

Statement of the Kyiv City Organization of the All-Ukrainian Memorial Society of Vasyl Stus in Connection with the Current Authoritarian Regime's Brutal and Unlawful Interference in the Human Rights and Historical-Education Activities of this Organization

Human rights organizations play an extraordinarily important role in progressive societies' just struggles with authoritarian and totalitarian regimes that hinder the establishment of democracy and rule of law throughout the world. One such human rights organization is the Kyiv City Organization of the All-Ukrainian Memorial Society of Vasyl Stus, which was founded in 1989 for the purpose of commemorating the victims of the Holodomor and political repressions, especially the participants of the Ukrainian national liberation struggle in the twentieth century. The human rights and historical-educational activities of this organization helped to overthrow the terroristic communist regime in the USSR and restore an independent, democratic Ukrainian state. Together with [the patriots of] independent Ukraine, the Kyiv City Organization of the All-Ukrainian Memorial Society of Vasyl Stus confidently entered the twenty-first century, implementing new ideas and projects.

In 2001, in the premises of the Memorial Society, which were renovated with funds donated by its membership, the scholarly division of the Memorial Society created the pioneering museum exhibit, *Not to Be Forgotten: A Chronicle of the Communist Inquisition*—the first in Ukraine. This groundbreaking exhibit highlights the tragic events that took place in Ukrainian history between 1917 and 1991, when our nation was victimized by Soviet Russia's communist totalitarian regime. The exhibit features historical materials that are included in the history curricula at the public school and university levels. In 2003 the exhibit was registered with the Ministry of Education and Science and Ukraine (Certificate no. 8148) and received a positive assessment from the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NAN). The Memorial Society printed 900 sets of the museum exhibit (consisting of 54 panels), of which 150 sets were printed in English.

In keeping with a directive handed down by the Presidential Administration, 750 sets were distributed to every region of Ukraine. The Memorial Society donated 70 sets to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine to be displayed abroad, which led to many countries recognizing the 1933 Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people.

Over time, the exhibit sparked the founding in 2007 of a new museum, following a decision passed by a conference organized by the Memorial Society. Every year the new institution, known as the Museum of Soviet Occupation, welcomes up to 15,000 visitors, including groups of schoolchildren and students from all over Ukraine. In keeping with the instructions of the [past and current] mayors of Kyiv, Oleksandr Omelchenko and Leonid Chernovetsky, respectively, district (*raion*) departments of education have systematically encouraged educators in the Ukrainian capital to familiarize their students with the museum exhibits.

The Museum of Soviet Occupation has hosted students from many countries, including Australia, Austria, Belarus, Brazil, Italy, Canada, Germany, Norway, the Republic of South Africa, Poland, Russia, Finland, France, USA, and the Baltic

republics. Visitors have expressed unqualified praise for the exhibit, as demonstrated by the comments recorded in the Guestbook.

The Memorial Society is home to a library of 4,000 books on topics related to the activities of the Memorial Society, as well as a video library consisting of 950 videos. Every week at 6:00 p.m. the Society holds meetings open to the public, where videos are screened and discussed.

Group tours at the Museum are led by two scholarly guides from the Memorial Society. These tours as well as all video screenings are free of charge.

In 2009–2010 the scholarly associates of the Memorial Society created five new exhibits:

1. *The Ukrainian Solovky Islands*
2. *The Kyivan Martyrology*
3. *Lost Memory*
4. *Linguistic Exposition*
5. *The People's War*

Two additional exhibits were created in collaboration with other civic organizations: *Shattered Destinies* and *The Destruction of Spirituality*.

The year 2009 saw the publication of a collection of documents entitled *Ukrainian Grain for Export, 1932–1933*, eighty copies of which were distributed gratis to all regional (*oblast*) libraries throughout Ukraine at the behest of the Presidential Administration.

In 2009 a contest for the best drawing of the 1932–1933 Holodomor in Ukraine was held for schoolchildren in the Holiiv district of Kyiv, where the Museum of Soviet Occupation is located.

In 2009, ten libraries in Kyiv's Holiiv district displayed the panels from the exhibit of *Not to Be Forgotten*.

In 2008 the film *Between Hitler and Stalin: Ukraine in the Second World War* was produced in collaboration with the League of Ukrainian Canadians. In 2009 the Memorial Society donated 60 copies of the film to every region of Ukraine.

Three scholarly conferences were held in 2009.

Two seminars for history teachers in schools located in Kyiv's Holiiv district and for deputy directors responsible for pedagogical work at professional-technical institutions were held in 2009.

In 2009 the scholarly associates of the Memorial Society held a three-day teaching seminar for students and employees of social services about the process of collecting the memoirs of Holodomor survivors.

In 2009–2010 the memoirs of the Holodomor survivors of Kyiv were published in the form of a book entitled *Kyivites—Eyewitnesses of the Holodomor*.

Two books were published in 2010: *Demianiv Laz: The Genocide in Galicia* and a teaching manual entitled *The Drilling System of the Child-Youth Military Sports Patriotic Game "Sokil" ("Dzhura") of the Ukrainian Cossacks*.

A computerized information center of declassified archival documents was opened in 2010.

Two scholarly conferences were held in 2010.

In 2009–2010, 70,000 archival documents on the state-building and liberation struggles of the Ukrainian people were uncovered in state and branch archives of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) and digitalized (now in the process of being studied).

In 2010, *The People's War*, a new museum exhibit based on newly discovered documents, was inaugurated at the People's Home in Kyiv.

A guidebook to *The People's War* was published in 2011. The Kyiv City Organization of the All-Ukrainian Memorial Society of Vasyl Stus is also active in the international humanitarian sphere. In 2010 a meeting to discuss humanitarian policies took place with a group of delegates from the European Parliament and the International Red Cross.

The Memorial Society also takes part in state- and community-level events, e.g., commemorations of the victims of Soviet repressions at the Bykivnia Graves National Memorial Preserve.

The Memorial Society's scholarly associates provide free historical consultations to lecturers, students, and schoolchildren. They also offer free legal consultations to victims of repressions.

The Memorial Society's dynamic work in the sphere of human rights and historical education has received high praise from progressive members of the public in Ukraine and abroad. Nevertheless, the advocates of Stalinist totalitarianism constantly seek to obstruct the organization's activities and have engineered numerous dirty provocations against it. In 2009 alone, the windows of the museum were smashed during the night on four occasions. The reactions from the agencies of law and order to our reports of these incidents were limited to notes of acknowledgement that such reports were received. These kinds of amoral and anti-social actions, which are being carried out by anti-Ukrainian political circles, markedly increased following the rise to power of the Party of Regions, many of whose leading members have often publicly expressed their contempt for the Ukrainian people, the memory of the victims of the Holodomor and political repressions, and the participants of the Ukrainian national liberation struggle in the twentieth century. It is alarming to note that having come to power through democratic means, the current regime is trampling democracy and forcibly imposing on Ukrainian society authoritarian rule, which is acquiring the features of totalitarianism. This is particularly apparent in the consistent use of state power structures, including the security services, in the struggle against dissidents. In our view, they are the ones who are behind the latest provocation against the Memorial Society.

Recently, the Memorial Society received a visit from representatives of the Security Service of Ukraine and the Kyiv Municipal State Administration, who demonstrated an intense interest in the Society's activities. After their visits, the Society lost its telephone service for an entire week. As the board of the Society has learned from unofficial sources, the grounds for such actions on the part of representatives of the SBU and the Kyiv Municipal Administration stem from a letter that was sent to the president and prime minister of Ukraine, the head of the Kyiv Municipal State Administration, the head of the SBU, and the Prosecutor-General of Ukraine by one Anna Ivanivna Zhuravska, a resident of the village of Obtove, Krolevets District, Sumy Region. The letter accuses the Memorial Society and its head, Roman Krutsyk, of conducting "illegal activities," "inciting inter-national hatred and hostility," "encroaching on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine," "collaborating with Western security services,"

and committing “treason against Ukraine.” In other words, this is a list of accusations that the Stalinist thugs typically aimed at Ukrainian patriots in the 1930s.

An investigation carried out by the Memorial Society in collaboration with various journalists determined that Anna Zhuravska, a chronic alcoholic, lived in the village of Optove, Krolevets District, Sumy Region, from where she eventually disappeared without a trace. She has been listed as a Missing Person since 2008. This fact casts grave doubts on her “authorship” of that denunciatory letter. At the same time, Zhuravska’s passport data, which are included in “her” letter, clearly prove that the real authors of this denunciation have easy access to those state institutions where these data are stored.

An analysis of the form, content, and style of this letter provides grounds to state that the letter was not written in a remote village located in the Sumy Region, but in Kyiv, and that it was written to order. It is possible that some time soon the Society will obtain more detailed information about the individuals who ordered and carried out the writing of this letter denouncing the Memorial Society. This will allow the Society to proceed with this matter along legal lines. In the meantime, we, the members of the Kyiv City Organization of the All-Ukrainian Memorial Society of Vasyl Stus, decisively protest the unlawful actions of the current regime headed by the Party of Regions, which is flagrantly trampling the democratic gains of the Ukrainian people and turning Ukraine into a preserve of neo-Stalinist totalitarianism. We appeal to the governments of the leading countries of the world to reach a just assessment of the domestic policies of Ukraine’s current leadership, as was done recently by President Aleksandr Lukashenko of Belarus and his immediate circle. We appeal to human rights organizations in Europe, North America, and Russia for support in counteracting the terror being wreaked by the security services, which are violating civic freedoms and democracy in Ukraine. We assure our supporters that no amount of provocations, repressions, threats, and intimidation will break us. We will continue our human rights and historical-educational work in the interests of the Ukrainian people and in the name of historical truth.

Adopted at a general meeting of the Memorial Society on 10 May 2011

Roman Krutsyk, head

Kyiv City Organization of the All-Ukrainian Memorial Society of Vasyl Stus; member of the Ukrainian Parliament of the 2nd Convocation