



NEWS RELEASE / COMMUNIQUÉ

THE HOLODOMOR MEMORIAL DAY ACT PASSES THIRD READING

*All Parties Unanimously Support Legislation that
Commemorates Victims of the Man-Made Famine of Ukraine*

NEWS

April 9, 2009

Queen's Park – Making history today, MPPs from all sides of the Legislature unanimously support the first tri-sponsored Private Member's Bill of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Bill 147, the Holodomor Memorial Day Act passes third reading at Queen's Park today.

The co-sponsors, lead by Dave Levac, Liberal MPP for Brant, along with Cheri DiNovo, NDP MPP for Parkdale-High Park, and Frank Klees, PC MPP for Newmarket-Aurora joined forces on February 18, 2009 to introduce Bill 147 which commemorates victims of the man-made famine of Ukraine.

The legislation provides for the declaration of Holodomor Memorial Day on the fourth Saturday in November in each year in the Province of Ontario.

The Holodomor is the name given to the man-made famine that occurred in Ukraine from 1932 to 1933, in which as many as 10 million Ukrainians perished as victims under Joseph Stalin's regime to consolidate control over Ukraine, with 25,000 dying each day at the peak of the famine in 1933.

Ukraine has established the fourth Saturday in November in each year as the annual day to commemorate the victims of the Holodomor. When passed, this Bill will extend the annual commemoration of the victims of the Holodomor to Ontario.

QUOTES

"Today is an important day for Ukrainian-Canadians and especially, for family and friends who fell victim of the Holodomor," said MPP Dave Levac Brant. "The remembrance of these horrors from the past requires our attention."

"Finally Ukrainian Canadians will have the respect for all the victims of Stalin's genocide they've been praying for in this Province," said Cheri DiNovo, MPP Parkdale-High Park.

"It is an honour for me as a Member of the Ontario PC Caucus to co-sponsor this Bill which is enacted into law today," said Frank Klees, MPP Newmarket-Aurora. "Those who have advocated for many years to have the truth concerning the Holodomor publicly recognized can take heart knowing that their persistence has been rewarded."



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Raphael Lemkin, the Jewish-Polish scholar who was the father of the 1948 UN Convention on Genocide and coined the term "genocide", applied it to the destruction of the Ukrainian nation as follows: "This was not simply a case of mass murder. It was a case of genocide, of destruction, not of individuals only, but of a culture and a nation."

"The passage of Bill 147 is a tribute to all those Ontarians, many of whom are no longer with us today, who struggled for decades to lay the foundation for the recognition of the Holodomor as genocide," said Orest Steciw, Holodomor Projects Coordinator at the League of Ukrainian Canadians.

"Today, the Government of Ontario paid tribute to the millions of innocent victims of the Holodomor, condemned the heinous crimes of the Soviet Communist regime, and restored historical justice. We applaud your perseverance and resolve to ensure the passage of Bill 147 that proclaims the fourth Saturday of every November as a day of remembrance-Holodomor Memorial Day and that recognizes the Holodomor of 1932-1933 as an act of genocide," said Chrystyna Bidiak, National President of the League of Ukrainian Canadian Women. "Learning the truth about all crimes against humanity is the only way we can ensure that criminals will no longer be emboldened by indifference and that such dark pages in history will never be allowed to happen again."

"This is the first tri-sponsored bill to pass in the history of Ontario," said Dave Levac, MPP Brant. "Through the creation of a Holodomor Memorial Day, we mend a wrong in world history and in defiance to tyranny and oppression, continue to preserve the culture, heritage and way of life of the Ukrainian people."

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