 6; 13 March).

Dobriansky had previously discussed his speech with Lemkin, as he briefly mentioned in his later memoirs (Dobriansky 1969, 47; Dobriansky 1970, 240). Moreover, Lemkin's cooperation with the Ukrainian organisations in the case of the Senate Hearings was mentioned in *Svoboda*'s announcement of the Manhattan rally that took place on September 20, 1953. In particular, 'Prof. Lemkin, at one time, helped a lot in Ukrainian testimonies before the Congressional Commission in the Vinnytsia case and other acts of Moscow genocide in Ukraine' (*Svoboda*, 1953, 18 September).

After the meeting of the McMahon Committee, Dobriansky continued an active advocacy campaign for ratification of the UN Genocide Convention by the US Congress, while also raising awareness about the Soviet genocide. His other statement, very similar to the one he delivered on February 9, 1950, although without numerous addenda, was published in the *Congressional Digest* (1950, 29(12): 313, 315, 317) and the *Congressional Record* (1950, Appendix, 96(16), A5345-A5347) on the initia-

tive of Sen. Herbert H. Lehman, who represented New York. In 1951, this text was also published in 'The Story of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America' (*The Ukrainian Congress Committee of America*, 1951, 48-55).

Ukrainian press publications also provide evidence that Dobriansky cooperated with Lemkin on the cause of understanding the Soviet genocide and even supported him financially. For example, on September 18, 1984, *Svoboda* wrote, 'Prof. Raphael Lemkin […] after arriving to America, cooperated with Prof. Lev Dobriansky, the then UCCA President, whom Lemkin received financial support from' (*Svoboda* 1984, 18 September). Cooper states that in 1952 Lemkin received $400 from UCCA (Cooper 2008, 212).

On July 15, 1951, *The New York Times* published Dobriansky's note 'Imperialism of Russia' (*New York Times*, 1951, 15 July). In November of that year, after a large Ukrainian demonstration in New York, the UCCA sent a telegram to the UN General Assembly. 'In the telegram on the issue of genocide, it was stated that red Moscow and international communism were continuing their crimes of genocide in order to take over the world, and, therefore, the UCC is trying to track this issue and to use the provisions of the convention against the genocide in relation to Soviet genociders' (*Svoboda*, 1951, 16 November).

Svoboda also emphasised that it was necessary to continue collecting and publishing information on Soviet crimes. On November 17, 1951, it wrote, 'Ukrainians, except for the Prof. Dobriansky's testimonies in the Senate Commission last year, have to make the following respective steps in the Vinnytsia case and other documented Soviet crimes of genocide in Ukraine. It is necessary to work on the documentary articles in this case; it is necessary to prepare now what could, under every examination, be considered an act of appeal for genocide committed by the Kremlin against the Ukrainian nation, and it is also necessary to make every effort now to stop this

genocide' (*Svoboda*, 1951, 17 November). In early 1952, *The New York Times* published another brief letter by Dobriansky, in which he asked the Senate to ratify the Convention (Dobriansky 1952).

Discussions of the concept of genocide in the Ukrainian émigré environment

For many years the use of the term 'genocide' in the late 1940s and early 1950s in relation to the events of the 1932-1933 famine and the crimes of the Soviet communist regime in Ukraine in general was not taken up by scholars. In 2003, the Ukrainian historian Vasyl Marochko noted, 'Historians and publicists, in fact, did not use the political and legal term 'genocide', although the respective 1948 Convention of the UN General Assembly existed, and in 1951, the USSR joined it' (Marochko 2003, 142). However, when listing the terms used to describe the famine of 1932-1933, he mentioned the phrase 'Moscow nation-killing' [*narodovbyvstvo*] (Marochko 2003, 143), which is a direct translation of the word 'genocide' into Ukrainian.

Ukrainian-language diaspora publications (particularly *Svoboda*) quite often translated the term 'genocide' into Ukrainian as *narodovbyvstvo*. Other Ukrainian media of the 1940s-1950s translated (or, to be more precise, transliterated) this term as 'dzhenosaid' (*Ukrainski visti*, 1947, 10 December; *Svoboda*, 1947, 18 December; *Svoboda*, 1948, 4 December; *Svoboda*, 1950, 28 January; *Nashi Pozytsii*, 1951, 2-3; *Svoboda*, 1951, 14 June; *Svoboda*, [Chubatyi] 1951, 2; *Svoboda*, 1953, 6 October). In addition, in its February 18, 1950, issue the Ukrainian Canadian newspaper *Homin Ukrainy*, published in Toronto, used the term *cholovikovbyvstvo* ['people-killing'] as a translation of 'genocide'. Furthermore, Ivan Dubynets, a Ukrainian émigré scholar who collected the materials for the second volume of the *Black Deeds of the Kremlin: A White Book*, in his article in the *Ukrainski visti* newspaper, which he edited, on Jan-

uary 24, 1952, translated the term 'genocide' as *vynarodovlennia* ['destruction of people'] (Dubynets 1952).

Nevertheless, Marochko, in his later work, *Encyclopedia of the Holodomor*, pointed out that the word 'genocide' was used by the Ukrainian diaspora in the context of the Holodomor as early as 1953. He wrote, 'On February 8, 1953, Dobrus (*Democratic Union of Former Repressed Ukrainians Under Soviets*), commemorating the memory of the famine victims, used the following definition: "the brightest fact of the *narodovbyvstvo* (genocide) of Moscow over Ukraine"' (Marochko 2018, 91). Marochko also noted that *Ukrainski visti* used the word 'genocide' in its appeal on May 31, 1953 (Marochko 2018, 91).

The word *narodovbyvstvo* ['people-killing' or 'nation-killing'] was used in 1930 by Ukrainian writer and public figure Volodymyr Ostrovskyi in reference to the policy of forced assimilation of Ukrainians. His August 1, 1930 article in the *Dilo* newspaper was a reaction to a series of publications in the Polish press by Stanislaw Grabski, professor of Lviv University and Minister for Education and Religion of the Second Polish Republic in 1923 and 1925-1926.[2] Ostrovskyi mostly focused on the threat of assimilation of Ukrainians in Poland, but also mentioned the disadvantageous situation for them in the USSR, Romania and Czechoslovakia. He estimated that '[…] for a long time, the crime of nation-killing in the form of assimilation will be both promoted and carried out, causing at most phraseological condemnations that have no practical significance' (Ostrovskyi 1930).

Ostrovskyi's conclusions that there are no instruments of punishment for the destruction of whole nations are, to some extent, similar to Lemkin's conclusions. For example, Ostrovskyi states, 'The murderers of individual persons always hide their

[2] This discussion was described in more detail in: *Dilo*, 1930: '"Tsyvilizatsiinyi" pokhid Hrabskoho', *Dilo*, 1 August, pp. 2-3.

plans, because the legislators of all countries have condemned the murder of a person and determined appropriate punishments for it. Only the mass murder of peoples in the form of assimilation still remains uncondemned, and it is not surprising, because those who committed it wrote the laws for themselves' (Ostrovskyi 1930). Fifteen years later Lemkin wrote, 'If the killing of one Jew or one Pole is a crime, the killing of all the Jews and all the Poles is not a lesser crime' (Lemkin 1946, 229).

In 1946, *The Ukrainian Weekly* published a brief editorial about the word 'genocide', emphasising the importance of using it:

> If genocide is eventually considered an international crime, a new light will be shed on the responsibility of the government toward its people. One of the causes of the Second World War was the world's unwillingness and inability to take some sort of punitive measures against a government that was hell-bent on destroying national, religious and political minorities. It may offer an opportunity for peoples who feel oppressed by a government to bring their grievances to some sort of world tribunal, as in the case of the democratic-minded Ukrainians, Lithuanians, Latvians and others on home soil, sitting tight only because there is no way for them to air their complaints. (*The Ukrainian Weekly*, 1946, 31 August)

One of the first times that the Soviet policy against Ukrainians was called genocide happened more than a year before the UN Genocide Convention was adopted. On November 21, 1947, at the Pan-American Ukrainian Conference,[3] the Memorandum to the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and Commission on Human Rights of the United Nations was developed. The text was agreed upon by

[3] The Pan-American Ukrainian Conference took place in New York on November 18-22, 1947.

Stepan Shumeyko, Head of the UCCA delegation; Rev. Dr. Wasyl Kusunir, D.D., Head of the Ukrainian Canadian Committee delegation; Rev. Mikola Ivaniw, Head of the Sociedade dos Amigos de Cultura Ucraina en Brasil delegation; John Hrehoraschuk, Head of the delegation of the Comité Unido Ucraniano en las Republicas de Argentina, Paraguay y Uruguay (*The Ukrainian Quarterly*, 1948, 89).

The Memorandum stated that the famine of the 1930s was a component of Soviet genocide (*The Ukrainian Quarterly*, 1948, 86). Nevertheless, the document emphasised that genocide against Ukrainians was ongoing in 1947; therefore, the UN should act to stop it (*The Ukrainian Quarterly*, 1948, 88). This appeal to the UN urging an end to the 'deliberate policy of genocide being pursued by Soviet Russia and its satellite nations' was mentioned in a November 19, 1947, issue of *The New York Times*. The newspaper noted that the appeal was adopted on the first day of the conference's work – November 18, 1947 (*The New York Times*, 1947, 19 November).

Moreover, an analytical article in *The Ukrainian Quarterly* (1948 Volume IV, Issue 4) described the events of 1932 and 1933 in Ukraine as genocide. The article 'Soviet Genocide of the Ukrainian People' was released under the pseudonym 'Prof. T.S.'. In recent years, scholars have pointed out that the author of this and several other articles about the number of the 1932-1933 famine victims was Tymothy Sosnovyi (Andriewsky 165), brother of Stepan Sosnovyi, who, in turn, was a statistician and tried to assess the number of the Holodomor victims.

The article by Prof T. S. reads as follows: 'The destruction of people by famine or by killing, by legal procedure or without it, by immigration or emigration, by Russification and denationalization – all these methods are included in the plans of the Soviet policy on the population problem, since this is an integral part of the Soviet national policy' (Prof. T.S. [T. Sosnovyi] 1948, 325); 'Ukraine under the Soviets has all the features of a colony whose population is subjected to economic exploitation

and to the crime of genocide' (Prof. T.S. 1948, 336). The author focused on the destruction of Ukrainians by famine, forced deportations, and the extermination of the intelligentsia. This very issue of *The Ukrainian Quarterly* was cited by Raphael Lemkin in his 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine' essay (Serbyn 2020, 48).

Gradually the term 'genocide' in relation to the events of 1932-1933 came into use in Ukrainian diaspora publications of the early 1950s, particularly in the two-volume, *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin – A White Book* (the first volume was published in Toronto in 1953, the second one in Detroit in 1955). Serbyn states that the word 'genocide' is mentioned twice in this book, in the articles by Yar Slavytuch and I. Koval (Serbyn 2021, 31-32). Yar Slavytuch named his article about the repression of Ukrainian writers in the 1930s 'Russian Communists Practice Genocide on Ukrainian Writers' (Slavutych 1953, 386-402). At the same time, Koval considered the infamous Decree of the Council of People's Commissars from August 7, 1932, also known as 'Five Ears of Grain Law', to be genocidal and a turning moment in the history of the famine (Koval 1953, 268).

We have found a third mention of the word 'genocide' in *The Black Deeds.* S. Lykho uses the phrase 'genocidal gang' in regard to the higher leadership of the Kremlin: 'All these revolting lies and calumnies are spread to whitewash the genocidal gang in the Kremlin and to absolve them from the guilt of such a terrible crime' (Lykho 1953, 226).

In 1954, the 1932-1933 famine was also mentioned in the context of genocide within the work of the Select Committee to Investigate Communist Aggression and the Forced Incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR.[4] During the Select Com-

[4] On July 27, 1953, the House of Representatives of the US Congress established the Select Committee to Investigate Communist Aggression and the Forced Incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR. Later, the activity of this Committee was expanded, and on March 4, 1954, its name was changed to the Select Committee on

mittee hearings that took place in Munich on June 30 and July 1, 1954; in New York on October 11-14, 1954; and in Chicago on October 18-19, 1954, several Ukrainian speakers testified about communist crimes (*US House Select Committee to Investigate Communist Aggression*, 1954).

In 1955, the work 'Stalin's Accomplices in the 1933 Famine-Genocide' by Pol Polovetskyi[5] (1955) was published in Munich. The author analysed the references to the famine in the world press of the 1930s, especially in publications by Gareth Jones and Walter Duranty.

Polovetskyi's interpretation of the 1932-1933 events was generally consistent with the materials published by representatives of the DOBRUS and SUZHERO organisations. For example, in the early 1950s, the *Ukrainski visti* newspaper contained advertisements with an appeal to submit materials for the *White Book*. Also, *Ukrainski visti* periodically published the so-called 'DOBRUS Page', where most of the materials were devoted to Soviet repression and the famine of 1932-1933.

Thus, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, Ukrainians in the United States actively discussed the topic of genocide independently from their cooperation with Lemkin. The term 'genocide' was applied to the Holodomor long before it gained international recognition. Through academic research, political lobbying and media outreach, the Ukrainian diaspora in the United States built a foundation for the eventual recognition of the Holodomor as genocide. Their work influenced both legal scholars like Lemkin and Western governments, ensuring that the famine was not forgotten and was understood as deliberate starvation of Ukrainians in order to impose Soviet rule in Ukraine.

Communist Aggression. In the press of this period, it was also known as the Kersten Committee by the name of its chairman. The Committee was active until December 31, 1954 (Stubbs 1985, 11; 27).

[5] His real name is Polikarp Pliuiko.

Conclusion

We have examined published materials demonstrating that the Ukrainian-American community in the United States actively participated in the discussion of the UN Genocide Convention and lobbied for its ratification by the US Congress. Ukrainians protested the genocidal policies of the USSR against non-Russian nations and promoted the topic of holding the USSR accountable for its crimes through the mechanism of the UN.

For a long time, Lemkin was considered to be the first person to label the Soviet policy against Ukrainians genocide. However, at the 1947 Pan-American conference, the authors of a signed memorandum to the UN General Assembly, the UN Economic Social Council, and the UN Human Rights Commission, stated that the USSR was committing genocide against Ukrainians. The memorandum was a call to action against the policy of genocide organised by the Soviet Union.

In addition, an article was published in *The Ukrainian Quarterly* in 1948 under the pseudonym 'Prof. T. S.', where the events of the 1932-1933 famine were called genocide. The author (most likely Tymothy Sosnovyi) described the destruction of Ukrainians by famine, forced deportations from Ukraine, and the destruction of the intelligentsia.

The concept of the four components of genocide, as described in Raphael Lemkin's 1953 essay 'Soviet Genocide in Ukraine', had been expressed earlier. Lev Dobriansky, then the chair of the UCCA, spoke about four types of aggression against Ukrainians at the hearings of the Subcommittee on International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of the Foreign Relations Committee of the US Senate on February 9, 1950. Moreover, in 1949, *The Ukrainian Quarterly* published Roman Smal-Stocki's article 'The Genocide Convention', in which the same four elements of genocide are mentioned.

Therefore, it can be argued that Lemkin was not the sole author of this concept – it was most likely the result of joint work by Smal-Stocki, Dobriansky and Lemkin himself. These three scholars had friendly relations, as evidenced by Dobriansky's memoirs.

Overall, the role of Dobriansky in advocating the Ukrainian question in the United States is heavily underestimated. He repeatedly gave speeches in Congress, sharply criticising the colonial actions of the USSR, published analytical materials and articles in the media, and also actively lobbied the Ukrainian question among American congressmen. He saw the ratification of the UN Convention on Genocide as a way to create an international mechanism for holding the leaders of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) responsible.

Finally, it should be noted that the efforts of the Ukrainian community in the United States were not in vain. The idea of investigating the crimes of the Soviet regime after World War II received some support in political circles, particularly in the Republican Party. However, no practical action was taken in this direction, and the United States ratified the Genocide Convention only in 1988.

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