

THE SILENT VOICES OF STALIN'S SOVIET HOLOCAUST AND MAO'S CHINESE HOLOCAUST

By Timothy D. Naegele

Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-tung were *the* most ruthless killers of their own people in the 20th Century, and perhaps in the entire history of mankind. They were responsible for the world's deadliest holocausts—or the mass destruction of human beings—yet their victims have never been identified or honored. It is time for the silent voices of those who died to be heard, and for these human tragedies of epic proportions to be recognized fully.

The famous Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal once spoke about the duty owed by survivors of the Nazi Holocaust to Jews and non-Jews alike to insure that other holocausts did not occur again, and of course he was correct. Memorials have been erected to those who died at the hands of Adolf Hitler's thugs. However, those noncombatants who were killed by Japan prior to and during World War II, and by the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot in Cambodia, and in Africa and elsewhere are forgotten.

Saddam Hussein's brutality with respect to the Kurds and Iranians, and those Kuwaitis whose fate has only been determined recently in shallow Iraqi graves, pales beside that of Stalin who was Hussein's hero. Aside from ordering the killing of those in the Soviet hierarchy, it is estimated that Stalin was responsible for the deaths of more than 30 million men, women and children—his own countrymen—including millions during the collectivization of the Soviet farms in the 1930s.

History has focused on Hitler's rise to power during that period, and his atrocities in the Nazi death camps and on the battlefields of World War II. Memorials have been

erected to the fallen of many nations that brought an end to his cherished dream of a “Thousand Year Reich,” and to the Jews who were persecuted and systematically killed by the Nazis. However, there are no memorials or tributes to those who perished under Stalin.

He was revered in the former Soviet Union for having defeated Hitler on his Eastern Front, and for the Red Army’s capture of Berlin—even though as the Soviets moved through Germany, they raped at least two million German women in what is now acknowledged as the largest case of mass rape in history. As the truth about him became known following his death, a program of “de-Stalinization” was implemented. However, never in the Soviet Union’s history were steps taken to honor fully those whose only crime was working on the land. They were peasant farmers, most of them, but they stood in the way of “progress,” Soviet-style. To increase agricultural production and to implement the multi-year plans that were being devised for their confiscated farms, which became state-owned lands, they were expendable—and liquidated.

For such a colossal crime to go “unnoticed” outside of the Soviet Union can only be explained by the gathering storm clouds of World War II, and the march of Germany and Japan, which focused the world’s attention elsewhere. China and other parts of Asia came under attack and were later occupied by Japan, while Hitler marched into Poland and then conquered Europe. Straddling the Atlantic and Pacific with Hitler in the East and Japan in the West, and still dealing with the Great Depression’s aftermath, the United States was preoccupied prior to World War II. Also, there was a strong sense of isolationism—that America was an island, bounded by the Atlantic and Pacific—which militated against our involvement in the Soviet Union’s “internal affairs.”

China's Mao Tse-tung was directly responsible for an estimated 30-40 million deaths between 1958 and 1960, as a result of what Mao's regime hailed as the "Great Leap Forward." Like Stalin, Mao's crimes involved Chinese peasants, many of whom died of hunger from man-made famines under collectivist orders that stripped them of all private possessions. The Communist Party forbade them even to cook food at home; private fires were outlawed; and their harvests were taken by the state. Those who dared to question Mao's agricultural policies—which sought to maximize food output by dispossessing the nation's most productive farmers—were tortured, sent to labor camps, or executed.

More than 60 million human beings are forgotten, seemingly having disappeared without a trace in the Soviet and Chinese Holocausts of the 20th Century, as if they never existed or were swallowed up by history. Yet they did exist, and they might have produced descendants numbering in the hundreds of millions today. One can only conjecture as to the contributions they would have made to mankind, which are forever lost like the contributions of those Jews, Gypsies and others who were killed in the Nazi Holocaust, and by Japan, and by Pol Pot, and in Africa.

Approximately 70 years have passed since this human tragedy of epic proportions occurred in the Soviet Union. Approximately 25 years have passed since the comparable tragedy occurred in China. It is time for the world to pay tribute to more than 60 million people who perished under Stalin and Mao. While the precise numbers of the victims may never be known, each of us has a duty to honor their memories and take steps to insure that holocausts do not occur anywhere again. China, Russia and the other former

Soviet-bloc countries whose citizens numbered among the silent voices must take the lead, and other nations must join as well.

It is possible that relatives and people who knew those who died are still alive today, and can bear witness to what happened and give new meaning to their lives. However, the likelihood of that being true diminishes with each passing day, and it is a race against the clock before they too are gone—certainly in the case of those who might remember victims of the Soviet Holocaust. It is time for the silent voices to be heard again, so they are not forgotten, which would compound their catastrophic fate.

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